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THE VULNERABILITY OF TEACHERS DURING NEW EDUCATIONAL POLICY REFORM IMPLEMENTATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF SHIFTING IDENTITY

By

VALENCIA TSHINOMPHENI MABALANE

THESIS

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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October 2013
DECLARATION

I, Valencia Tshinompheni Mabalane, sincerely declare that this thesis, The vulnerability of teachers during new educational policy reform implementation: An ethnographic account of shifting identity, submitted to the University of Johannesburg is my original and independent work and design. I further declare that this work or any version of it has never been submitted to any other institution or faculty for degree purposes. All citations where the work of others has been used were acknowledged by means of complete references.

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VT Mabalane

Date: 29 11 November 2013

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother Joyce Nyamukamadi Matshidiso Nthangeni who was called to Glory before she could see a doctor in her family. I thank her for teaching me the value of endurance and patience; her unwavering support and sacrifice shown during trying times encouraged me to stand during my study period. May her soul rest in peace.

Edela zwavhudi, Mukololo wa ha Davhana. Ahee! Tshingwala, Nesengani ahee!
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The support and contributions I received towards the completion of this study from family, friends and colleagues, not all of whom I will be able to mention, is immeasurable. Your social, professional and academic contributions are highly valued. I do not have enough words to thank you for caring.

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• All colleagues and friends who were not mentioned by name for their encouragement.

• I am deeply indebted to my husband for believing in my abilities, and his encouragement, love, patience, support and assistance with our children. Thank you for your unconditional acceptance and love. To my four children, Owen, Rorisang, Gaositwe and Bontle for your invaluable assistance, in putting up with my studies and sacrificing your time. Thank you for being there for me in times of need.

• Above all, glory goes to God the Almighty for being my wisdom and source of strength, for enabling me to endure, and for guiding and directing my footsteps. His eyes are always on the righteous that they may not trip or fall.
ABSTRACT

This study is about teachers’ identity shifts during the first waves of educational reform in South Africa in the post-apartheid renewal and restructuring of the education system. I studied the everyday life of four teachers in a “township” school in Gauteng Province, the industrial heartland of the country.

I set out to find, over a three of years, how teachers saw themselves as professionals in this changing landscape, which included a three of new policies, including a new curriculum policy and a school governance policy. The study started with the knowledge claim that the researcher would find a shift in teacher identity, working from theories of self, specifically symbolic interactionism. I argued that in the establishment of a “post 1994” identity, as citizens and as educational practitioners, teachers have been the object of multiple social interventions. The least of these is not their adapted teaching modes and their performance as “OBE practitioners”, but as educators who took on the identity of the curriculum and its ideological intent. This was to shift teachers’ focus to learning outcomes more than content input and to see themselves as “guides by the side”, facilitators of learning, creating learning conditions that would optimise the potential of children and youth. For many teachers, the move away from being the giver or instructor to being the guide may be disturbing, I argued at the outset. I was interested to see how they engaged with a new life in a new system, or rather, a system “under repair” and one which may ask of them not only to adopt the “seven new roles of educators” as per the first policy change, but with that, also their sense of who they were, their sense of self as practitioners.

Thus, in order to answer the question “How do teachers perceive and understand their professional identity during a substantial educational policy shift?” the study aimed at understanding how teachers experienced the on-going changes of curriculum content, pedagogy, content knowledge, administration of classrooms and
assessment practices. To this end, I conducted a review of some of the literature on teacher identity, coming to the conclusion that it is difficult to understand teachers' professional identity as an all-encompassing concept. However, there is consensus that professional identity is not stable or static, but that it is a relational concept, for which one needs an understanding of identity as a social endeavour and as a product that is individual —“unique” and collective —“shared”.

I thus set out on a study that explored, in partial ethnographic mode, the everyday life of four teachers as they struggled to find their personal space during the implementation of new policies. I utilised a specific computer assisted qualitative data analysis tool (ATLAS.ti) to analyse the corpus of qualitative data gathered by way of interviews, photographs, documents and field notes. From the data I derived 11 themes, which were then patterned into main findings.

The findings showed how the teachers' identity had become unstable to the extent that it might have impacted the quality of their work, although at the time no one would acknowledge this. Even though authors agree that professional identity is dynamic and that it moves as time goes by, and although that is an acceptable premise for looking at teacher development, what I found is that the required shifts had been exorbitant. The teachers in this study felt that there was simply too much change expected of them without sufficient scaffolding.

The 11 themes that constitute the findings of the study show how the professional identity of the teachers was changing; and that it is their overall sense of being in a bigger (national, community and spiritual) context that was enabling them to continue with a sense of (a somewhat fragmented) self. Were it not for their sense of community and their religion, as well as their conviction that they serve a new nation, they could have had an even more broken identity.
I concluded the inquiry by emphasising the significance of foregrounding the teacher as a professional person, as an individual, during reforms. Policy implementation, I suggest, must take cognisance of their emotional well-being during such times. Reforms may look technical on paper, but in practice, they are about people’s sense of who they are as professionals. I believe that my study made a contribution to this understanding.

**NOTE:** CD in pocket at the end of the text contains raw data files for perusal only, but not essential for reviewing the thesis.
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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION: POLICY CHANGE AND SCHOOL LIFESTYLE CHANGE

This study is a slice of the history of educational reform that was implemented after the end of the apartheid era in South Africa. It gives a glimpse of one corner of the educational landscape - how a group of teachers reacted to new educational policies and how their professional identity shifted during this time. The study captures a moment in history when teachers had to reconstruct their identity as professionals in a new dispensation. They had become participants in national reform and when the data used in this thesis was collected they had to redefine themselves as professional teachers like many in the world who have lived through comprehensive policy change. They had to find their feet, position and their voice (Ribiero, 2006). The thesis looks back at this time, with the author having the knowledge of two more waves of change that would come.

Like the rest of the world, South Africa has been through a number of processes of educational reform and transformation. The first, and arguably the most fundamental of these changes, began soon after 1994 as a means to rectify previous unequal educational opportunities created by the regime of apartheid. This process of renewal and alteration over almost twenty years has placed challenging demands on and created expectations of its teachers. Because transformation is system-wide, affecting all education structures and functions, the change inevitably filters through to the sense of professional self of the individual teachers in the nation’s schools.

Initially, the South African government implemented changes to redress past imbalances and injustices to ensure equal education for all South African citizens. Along with new policies, bills and statutes, the Education White Papers (1995a and 1996a), Department of Education Reports (1995b, 1996b) and the South African Schools Act (1996), a new curriculum of outcomes-based education (OBE) was introduced as a means of ensuring educational quality and broader socio-economic growth (Department of Education, 1996). The South African Schools Act of 1996 and other policies (such as assessment policies, retention policies and others), changed the definition of the role of teachers, requiring new roles and competencies. It is
worth noting that the roles of other education officers or role players changed as well in the new policy, but this study will focus on teachers only.

Before the educational reform process started, the teaching profession was, according to Jansen (2003), very bureaucratic. Few would disagree with this assertion. School inspectors evaluated teachers who were required to study and adhere to the syllabus rigidly. “The teacher was an obedient servant who executed the well-defined instructional tasks as per official syllabus and a moderated examination” (Jansen, 2003, 243). In this paradigm, education was arguably teacher-centred and teachers were primarily responsible for the effect of their teaching as it would be evident in learner performance. The introduction of the OBE curriculum aimed to change this teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach, as was the trend in the era of (radical) constructivist epistemologies (Henning, 2013).

It is somewhat ironic that the most recent policy (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS]) changes are a reminder of a streamlined curriculum introduced in 2001. Jansen (2003) noted at the time of the first wave of reform that while teachers had been “centre-stage” in power, expertise and authority, the introduction of OBE aimed to move the teacher to the side as “facilitator and guide” and would likely shift the instructional role of teachers. The OBE curriculum was seen to allow learners to mediate learning within a learner-centred classroom. It was, in hindsight, a lofty ideal. The “new” approach removed the “comforts” (sic!) of subject competence and formalised textbooks from teachers, and introduced the greater responsibility of ensuring learners took responsibility for their learning in well-planned lessons where they would be scaffolded by a competent teacher who understood her/his role as mediator. It was the tenet of constructivist learning theory that was emphasised in the policy. In so-called “OBE” classrooms learning and competence took precedence over content. There is, currently, a move in South African education to focus on content knowledge as the object of teacher education because teachers are not seen to be as knowledgeable in their field as they ought to be (Fleisch, 2010).
During the first reform, teachers were no longer there just for teaching/instruction, but also had to assume new roles as outlined in the *seven roles* in The Norms and Standards of Educators (Department of Education, 2000). Their social role was also emphasised. Changes in policy require teachers to adapt to the new requirements, and change their “way of life” (Wolcott, 1994). At the time of writing this thesis, an uncertainty of who teachers are, and what they stand for prevailed. Already ten years ago, Mattson and Harley (2003) argued that teachers had responded to the new framework superficially, mimicking the changes and seven roles required of them, “pretending” to be competent while they were actually facing serious challenges. They acted as though they had been coping with changes and limited resources, but in fact improvised their teaching because of lack of resources.

Another aspect of how teachers responded to educational reform is proposed by Hargreaves (2005) who argues that in times of reform teachers are unable to express their emotions. He attributes this to fear of being seen as unprofessional by their peers and others. Notably, policy on teachers’ roles portrays teachers as extended professionals with well-developed reflexive competencies, whereas empirical findings (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2000; Jansen, 2003, Soudien, 2001; Smit & Fritz 2008; Mattson & Harley, 2003; Smit, Fritz & Mabalane, 2010) show the opposite to be true. In turbulent times teachers demonstrate a restricted view of professionalism and skills as they protect their comfort zone, which is where they feel secure.

Additional role-taking would be low on their list of survival tactics. Yet, in the OBE policy context, they were expected to assume the following roles, as outlined in the Norms and Standards Policy documents (Department of Education, 2000a).

1. Learning mediator
2. Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials
3. Leader, administrator and manager
4. Community, citizenship and pastoral role
This study argues that teachers have been required to establish a “post 1994” identity through multiple social interventions, the most drastic arguably being the necessity to adapt their teaching modes and their everyday activity to performance as “OBE practitioners”. Teachers were expected to shift their identity and transform to a professional that would fit the policy mould. In the first wave of reform and the curriculum that was implemented in 2001 (Curriculum 2005), this adaptation to an alternative “way of life”, or cultural practice (Wolcott, 1994), both as practitioners and as citizens, demanded much: an adaptation to a lifestyle that did not have the necessary material and other support structures, the infrastructure, or the discourse of the interventions (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2002). They also had to adapt to a classroom lifestyle, and the social environment for which they had not been prepared and in which many did not feel at home.

To investigate how teachers dealt with these new policies, my research was conducted in a school in a “township” (historically, racially segregated for Black people) area on the Witwatersrand. The socio-economic status of the school is middle class by township standards. The school was characterised by political fighting during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The population is predominantly isiZulu-speaking group, and has moderate resources. At the time of the study the primary school in this study accommodated children from an informal settlement and a “township middle class” area. There were 39 teachers plus the principal and the two deputy principals, with 11 males and 31 female teachers to teach 1138 learners. This included learners with special needs. The school had a well-equipped computer laboratory, library, playing field, and had a feeding scheme at the time.

This research investigated how teachers negotiated the rapid changes in the education system from 2005 to 2010. It investigated how the policy changes had filtered to the professional identity of the teachers. I argue that if policy makers had
understood the implications of their policy shifts, then this would have benefited teachers. Furthermore, I argue that any skewing of identity and motivation would affect teaching practice and commitment of teachers. As evidenced by the data of the study, teachers’ morale and motivation and some of the practices that I observed at the time of the inquiry were a result of not having taken this into account: the identity shifts of teachers who were used to being instructors who planned lessons with aims in mind, to becoming facilitators who had (abstractions of) outcomes of learning in mind (Matson & Harley, 2003; Soudien, 2001). At the time, Soudien (2001:35) had this to say about the reforms introduced in South Africa:

In having to implement the reforms, particularly those which address the questions of governance, the curriculum, staffing, medium of instruction and conditions of service, many South African schools have had to deal with questions such as who teach what they teach and how they teach. Central to the reform process is the ideal of reconstruction and development.

The implication here is that it is fatal for any educational reform to ignore the teachers’ professional identity when planning the curriculum to be implemented by them. Several authors outside South Africa (Sachs, 1999 & 2001; Tickle, 2000; Barty, 2004; Miller, 2000) and nationally (Jansen, 2003; Soudien, 2001; Mattson and Harley, 2003) have argued that any reform in education must consider the different aspects and circumstances of teachers, such as their education, professional development, training, schools where they teach, and teaching experience. It is with this statement in mind that I posed the following research question: How do teachers perceive and understand their professional identity during a substantial educational policy shift?

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research problem comprised three components, related to the time when the research was conducted:

- OBE policies created confusion among teachers regarding their new “role” as educator.
• Ambiguities in the norms and standards for teachers, especially with regard to the “Seven Roles of Educators” impacted teachers’ philosophy of teaching.
• Teachers have had difficulty in accepting the changes demanded of their professional identities, specifically with regard to classroom “way of life” and their instructional function.

This thesis argues that OBE policies failed to take into consideration the teachers’ legacy and how they perceived themselves, in other words, how the apartheid education system had framed their identity. Their perceptions of education, teaching, learning, and what they stand for, were affected. Stout (2001) emphasises this point by arguing that the continuing educational reforms and growing diversity in learners and integration of new and old policies impacted on who teachers believed they were, on their identity orientation during their pre-service education and training, and their current professional identity.

The claim of this study is that identity was a neglected area during the reform and that the unforeseen consequences of the shift expected from teachers may have been one of the causes of current teacher behaviour of passive resistance. Van Veen, Sleegers and van de Ven (2005) argue that the contexts that are usually created by school reforms jeopardise teachers’ identity by creating new professional challenges for them, some of which they cannot resolve. In effect, the (tacit) philosophy of teaching of the teachers in this study could have been impacted by the newly introduced seven roles of educators especially. It may have affected their belief systems about their calling as educators and about teaching and what they understood about themselves.

Jansen (2003) argues that as teachers’ professional identities were assumed to be stable, no one made provision for the loss of self that teachers may experience. The new policy on teacher roles the Norms and Standards did not make provision for this – for the accelerated adaptation of their identities and their everyday practice. And this had to be done with limited resources and support structures. For instance, limited in-service training was provided and there was also no counselling. Some of the changes the OBE policy required included continuous learner assessment.
against clearly defined outcome statements, using a variety of methods, techniques, tools and contexts, recording of the findings, and reporting by giving positive, supportive and motivational feedback to learners, other educators, parents and other stakeholders. The shift was huge. Furthermore, teachers had to create an enabling learning environment conducive to learning and afford learners an opportunity to explore and interrogate the content without fear (Department of Education, 1998; Jansen, 2003; Mattson & Harley, 2003).

These OBE policy requirements were vastly different to the manner in which teachers had been trained and had been practicing. The paradigm shift was very large. And as such, teachers found themselves having to change their professional identity (or mimic a new one) and this aspect of their lives was without policy agenda or in-service development or counselling assistance. Schmidt and Datnow (2005) assert that in an environment of ambiguity and confusion, teachers’ meaning-making processes are influenced negatively by how they perceive and understand the situation. Mostly, they are affected by their emotions. And as a result, this has a negative effect on their personal and professional beings.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTION

This study aimed to understand the factors that influence and shape the professional identity of teachers. This was then used to understand what constituted teachers’ professional identities, how these were reconstructed and redefined in a time of policy change, and posing the question: How do teachers perceive and understand their professional identity during a substantial educational policy shift?

Objectives:

- To observe and interview four teachers in their daily life at school.
- To write an ethnographic narrative on each teacher.
- To analyse teacher journals.
- To use the narratives compiled from journals in the construction of themes in tandem with interviews, observation notes and photographic data.
1.4 THEORISING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

There is no single definition of what teacher professional identity is. According to Olsen (2008) part of the difficulty in defining teacher identity is due to the many and diverse ways the concept “identity” has been defined by scholars. This will be discussed in Chapter 2. A definition would also have to consider the issue of what constitutes teaching as a profession. Sachs (2001:150) argues that, “(w)hat counts as teacher professionalism has come to be a site of struggle between various interest groups concerned with the broader enterprise of education”. Authors agree that what constitutes professionalism or teaching has been contested by different groups, resulting in academic and ideological dispute between union leaders (politicians), policy makers (bureaucrats), academics, and teachers themselves. This makes it difficult to have a singular version of what constitutes professionalism or teaching as a profession (Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink & Hofman, 2011). For example, between 1990 and 2000 Beijaard et al. (2004) reviewed 22 studies in which they found that the concept of professional identity is used in different ways or not defined at all by those who researched it.

Furthermore, scholars like Connelly and Clandinin (1995) argue that teachers use institutional stories to influence their professional identity during the context of education and curriculum reform. Kelchtermans (2005) says that teachers’ professional identity relates to how teachers see themselves as teachers in accordance to their interpretations as they interact with people and their context, which manifest itself in their “job satisfaction, occupational commitment, self-efficacy, and change in level of motivation” (Canrinus et al., 2011). The implication here is that teachers’ professional identity is intertwined with self and profession. Thus, teacher identity can be said to be how teachers define themselves in relation to their professional roles. In other words, teachers’ professional identity comprises both personal and professional aspects of the nature of teaching profession; it is both socially (externally) and personally (internally) directed – and these denote the aspects of self which are positioned towards “I”– the personal subject or acting agent - and “me”– the social object of activity (Olsen, 2008; Canrinus et al., 2011). The notion of “self” will be discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5.3.2). The implication here
is that the teachers’ professional identity is shaped by the interface between the context (including the school), the societal roles and the practical daily reality of the profession as it comes alive in the classroom, to name a few; it also includes the person, the self of the teacher, which must remain in balance to effect teacher professional identity.
FIGURE 1.1: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE CONTEXT AND “SELF”

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The theoretical perspective underpinning this study is symbolic interactionism (SI). According to Cuff, Sharrock and Francis (2005), “symbolic interactionism is a social constructionist approach to understanding social life”. This perspective defines reality as being dynamic and multifaceted, and considers people as actors/agents/subjects rather than reactors/recipient/objects in social life and in social structures. In other words, people’s actions are contextual; their actions are dependent on where they are and what is going on at that particular time and place. These authors also say that from a SI perspective meaning is always linked to acts, to a specific perspective, and to processes of making knowledge. As such the making of meaning, and from that also the making of knowledge, is a resource that enables people to solve problems of the changing world. The two theorists pertinent to this thesis are George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer (Nelson, 1998; Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003; Sandstrom, Martin & Fine, 2006). I will expand briefly on the ideas of Mead and Blumer in Chapter 2.

Another aspect of SI is that it takes as its point of departure individuals in the processes of creating an everyday life-world. It is a social theory, but it has its roots
in the psychology of the individual in interaction with society. It focuses on the creation and construction of reality by active and creative individuals during interaction with others. Individuals are seen as active creators of meaning in interaction. Thus, central to symbolic interactionism is that people act on situations because of how they perceive and define the present situation (Blumer, 1969; Nelson, 1998). This human interaction is mediated by symbols such as language and other objects and semiotic artefacts in their environment. Individuals interpret and determine the meaning of other individuals’ actions and make sense of their umwelt by being in-the-world and interpreting its signs and the activities of people. Blumer proposes three premises for a SI view of social reality:

The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they have for them... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969:2).

The use of symbolic interactionism as a lens for this research is because I argue that people (and not objects or activities, or systems, for example) are key in this theory. Furthermore, SI acknowledges that reality and knowledge are constructed by social actors (thus always assumed to be in interaction with others) as they make meaning of the actions of people and things around them. Participants in the studies are not viewed passive “recipient” objects, but reciprocal subjects who are active in the construction of their reality, through interpretation of meanings within their social context.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of the study is to interpret and then try to understand how teachers make meaning both of and for their professional identity. Methods to investigate teachers’ identity and their shift would have to be those methods that accommodate and that can capture meaning-making of people in their everyday lives. Authors have written widely about such methods, especially after the qualitative research resurgence in
the 1980s. Some of the writers that I consulted, such as Mouton, (1996,2001); Taylor and Bogdan (1998); Denscombe (1998); Guba and Lincoln (1998); Denzin and Lincoln (2000); Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002); Peltz (2002); Henning et al. (2004); Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2005); Riemer (2008) emphasise the ethnographic quality of these types of methods, while others alert one to the phenomenological issues and others to the narrative issues (Babbie & Mouton 2002; Best & Kahn, 2003; Creswell, 2007; Seale, Goba, Gubruim & Silverman, 2005; Flick, 2007). In this vein, various qualitative methods were employed in order to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the professional identity of teachers.

Thus, the research design has ethnographic elements, due to the elements of a way of life of an identifiable group of people (Wolcott, 1994). It is, however, a generic qualitative study as described by Merriam (1998). The design includes observing patterns of actions, conducting interviews, assembling various documents and artefacts and recording conversations as described by qualitative research methodologists (Gay, 1992; Best & Kahn, 2003; Creswell, 1994; Henning et al., 2004). The design will be discussed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 the data analysis will be explained from the “raw” data to the final themes, using ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All participants were given a detailed description of the research process and foreseen outcomes (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Mouton, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A clear “audit trail” that consists of original interview transcripts is attached to the study on CD. I also ensured that the research was conducted according to the ethical standards required by the Faculty of Education’s Ethics Committee, including the undertaking to observe and respect the autonomy of participants. I asked for volunteers to participate, and ensured that I obtain consent from all stakeholders and participants concerned. The freedom to withdraw was honoured as well as the right to anonymity of participants when publishing.

I honoured the culture, procedure and the protocol of the school and the department by asking permission to conduct the interviews. Permission to conduct the study was
requested by means of a letter from the Gauteng district office and the school management team or committee. The school and the district office were both given a letter tabulating what the study was all about, why the research should be conducted, who should participate, and how they would take part in the study (Appendix A). The participants who volunteered to take part in the study consented by means of a letter (Appendix B).

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Background of the study: Policy change and school life style change

The chapter introduces the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework: Teacher identity and educational change

This chapter discusses some of the relevant literature on identity, teachers’ professional identity; and the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Design: Capturing identity shift

The methods utilised in the study are set out in this chapter.

Chapter 4: The data of the study

The chapter present the process from “raw” data to findings systematically.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

The themes of the findings will be discussed, showing the overall pattern of the data. The recommendations for research will be included as well as ideas for a policy brief with regard to teacher counseling.

1.9 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter outlined the basis for the thesis, presenting the underpinnings and context of the study. It gave a description of the context for the
study and introduced the narrative and the perspective of a “slice in time”, zoomed into the lives and minds of four teachers at a juncture of the broader South African education narrative. The chapter also provided an outline of the thinking that structured the thesis - the motivation and background to the study, the aim of the study, research question, problem statement, and the authors that guided the conceptualization of the thesis. The next chapter will expand on the literature that was consulted for an understanding of the notion of *professional identity* of teachers.
CHAPTER TWO: TEACHER IDENTITY AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss the notion of teachers’ personal and professional identity and argue that teachers’ sense of self is especially vulnerable during times of systemic change. Elucidating and demystify the concept of identity poses various challenges for a critical discussion on the current debates around identity. The conceptualization of identity is not an entirely concrete endeavor, but a discussion of this will invariably highlight aspects of it that are important to this study. Identity is necessarily a subjective construction that is always in flux. There are scholars who define it as the unfixed and relational aspect of the self. There is presently little agreement on what identity is and it is difficult for this reason to forward a specific conceptualization that can be considered definitive. Despite this various commonalities can be seen in the seminal works of authors like Mead (1934), Hall (1992), Bradley (1996), Jenkins (1996 & 2004), Castells (1997), Craib (1998), Brubaker and Cooper (2000), Woodward (2000), Gee (2001), Moya (2001), Stout (2001), Lewellen (2002), Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) and Standbu (2005) to name a few. These authors typically present definitions of identity that emphasize the following: identity is an aspect of the self that is subjective and systematically constituted; identity entails the construction of meaning from social interaction – it is the basis for creating meaning of interactions with others; identity formation is a continual process that persists in time and is defined by context; this gives rise to the argument that identity is not a stable construct, but that it is a shifting, symbolic construction.

When dealing with the way in which teachers negotiate educational reform, it is necessary to explore the way professional identity is constructed over time. This will provide a sense of what happens to teachers when change is forced on them. Studies that foreground professional identity have typically emphasized how professional identities are formed. It would be consistent to argue that professional identities of teacher’s are not a fixed attribute; it is a shifting, continually negotiated
and ambiguous relational phenomenon. Teachers come see themselves as professionals by negotiating the demands of teaching and reconciling their training as pre-service teachers with the realities of daily practice. Teachers construct professional identities through negotiating the demands of the workplace, which can be seen as a process of ‘becoming someone in the workplace’. In times of educational reform the tenuous foundations of professional identities becomes amplified. Policy makers and reformists ignore the emotional consequences of affecting extensive alterations to daily practice, which has left many teachers vulnerable in the workplace.

Professional identities contribute significantly to the way in which teachers, for instance, view themselves in relation society at large. It is constituted through a process of symbolic exchange that is emphasized when individuals step into the function society has fashioned. Identity is a social construct. Symbolic interactionism can be used to describe the process of teacher identity formation and to explain how teachers interact with people around them and their environment. Symbolic interactionism is typically concerned with how language, thought and meaning are conditioned as people interact with those around them. What is of particular interest for this study is the way in which the teacher navigates the hierarchy of the system of education, the complexity of society and daily practice.

2.2 TOWARDS DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY: “UNFIXED” AND “RELATIONAL”

As stated above, this section will discuss the views of different authors who wrote on the concept of identity from different perspectives. I will discuss how identity is conceptualized to highlight the important ideas that are used to define it. I begin with a general definition of identity and will argue that there is no general consensus on the definition. I explore the following four ideas; (1) identity is unfixed and relational. The fluidity of identity is a prominent theme of authors working in this theoretical domain. Some argue that identity is influenced and characterized by many aspects of people’s lives. (2) Identity as a subjective component of the “self”. Authors argue that the self, which consists of the ‘I’ and ‘me,’ develops as we interact with others.
within our environment. (3) Forming identities as “shapes of life” is an idea forwarded by theorists to argue that identity formation is an essential feature of living in human society. (4) Context and the shifting of identity. Authors argue that contexts shape the articulation of our identity and that identities are influenced differently in different contexts, and are considered context dependent.

In trying to find a working definition for the concept identity a researcher can read widely across disciplines and may come to realise that it is difficult to pin down any specific conceptualisation. It is a notion that has received much attention across disciplines and perspectives, including psychology, sociology, education and philosophy. But identity has remained a contested concept. There is little agreement, on ideas about ethnicity, language and nationality coming into play (Lewellen, 2002). Some authors’ disagreements revolve around issues such as the nature, and definition of identity; how identities are created; the role of globalisation in identity formations; theories of identity; and the conceptualisation of identity (Moya, 2001).

I would add, by citing Kelchtermans (2005), that identity, like culture, is in flux, especially during times of change, for example during educational reform. According to Strandbu (2005:29), this state of flux is especially notable during “turbulent times”. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue that it is a concept which is used too widely and loosely, and explain that it no longer makes sense in general. I argue, in contrast, that it makes sense in very specific moments in time and in specific contexts. It is in such a context that this study was conducted: a moment in the history of the first educational reforms in South Africa after apartheid.

The study took semantic cues from authors who focused on different aspects of identity: Jenkins (1996) focuses on social identity; Kath Woodward (2000) examines the formation of identity; Stuart Hall (1992) discusses cultural identity; Bauman (1996) focuses on the concept of identity as a pilgrimage; and Bradley (1996) discusses modernist and postmodernist views of identity. Other authors report on teacher professional identity, specifically in times of change and transformation. I will discuss a small sample of these authors.
What is common to most of the scholars who study this concept is that identity is formed and characterised by a number of different aspects of human life. Identity invokes what I would like to refer to as ‘various faces of identity’: there is gender identity, religious identity, political identity, social identity, racial identity, cultural identity, ethnic identity, sexual identity, national identity, class identity, and professional identity. I would argue that one’s sense of self or the lived self is a composite of all of the above and many more extractions from the whole of what makes us human and that constitutes consciousness of the self. When viewed on this principle, it makes sense to utilise symbolic interactionism as a lens to try to understand teachers’ sense of self in a specific context and at a specific time.

In this way my research argues that teachers’ identities are influenced and characterised by many aspects of their lives, including their community and social context, the culture of the school where they work, and their assigned ‘roles’ as required by the department of education (the Department of Basic Education, previously the Department of Education). These aspects, pertaining to their professional roles, were given much (regulatory) attention during the first wave of educational reforms in South Africa. To begin with, there was a new idealised curriculum with completely new demands for which the teachers had not been prepared adequately. One of these was to become a ‘democratic’ teacher. Other policies included teacher development and roles and norms of practice (see sections 1 and 1.5). The expectations for teacher performance across a range of activities introduced new roles for and created new expectations from and standards for teachers. The stage was set for teachers’ workplace/professional identity to shift in the face of reform. This lasted for many years through a range of policy and curriculum changes, of which this study gives only an early glimpse of one set of teachers in a school at the height of the first set of reforms. In the study I am able to give a single, integrated view, which will be my own and which will be based on some of the work on identity that I encountered in my review of literature, trying to find integration in the many divergent views.

Even though there are many divergent and often contradictory views on, and definitions of identity, there appears to be one commonality that holds true: identity is
an unfixed and fluid trait of a person and constitutes a relational experience. Lewellin (2002) sees part of the problem with defining identity as the fact that it applies to three completely different concepts. The first is how a person perceives himself/herself; secondly, how the person is perceived by others; and thirdly how the scholars in the divergent fields of identity studies perceive it. He further qualifies this by stating that people perceive themselves differently, due to multiple facets that constitute identity, depending on the relationships they have and the places they occupy as well as the experiences they have. Teachers and other professionals will be given cues by all the people they encounter in their role as a professional teacher. If the context of work changes dramatically, or if expectations change, it is only to be expected that the sense of self will become unstable, fragile or even vulnerable.

Some of the theorists who write about identity, such as Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), qualify this assertion by stating that we do not ever have a fixed identity, due to the chronology of life. It is never stationery and it changes as our minds and our bodies do. We change both physiologically and psychologically. We develop our identities as we go through life, but in times of rapid change we may not keep up with the pace of change that is required. These authors argue that identity ‘movement’ is thus initiated socially, as the individual interacts with people and society at large. Similarly, Palmer (1998) notes that one’s identity is formed by diverse forces that make up one’s life, and these forces impact on how we perceive ourselves, others and the world. Gee (2001:97), who is a scholar of semiotics, argues that “(i)dentify development occurs in an inter-subjective field and can be best interpreting oneself as a certain kind of person being recognised as such in a given context.” Furthermore, he emphasises his argument by stating that people have multiple identities: “The ‘kind of person’ one is recognized as ‘being’, at a given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable” (Gee, 2000:99). I would say that what most authors agree on is that identity is flexible and not rigid or stable and that it is not a psychologically or socially ‘unstable’ person who changes part of her/his identity.
In the workplace it is almost part of the requirements for doing a good job to continually engage in the process of articulating an identity that is consistent with the self and the ever changing social environment. One’s personality will, of course, last through some changes of professional identity and it is important to note that a person’s identity differs from a person’s personality, which appears to be more stable over time, maintaining specific personality traits. The teachers that I studied still have the same personality traits that I came to know when I studied them, but as professionals, after some years, they are not the same people – they have all moved on.

Jenkins (1996) also conceptualises identity as a social product that is at the same time individual, “unique” and the collective “shared. The author argues that each individual has an identity which is personal to them but is shared with people we interact with and through our affiliation to social groups. He sees the individual elements of identity as emphasising difference and the collective identity as showing similarity with others. The idea of being a teacher is at the same time a shared professional identity (with other teachers) and an individual one. He argues that identity is an integral part of social life and that each individual has an identity, which is personal but which is shared with people we interact with and through our affiliation to particular social groups (Jenkins, 2004). In other words, people identify with those people who have similar traits or impact on their personality positively.

Jenkins (1996) to some extent agrees with the ideas of symbolic interactionists, like George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman. He uses Mead’s ideas by arguing that identity is formed in the process of socialisation. As people go through this process they learn to distinguish between social difference and similarities as well as the difference between the self and others. He believes that there are certain identities that become more important and remain relatively stable throughout one’s life. Furthermore, Jenkins explains that these primary identities include selfhood, humanness, gender, and at times, ethnicity and kinship. Jenkins also draws from ideas of another interactionist, Erving Goffman, by arguing that people spend time every day trying to manage the impressions of themselves that others should see. He believes that identities are formed as individuals try to make impressions.
Similarly, Goffman (1969) distinguished between the personal and social identities of individuals.

Craib (1998:4), like Jenkins, argues that identity is “the product of agreement and disagreement and is open to change” – thus also inferring that we negotiate identity – especially, I would say, in the workplace. But he critiques Jenkins for omitting half the picture: that “half” which is internal and goes on “inside” of the bearer of identities. This leaves out the process of internal negotiation. Identity, in the way that Jenkins conceived it, does not account for individual identities. Craib (1998) argues that social identities can come and go but one’s personal identity continues as the one that unites all social identities one ever had, or will have. He posits that identity is fluid.

Identity is a complex phenomenon that has been studied in various ways and on various levels, including the individual and social. Elements of the concept can be studied in isolation. I will briefly focus on the following components as elements of identity: identity as ‘self’, identity as the construction of meaning, the formation of identities, and identity and context.

2.2.1 Identity as ‘self’: Being subjective

Mead’s definition of identity foregrounds the notion of “self,” which, on its own, is an assembly of multiple parts. He refers to these as an “I” and a “me” (Mead, 1934:5). This is shorthand for implying that the subjective self reflects as “I” and the objective self (being acted upon as an object of social interaction) is reflected upon as “me”. Although these terms now appear somewhat simplistic, they do serve some purpose. Thus, hypothetically, according to Mead, if only an “I” operates, then no social relationships will take place whatsoever (Mead, 1934:7). At the same time, if only the “me” operates, then “I” would be a lifeless object. His argument seems to have been that human beings are reflective and symbol-using, struggling to live both as “I” and as “me”. He states that these two selves emerge whenever we say something about ourselves, in other words, together they constitute one’s identity. He muses: “I am a divided, experiencing, and experienced at the same time” (Mead, 1934:7). What is implied by Mead is that the “I” and the “me” are depended on each other, one cannot
separate them from each other, nor focus on “I” or the “me” vice versa. There should be a balance between the personal influence on one’s persona and that of others we interact with around our context.

The notion of the subjective ‘self’ in identity is also discussed by Gee (2000) who says that the concept of self is an organised symbol of our theories, attitudes and belief systems. He argues that identity development takes place in an inter-subjective field and can best be defined as interpreting oneself as a different type of an individual at a given time, and being recognised in a specified context as such by other people who interpret our interaction (and our use of symbols). This indicates the fluidity of identity, in other words we possess different identities as dictated by different context. For example, teachers can be woman or a man; husbands or wives; scholars or student depending on the context in which they find themselves. This supports the notion of self as defined by Mead indicated - the subjective self reflects as “I” and the objective self.

Other scholars like Stout (2001) agree by seeing identity as a definition of the self, saying that it is how individuals want to define themselves through their perception of self, relationship with others, and with bigger groups. This notion agrees with that of Mead and Gee perceptions of self. He also refers to social contexts as the catalyst for shifting identity, because of the coexistence of various self-constructs of identity within the same person, becoming active at various times or in diverse places (Stout, 2001; Kalb, Pansters & Siebers, 2004). On this view I would add that chronology is important and that events in time are markers of identity shifts. Stout (2001) furthermore argues that to understand identity one has to view it as a “collective true self buried beneath layers of superficial and artificial selves, this hidden essential self is the one that has historical continuity…” (Stout, 2001:5). This notion is criticised by Hall (1996:35) who argues that the creation of people is not about unearthing layers until one comes to the original one.

It is a matter of imaginative and creative rediscovery, in which contemporary interpretations and needs fill in the gaps, re-create the past ... Identity is not an accomplished end point of a people’s history, but a constant process of becoming. It
is a never quite complete, but always temporarily positioned within a particular context that needs to be imaginatively and adaptively interpreted Hall (1996:35).

I would say that the ‘layers’ are not additions or masks, but ‘covers’ within which the ‘deep’ self-lives. This is the case with teachers whose identity changes from the time they enter teaching as novice teachers and continues to evolve as they grow and learn more within the teaching profession. Teachers’ professional identity might also be positioned within a particular context, for example, as administrators, heads of departments, or coaches in extra-curricular activities. The next section will clarify how identity is subjective and what makes it subjective.

2.2.2 Identity as construction of meaning from interaction in context

Castells (1997; 2001) takes an interesting view when he argues that identity is a process of constructing meaning by social actors derived from their shared experience and not an individualistic endeavour that can be carried out in isolation. He writes, “Identity for me is the construction of meaning in shared context” (Castells, 2001: 115). This means that identity construction is the individual’s construction, even though there is mention of the ‘social’ actor. Thus, though identity is the construction of an individual and the ‘social’ actor is significant, Castells (ibid) asserts that ‘outside forces’ are the causal factors of identity construction. What is internal is the option of one power over another. Identity is, by its very character, social, even though it refers to the individual.

Castells (1997: 7) defines meaning (towards identity construction) as being “the symbolic identification by the social actor of the purpose of his/her actions”. He continues to argue that this construction of identity is not based on whether identities are constructed in an on-going fashion, but on how they are constructed, by whom they are constructed, for what are they constructed and from what (Castells, 1997: 20). Castells’ (1997) also argues that the construction of identity happens amidst the negotiation of power relations, which unavoidably influence the construction process.

Castells’ (1997) recognises the importance of social connections with regards to the formation of identity between individuals. It also focuses on the importance of people
being active agents in the course of interpretation and development of that identity. He argues that there are two aspects that are essential to consider: 1) the historical development of identities – where the identity becomes a material force and a material source of meaning, when it has been enforced consistently for a long time and is built into people’s bodies and souls, so that it converts into becoming an experience; and 2) that part of the identity which is not embedded in experience and which is not real but fantasy. He also embraces the idea of shared experience, and he emphasised that these must take some time to develop in order to become part of an identity. He also asserts that experiences are inherently embedded in culture and that there is no such thing as an empty cultural space. This suggests that identity is the consequence of the context in which it is constructed. Although I find his writing a bit obtuse at time, I tried to get the some of the gist of his ideas. His reference to ‘fantasy’ I find intriguing, indicating, for me, that he thinks that some part of who we think we are is not connected to everyday reality.

But, regarding the role of context, in the case of the teachers I studied, this suggests that their identities are impacted upon by the culture of the school and how things are done in their classrooms and within the school environment. Their homes, community, country and other elements of the society are a part of undoubtedly influence the identity of these teachers. How then is identity as construction of meaning from interaction in context shape life?

2.2.3 Forming identities as ‘shapes of life’

This section will focus on identity as ‘shapes of life’ from the perspectives of Woodward (2000) who is in agreement with Jenkins, Castells, Mead and Craib but includes agency and structural constraints as shaping identity. Then, this will be followed by Kidd (2002) who conceptualises identity like the above mentioned author but adds three related and subtly different forms of identity and last, Bradley (1996) who sees identity as unequal and rooted in being a member of a group.

An interesting view of identity comes from Woodward (2000) who asks: “to what extent can we shape our own identities?” (Woodward, 2000:1). She identifies three components (following Giddens, 1996) in the process of shaping who we are in life:
1) agency, which refers the degree of control which we ourselves can exert control over who we are; 2) structure, which includes the forces beyond our control which shape our identity; and 3) interpellation, which is (an exclamatory) “process whereby people recognise themselves in a particular identity and think ‘that’s me’” (Woodward, 2000:1). Through interpellation, people are linked to society and this may be conscious or unconscious. This she emphasises by asserting that:

Identity requires some awareness on our part. Personality describes qualities individuals may have, such as being outgoing or shy, internal characteristics, but identity requires some element of choice. We may be characterised by having personality traits, but we have to identify with – that is, actively take up to – an identity. Identity is marked by similarity …of the people like us and by difference, of those who are not (Woodward, 2000:6).

Furthermore, like Jenkins (1996) and Castells (1997:2001) she believes that we categorise others and ourselves through symbols that include languages, gestures, clothes, hair and so on. Woodward (2000:6) argues that “symbols and representations are important in marking the ways in which we share identities with some people and distinguish ourselves as different from others”. Accordingly like Craib, she views identity as being marked by similarities between an individual and the differences between the groups individuals identify with. Woodward also believes that identity combines how people see themselves and how others see them, which are the ideas shared by Mead, Castells, Craib and the other others already discussed. It is partly internal and subjective, but also partly external and dependent on the judgment of others. She argues that “(i)dentities are formed through interaction with people. When people take up different identities there are different processes taking place as people position themselves, and are positioned, in the social world” (Woodward, 2000:1). What Woodward indicates here is the significance of context and others on identity formation. This means that people see themselves differently in different context as dictated by similarity or difference. This indicates the significance of individual agency and structural constraint on identity formation.
Woodward (2000) argues that identity is always formed through the combination of individual agency and structural constraint, highlighting what Giddens (1990) theorised in his structuration theory. She (Woodward) believes that these are limits on the identities we can choose for ourselves. Included in these limits on individual choices are structures of gender, nationality and class. Giddens's theory of structuration asserts that there is more to social life than random individual acts, which are not easily determined by social forces. Instead, Giddens (1990) emphasizes human agency and social structure and believes that both are in a relationship with each other – none is above the other. Human practices are recursive - through their activities, individuals create both their consciousness and the structural conditions that make their activities possible. Giddens (1990) also places emphasis on the fact that agency and structure are mutually constituted and are a duality that cannot be conceived of apart from one another. The implication here is that none of the two should be prioritized over the other; instead they must complement each other. In the context of teachers, it means then that teachers agency is limited by the structural constraints like rules, policy and curriculum changes they find themselves in within their teaching landscapes both internal and external (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The policy which continuously prescribe to teachers what to teach, how to teach and when to teach have the ability to retard their agency.

It is important to mention that Woodward’s theorising maintains a balance between arguing that there are increased choices in the construction of identity, and recognising that there are continuing restrictions or constraints, which limit people’s choices. She also argues that “the concept of identity encompasses some notion of human agency; an idea that we can have some control in constructing our own identities” (Woodward, 2000:8). At the same time she acknowledges that there are structural constraints that continue to prevent some people from adopting the identities they would like to have. She refers to economic circumstances, poverty, racism and changes in employment to name a few. She agrees with Jenkins, Mead, Castells, Hall and others that identities are constructed, but she differs with them on the how this construction occurs. As stated above, I agree with her assertion as
teachers changes in employment conditions and roles constrain their agency as they have to fit into the mould designed by the policymakers.

Woodward’s refers to Goffman’s (1969) dramaturgical approach; an approach that considers the social world as resembling drama, or the performance of a play. Mead’s influence is evident in the indication that an individual’s development involves the ability to imagine how others see him/her. She expounds this by stating that “the ability to visualise and to represent ourselves gives some degree of agency, although the repertoire of images on which we can draw is always limited by the particular culture which we inhibit” (Woodward, 2000:9).

Another author, Kidd (2002), conceptualises identity as a matter of knowing who is who and as a systematic establishment and signification between individuals themselves, amongst collectives, and between individuals and collectives, of similarities and differences. Kidd (2002) makes a distinction between three related but subtly different forms of identity: 1) individual identity, which is social identity created through interaction with others; and the individual identity is a unique sense of personhood held by an individual; 2) social identity, which is defined by sociologists as a collective sense of belonging to a group of individuals identifying themselves as similar to each other, but different from social group; and 3) cultural identity, which entails a sense of belonging to a distinct ethnic or sub-cultural group (Kidd, 2002).

On the other hand, Bradley (1996) addresses another issue, namely the idea of fractured identities, and argues that the modernist and postmodern conceptions of identity are inadequate on their own. She argues that to understand identity one has to pull together classical and modernist approaches to understanding inequalities with newer perspectives inspired by postmodernism and post-structuralism. She sees identity as rooted in membership of a social group. She does this by identifying a number of differences between postmodernism and post-structuralism and sees both as not adequately addressing identity. She examines four aspects of inequality which are class, gender, race and ethnicity and sees them as the most important forms of inequality and sources of identity, and to these she adds sexuality and
disability as other forms of social division. She explains that in practice these inequalities interact with each other although they may be analysed separately and all of them are significant (Bradley, 1996). Although there is no straightforward relationship between these inequalities and identity, their importance varies over time and with individual circumstances. Bradley embraces the post-modernist view that there is a good deal of choice over identities and those identities are to some extent fragmented (Bradley, 1996). She also believes that social factors tend to bring certain identities to the fore and at the same time reduces the importance of others. She believes that identities are grounded in inequalities, social divisions and differences and these are bound to time, place and individuals. Context and chronology are evident in all of the literature that I have included in the discussion thus far.

But Bradley (1996) goes further and identifies three levels of identity: 1) passive identity, which is “potential identity” where the identity lies dormant, 2) active identity, which is a level of identity that individuals are aware of and this provides a base for their actions and includes positive elements for an individual’s self-identification, and 3) the politicised identity, which “occurs where identity offers a more perpetual and stable base for action and where individuals continually think of themselves in terms of an identity (Bradley, 1996). Such identities are formed through political action, through campaigners highlighting the importance of identity and using it as a basis for organising collective action. Bradley’s argument of identity gives a different perspective and adds to the opening arguments of this chapter that identity is formed and characterised by different aspects. The three levels of identity above are in agreement with the argument that identity is not stable. The passive and active identities can be compared to the ‘I’ of the self, whereas the Politicised to the ‘me’ as seen by others.

2.2.4 Context and the shifting of identity

Context has been cited above by a number of authors as a determinant of identity. In some of the texts it was suggested that identities are not forms that exist in isolation, but are embedded in context, which indicates that no space or context is neutral,
identical, the same or passive (Gee, 2001; Sachs, 2001). This means that whatever happens in the context, an identity is located in will have an influence on the articulation of that identity. Most theorists of identity have alluded to the fact that identities are formed differently in different contexts (for instance, Castells, 2000).

No identity can be formed in the same way. A particular context a teacher might be faced with at a given time will have unique effects on the formation of his or her identity. This means that although two teachers may teach in a primary school, their experiences and identities will differ because they may be teaching at two different schools. Even when people teach at the same school, the contextual influence on their identities may vary according to their roles at the school. Their experiences and identities will be affected differently by their shared context because they enact different roles at the school, for example the professional identity of a biology teacher is likely to be different to the identity of an English or music teacher.

Another aspect of Castells (2000) theorising that I find important is that there is no such thing as an ‘empty cultural space’ or context. He argues that context aids us in articulating an identity that is unique, because we all start our experiences and history with some kind of identity. From the very moment we are born we make meaning, which comes from experiences derived from the environment around us. Castells also argues that three types of contexts are critical in identity formation: 1) the cultural context, 2) the social context and 3) the political context. It is these contexts that will determine the particular meanings that we attach to behaviour in a given interaction and situation, and, in turn, these meanings will determine which aspects of our identity(s) we will choose to foreground.

In his study of emotions in teacher identity, Zembylas (2005) perceives identity as being constantly context embedded in contextual power relationships, ideology, politics and culture. Similarly, Stout (2001) says that the different constructs of identity may coexist within the same individual, becoming real at different times or in different contexts, even though he makes no assertion to power relationships, ideology, politics and culture. This means that identity is also transient, and is therefore time and context bound; it depends on how individuals experience their
context at that particular time. One can argue that contexts are permeable and that different contexts may overlap and influence one another as an identity is articulated (Soudien, 2001). Soudien uses the term “discourses” for sites, space or contexts. He argues that these contexts are active and not passive. He refers to these active discourses as, the ‘Official Discourse’: “the product of intense contestation arises out of the struggle for political hegemony...reflects the ‘ideologies, views and perspectives of whichever political group is in power” (Soudien, 2001: 312).

Beijaard et al (2004:113) argue that “Professional identity implies both person and context”. This view is also supported by Schmidt and Datnow (2005) who add that teachers’ identities are entwined with various contexts and collaborative partnerships they encounter as practitioners. Erasmus (2001) sees identities as open and fluid in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Teacher’s identities therefore appear to be forged by multiple contexts and semiotically diverse sets of communication in a culture in the most complex sense of the word (Geerts, 1973). Thus, one could argue that it is not be possible to design interventions (such as the “OBE workshops”) that are generically usable or that can be ‘localised’ when identities of teachers are dynamic, contextually influence and not based on a premise of the individual mind, but lodged in a dialectic of the self and the community.

Furthermore, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) suggested two contexts in which teachers find themselves. The two contexts are described as landscapes, namely; first as “the professional landscape outside classroom which is abstract to teachers….Teachers are required to know, understand, discuss, and do something with the knowledge poured into the landscape via the conduit” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995:10). The second one, is “the teachers’ professional landscape in the classroom: a safe place for secret stories” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995:12). These contexts are represented by the metaphor of a landscape. The landscape is used to describe teachers’ space (school environment), place (classroom) and time. They believe that in these landscapes there are different people, things and activities that influence the teacher’s articulation of a distinct identity (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The contexts are characterised by theory and practice, which creates a ‘dilemma’. “The described situations are dilemmas because neither researchers in their
situation nor teachers in theirs can have it both ways theoretically and practically. Educators of all persuasions, and whatever situated on the imagined continuum joining theoretical and practical activities, are joined to be, at one and the same time, theoretical and practical”. At one end of the imagined continuum, educational researchers and theorists are expected to produce practically useful theoretical knowledge. At the other end of the imagined continuum, teacher practitioners do not merely teach in a way that embodies an expert practical knowledge of teaching but to do so reflectively (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995:6).

The authors refer to Cuban’s (1992) concept of ‘dilemma’ to address two different contexts. Cuban describes dilemmas as situations that are conflicting and that need decisions, because of the lack of satisfaction with competing values, which are not soluble. Educators’ professional environments are precarious and teachers are uncertain of their position with regard to theory and practice, and they have to continuously deal with conflict between theory and practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

2.3 TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

It is difficult to establish a comprehensive definition of teachers’ professional identity. To define teachers’ professional identity I will first focus on different authors who define professional identity. This is followed by a discussion of how teachers form their identities from during their pre-service training and at the height of their careers. The basic focus of this section is how teachers define their career trajectory, and in the process negotiate their identity in the workplace. This is related to teacher agency, the shifting identity of professionals and various aspects that contribute towards the fluidity of teacher identity. These ideas are explored as the preliminary groundwork for a discussion of the effect that curriculum change can have on teachers and their professional identities.

There are a number of researchers that focus on the early professional life of teachers, by how they become professional educators (Britzman; 1991; White & Moss, 2000; Bullough & Gitlin, 2001; Cattley, 2007; Timostsuk & Ugaste 2010). These researchers explore the different aspects that make up the teachers’
professional identity, starting from how professional identity is conceptualised, or the progression from their initial education to experienced teachers. Professional identity can be defined in various ways. Research on teachers’ identity, according to Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), can be divided into three categories: studies in which the focus was on teachers’ professional identity formation, studies in which the focus was on the identification of characteristics of teachers’ professional identity and studies in which professional identity was (re)presented by teachers’ stories. These authors concluded that professional identity is a continuous and on-going process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences and it corresponds with teacher development, which is continuous, and entails lifelong learning.

I have already discussed the idea that the identity of an individual is not “a fixed” attribute of that person, but a relational phenomenon (Beijaard et al 2004; Lasky, 2005). It is also negotiated, shifting and ambiguous, the result of culturally available meaning and the open-ended power-laden enactment of those meanings in everyday situations (Sachs, 1999; Kondo, 1990; Melluci, 1996). It would seem that professional identity can go by that definition as well. According to Beijaard et al (2004:108), “in some studies, the concept of professional identity was related to teachers’ concepts or images of self. In other studies of professional identity, the emphasis was placed on teacher roles.” The images or concepts of “self” determine teachers’ teaching philosophy, development and how they perceive educational changes.

According to Beijaard et al (2004), the term ‘professional identity’ is also used in varied ways in the field of teaching and teacher education. They explain that there are studies which consider professional identity as being related to teachers’ concepts- or images of self (see Knowles, 1992 and Nias, 1989), drawing on teachers’ roles. They refer to the work of Goodson and Coole (1994), as well as Volkmann and Anderson (1998) in this regard. “Most of the teachers experience identity as a constant course of incorporation of the ‘personal’ and the professional side of becoming and being a teacher for example” (Beijaard et al., 2004:108). In other words, teachers’ personality and profession cannot be separated in the formation of their professional identities. Teachers’ characteristics, beliefs,
relationships, family and other aspects of life will have an influence on their professional identity and their professional side will impact on the personal issues. Teachers construct their identity by drawing from who they are as people and as professionals.

Furthermore, professional identity may consist of many sub-identities that may conflict or align with each other (Miller, 1999). According to Miller (1999), it is better to recognise in the definition of identity that a plurality of sub-identities exists. To give expression to this Miller used the metaphor of “ourselves as a chorus of voices, not just as tenor or soprano soloist” (Miller, 1999:8). Gee and Crawford (1998) state that we take on different identities, depending upon the social setting, yet there are relationships between these identities. It can be argued that the better the relationships between the different identities, the better the chorus of voices sounds. This is specifically pertinent of one thinks of a teacher’s daily life in which she has to switch roles from instructor to counsellor, to assessor, to care-giver.

I agree with Melucci (1996) who argues that teachers inhabit multiple professional identities. Accordingly, clashes may occur between the defined identity of teachers as projected by past education systems, political beliefs, personal factors and needs (Melluci, 1996). This view is also held by Jansen (2003), who says that teacher identities could be defined as the way teachers perceive themselves in their work professionally, emotionally and politically, depending on their working conditions. Jansen (2003) argues that “professional identity is not a stable entity...it is a complex and dynamic equilibrium of professional self-image which is constituted by different roles teachers have to play”. These roles depend on their belief systems, environments and how they experience the world.

According to Furlong, Barton, Miles and Whitty (2000:5), “Teachers’ professional identities are rich and complex because they are produced in a rich and complex set of ‘relations of practice”. They claim that there are three concepts that are central to the idea of traditional professionalism, which would expand to the construction of teachers’ identities: knowledge, independence and responsibility. Indeed, central to the epistemology of early teacher education is the fact that as professionals, they
need to cultivate these attributes. Furthermore, Furlong et al. (2000:5) argue that “teachers’ identities are intertwined with various contexts and collaborative partnerships they encounter as practitioners. While their primary engagement may be with a specific enterprise, they are constantly challenged to unpack how this configures within a broader scheme of things.”

The discussion thus far suggests that although the researchers vary in their conceptualisation of the professional identity of teachers, there are significant common and overlapping components that constitute teachers’ identity.

2.3.1 About being someone professionally

Professionalism is difficult to define because the term is used in different ways; varying from context to context and this also applies to teachers’ professionalism. The professional identity of teachers is an elusive, ambiguous and difficult concept that is viewed in a variety of ways (Hargreaves, 2000; Sachs, 2003; Day and Flores, 2005; Demirkasımoglu, 2010). These researchers borrowing from Hargreaves (2000), Helsby (2000) and Flores (2005) argue:

Professionalism is a dynamic and contextual construct, and therefore, it is subject to different, and sometimes competing, interpretations, analyses and ‘voices’. It reflects the ways in which the teachers’ role is understood on a broader and political level and the kinds of competencies expected from them, but it also reflects how teachers see their work and themselves as professionals.

Some of the researchers I have encountered in my reading focus on a wider spectrum of professionalism, from the external factors of the school as a whole to the classroom context. This includes the interaction within the teachers’ environment – with colleagues and the employer (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Demirkasımoglu (2010) distinguishes between two versions of teacher professionalism which are relatively different from each other, namely the “old professionalism” and “new professionalism” that emerged from scholarly debates, both of which invoke the employer. Hargreaves (2000), on the other hand, conceptualizes teacher
professionalism in four stages. He sees the development of teacher professionalism as passing through three historical phases in many countries. The key features of these phases could be summarized as follows:

1. The pre-professional age: In this age, teaching was managerially demanding but technically simple so the teachers were only expected to carry out the directives of their knowledgeable superiors.

2. The age of autonomous professional: This age was marked by a challenge to the singularity of teaching and the unquestioned traditions on which it is based. “Autonomy” was considered as an important component of the teaching profession. The principle that teachers had the right to choose the methods they thought best for their students was not questioned. Also, the teachers gained a considerable pedagogical freedom.

3. The age of collegial in the profession: This age draws attention with the increasing efforts to create strong professional cultures of collaboration to develop common purpose, to cope with uncertainty and complexity and to respond the rapid changes and reforms effect (Demirkasımoglu, 2010: 3).

This approach indicates how teachers’ professional identity is conceptualized from different sources. I will not discuss this approach further but mention it to show how teacher professionalism (code of conduct) is linked to teacher professional identity. It also has elements that influence the development of teachers’ professional identity from the initial training to later in their teaching profession as they negotiate becoming teachers.

The process of becoming a teacher is seen by most authors as a dynamic and long lasting phenomenon, which is in contrast to the view of a teacher being a contingent phenomenon (Franzak, 2002). If becoming a teacher is on-going and dynamic, I argue then that it implies that teachers’ experiences add to the development of their professional identity when they become experienced teachers. Experience defines identity, or is important in defining it. The implication here is that the identity of teachers is articulated before they start teaching at a school, and is characterized by a complex, multi-dimensional process that starts before and when they prepare to
enter the profession; it is developed in the process of training as teachers (Flores & Day, 2006) and it continues throughout the duration of their career.

To become professionals, pre service teachers should be equipped both pedagogically and with adequate content knowledge that will help them with specialisation in a particular subject. They should develop a strong professional identity that filters through their teaching styles and that ‘adequately’ prepares them for the school and classroom context (Turnbull & Kervin, 2007). This idea concurs with Timostsuk and Ugaste’s (2010:1563) explanation that teachers “considered that initial training was an important time for students to begin to create a solid teacher identity that would support and sustain them in their future profession”. They argue that initial teacher education has an impact on the student teachers’ professional identity and prepares them for the challenges ahead (Timostsuk & Ugaste, 2010).

Authors agree that a professional identity begins to form before professional practice actually begins (Turnbull & Kervin, 2007; Bullough, 2005). Teachers develop their professional identity by having experience in a real classroom during their pre service period so that they can see themselves reflected in classroom activity. The pre-service teachers have to be supervised by a mentor and be afforded an opportunity to experience the ‘real situation’ to make a link between teacher education and the school as workplace. They can learn to become part of the school community so that they can develop professional collegial relationship with fellow teachers in a non-threating environment to allow their identities to begin developing.

This view is shared by Korthagen (2004), who explains the development of a professional identity. Korthagen (2004) uses the image of the ‘onion model’ to show how teachers function. He describes six levels of change during the initial teacher education. These levels vary in layers, from lower to more in-depth layers of change. The six levels are labelled the environment, behaviour, change in competences, beliefs, and missions. Korthagen (2004) proposes that the first layer consists of the environment and behaviour – which are aspects that can be directly observed by others, made up of the classroom, the students, the school and the employer. Those who enter the profession, for example new teachers, usually focus on the problems
in their classrooms and how to address them. These are also the peripheral stratification of change that takes place in them. The first two are followed by deeper layers of change, which are change in competence and beliefs. Competencies are “the integrated body of knowledge, skills and attitudes… (that) represent a potential for behavior, and not the behavior itself” Korthagen (2004: 80). Knowledge of subject matter influences the level of behavior.

The third level, involves belief and how this may have an impact on the teacher’s competencies. Korthagen argues that teacher behavior is dependent on whether the competency is put into practice or not and that belief about teaching and learning will come into play. Korthagen (2004) furthermore argues that usually teachers have developed their identity as teachers by what they had experienced when they were still at school and exposed to teachers for more than a decade. Their ‘old’ beliefs usually prevail and so teachers usually teach as they were taught by their former teachers. The next level has to do with how teachers think about education and has its roots on the stories they tell their colleagues and themselves, their narratives. This level is about how people define themselves, that is, how they narrate their self though their own professional story. In discussing this level Korthagen (2004) argues for the following humanistic-based questions: “who am I? What kind of a teacher do I want be?”, and “how do I see my role as a teacher”? On this level the aspect self-concept is foregrounded. He argues that although self-concept is important to the development of a professional identity at this stage, it is usually resistant to change. For example, it is difficult for experienced teachers to help the new teachers who have negative self-concepts to think positively about themselves no matter the situation.

The sixth level of understanding teacher identity in Korthagen’s model is the spirituality level, which he also refers to as the ‘mission level’ because it is concerned with highly personal questions as to what end the teacher wants to do his or her work, or even what he or she sees as his or her personal calling in the world. In short, the question of what it is deep inside us that moves us to do what we do Korthagen (2004:85).
It has to do with making meaning of our presence within a larger whole, and the role we can take within that context. It is concerned with giving meaning to one's personal existence, and asks the question, "why do I exist (as a teacher) and what do I aspire for"? It shows the interconnectedness of a person with a larger group, like teachers having the feeling of self-worth on children and how they, the teachers, are part of this bigger whole along with other teachers. He further argues that people are unaware of this level because but a sense of it surfaces when an individual needs the support of a larger group. The last two layers of change are more in-depth layers of professional identity and missions. These two layers of change are fundamental and central to teachers’ personality (Korthagen, 2004). These layers show the complexity of the development of becoming a teacher and how teachers become someone professionally during their training and within the school context. To become someone professionally within the school context new teachers face varying experiences (Leserth, 2013).

The six layers also show the aspects that affect teachers during their years of teaching. Pre service teachers usually experience tension in the first few years of teaching as they negotiate their professionalism in their schools. As they move to the school environment new teachers found themselves facing different challenges, ranging from anxiety of whether they will be able to put into practice what they learnt, feelings of isolation, lack of confidence and despondency with the content learnt from teacher education as students. Some of the teachers experience lack of support, problems of classroom management Flores and Day (2006), sense of frustration and feelings of ineffectiveness and defeat (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006; Hargreaves, 2005).

Bullough and Gitlin (2001) add to the argument about shifting identity: education changes within teachers’ context and reshape their work intensely. These authors studied the tensions produced by new education policies and which resulted in teachers losing a secure sense of self. They argue that the tension between what a particular context demands of teachers and of who they are or want to become resulted in teachers’ confusion and loss of their identity. “Can I be who I am in the classroom?” (Bullough & Gitlin, 2001:45). Consequently they answer the question
by stating that it is important for teachers to know who they are and where they stand - making ‘self’ central to teachers’ pre-service to teacher education. ‘Self’, according to Bullough & Gitlin, (2001) means that who one is as a person in everyday life has a great influence on what one will or will not learn in teacher education. They also believe that who one is, and what one learns in teacher education shapes what one will be as a teacher, what and how one will teach, and how one will respond to the changing context of teaching (Bullough & Gitlin, 2001). By the time a teacher is employed in a school he or she may have a firm sense of self-worth. But radical educational change may make it hard to retain a strong sense of self.

Flores and Day (2006) conducted a study for two years in which they followed 14 new teachers to see how they negotiate their professional identity in their schools, and they found that these teachers shaped and reshaped their professional identities as they went along in their work. These teachers integrated their prior experiences as pupils; as a result their identities had been strongly embedded (Flores & Day, 2006) in their personally situated identities (Leserth, 2013) at the beginning of their career. But these destabilized as they grew in their work place, due to negative school contexts and the school cultures in which they worked. They found that new teachers adopted new ways of teaching styles they observed within the school from the experienced teachers and that they used these styles to construct their identities (Flores & Day, 2006), thus adding to their toolkit of the self, but also perhaps transplanting activities that were foreign to them, thus adding to their sense of alienation. As they grew and developed within different schools, the new teachers lost much of the ‘good and best’ things they had initially believed in. The conclusion that was drawn from the study was that, along with the impact of the school as workplace, there is a link between personal histories and contextual influences in the school. Teachers who were mentored and worked in collaborative school cultures and home cultures were more likely to show positive responses. “…the key role of personal biography in mediating the making sense of teachers’ practices and their beliefs about themselves as teachers and in reshaping their teacher identity- also emerges from the data” (Flores & Day, 2006:230).
The context of the school played a role in shaping and reshaping their understanding of teaching and (re)construction and deconstruction their professional identities (Flores & Day, 2006). They conclude that the pre-service teacher education had a “weak impact on the way in which new teachers approached teaching and viewed themselves as teachers (Flores & Day, 2006:224)”. But, as Beauchamp and Thomas (2006) argue, the development of a professional identity takes place over a period of time and must begin before the actual practice.

![Diagram](https://example.com/diagram)

**FIGURE 2.1: FLORES AND DAY’S (2006), KEY MEDIATING INFLUENCES ON THE FORMATION OF TEACHER IDENTITY**

Hargreaves’s (2005) study confirms some of the findings of Flores and Day (2006). His research with teachers of different ages found that young teachers were enthusiastic and optimistic during their early career. These young teachers had learnt survival adaptation skills to cope with the pressures that come with their occupational and social environment characterized by rising insecurity. Later on, these young teachers experience the deterioration and wearing off of experiences. Furthermore, as they progressed to negotiate their professional identity, in their middle years, instead they retain and bring back some of their enthusiasm, they
develop confidence, competence and feel established to remain open to changes they adopt (Hargreaves, 2005). In the same way Clandinin and Connelly (1995) argue that teachers are characters of their own stories of teaching, which they personally authored within the school walls even when the bureaucratic institutions governed by rules and regulations restrict them. They argue that teachers have no control over these structures and institutions which impact on their identity construction through constantly shaping of their lives, although they do author their stories in these structures. The implication here is that teachers are responsible for charting their professional identity and conceptualising the meaning of teaching as informed by their experiences at a particular time and space. In South Africa, teachers of different ages have different experiences which influence their interpretations of what takes place in teaching and it is also based on their pre-service experiences and other aspects like context.

Accordingly, becoming a professional is also an experience in which emotions play an important role. Van Veen et al. (2005) argue that emotional experiences in the workplace have an impact on teachers’ decisions to embrace or reject changes. When the teachers move from pre-service teacher education to the actual teaching environment they are usually overwhelmed by the shock of entering the workplace when they are in a class and have to be with children for the whole day, knowing that they are responsible for the children’s wellbeing and their learning can be intimidating to new teachers. They begin to perceive themselves no longer as student but as practitioners, and as adult teachers who have a big responsibility (Sleegers et al., 2005; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006; Leserth, 2013).

Another important aspect highlighted by researchers such as Cattley (2007), Schmidt and Datnow (2005) is the issue of agency in the workplace and how that may be a factor to consider in the teachers’s emotional wellbeing. This is particularly important when considering how a sense of professional self develops from a pre-service position onwards. Cattley (2007) sees agency as a significant aspect of professional identity, making teachers active participants in the course of their professional development. But, if there are many systemic changes in the first years
of practice this may be an especially difficult time for teachers. Britzman (1991:8) argues:

Learning to teach is not a mere matter of applying decontextualized skills or of mirroring predetermined images; it is a time when one’s past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension. Learning to teach - like teaching itself- is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become.

Teachers expect their pre service identity to be recognised by the schools and policy makers. They expect the manner in which they were trained to be compatible with the context they are entering, and any conflict will result in vulnerability. However, if there is a new education policy that expects a teacher to conform to new rules and practices it is hard to adjust form a previous concept of teacher to one directed by a new policy. To become someone in the workplace means then also to become someone in a new policy that is being implemented.

2.3.2 Becoming someone in the workplace

This is a stage of becoming a teacher by learning in and from practice. I refer to this stage as ‘the actualisation stage’, wherein what teachers have learnt in their pre-service training has to be put into practice. Teachers bring their teacher education knowledge, self-knowledge, beliefs and expectations into this more practical context. Featherstone (1993) sees self-knowledge as the first output or production of their early teaching experience, wherein teachers battle to adapt, understand and adjust the self. The implication of production, adaptation and adjustment denotes agency in the sense that teachers have to be active in the development of their professional identity. Featherstone (1993) also emphasize the element of agency in the workplace by arguing that teachers’ complex and personal learning must be encouraged. She argues that new teachers find it difficult intellectually and emotionally as they learn about themselves as teachers.

The transition from being pre-service teachers to young practitioners can be demanding as they discover new elements to be articulated in their ever developing
professional identity. They are essentially negotiating a different context and are forced to reconcile the novelty of the teaching context with their pre-defined notion of teaching and being a teacher. Featherstone argues for considering a component on teachers’ personal development in teacher training courses (Featherstone, 1993). I argue that the development of a professional identity seems to be paramount in the transition from pre-service teacher to a becoming an experienced teacher. This is supported by Flores and Day (2006:220) who define the professional development as “an on-going and dynamic process which entails the making sense and (re)interpretation of one’s own values and experiences”.

Miller Marsh (2002:454) suggests that pedagogical choices of teachers are usually formed by their identity, “which is shaped by both a child-centred discourse and a socio-cultural discourse”. Her assertion involves the process of social negotiation shaped by individual teachers’ experiences as a student. She further asserts that there are various discourses that define what it means to be a particular type of teacher, and these discourses are rooted in the social, cultural, historical, and political context in which schools are situated (Miller Marsh, 2002:460). Miller Marsh (2002:467) continues to state that “[h]elping teachers to make visible the power in the discourses they use and illustrating to them that they can make some choices about their own identities and the social identities of the children in their care is one way to work towards social transformation”.

According to Barty (2004), the “construction of teachers’ identity is influenced by many factors, from individual experience and teacher training, to socio-cultural discourses relating to nationalism”. She shares Jansen’s views that, though the ministries of education can regulate and control curriculum documents and resources, each teacher, as an individual being will bring a unique set of life experiences to his or her classroom. These individual distinctions influence the philosophical beliefs that teachers hold on to and ultimately the pedagogical approaches used in the classroom.

To indicate the complexity of the new context in identity negotiation, Beauchamp and Thomas (2006) employ imagination and reflection literature to encourage teachers to
actively become conscious of their emerging identities in the new environment by tapping into their teacher education programme. They argue that although programmes of teacher education are designed to help pre-service teachers to develop expertise and competence in the school and classroom, the movement from the pre-service environment to the actual school environment can frustrate them “leading to a sense of ineffectiveness and defeat” (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006:2).

They attribute this to the gap between what teachers learn during pre-service training and what happens in the actual teaching practice in schools. They argue for a link between the transitions from teacher education to the real school situation. Furthermore, they found that programmes from teacher education, which are structural and lack agency, do not adequately prepare student teachers for the realities of the initial teaching period and as a result inhibit their activities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006). Accordingly new teachers feel frustrated and challenged in their early years of teaching because they find it difficult to put into practice what they learnt in the complex context of school which is influential both to their practice and professional identity. I maintain that if initial teacher education programmes are not linked and aligned with the real school context of teachers, they can contribute towards inhibition of development and growth of teachers’ professional identity.

Furthermore, Hargreaves (2005) argues that new teachers try to find their footing in the first years of their teaching. In other words, they try to make sense of the factors that construct their professional identity (Barty, 2004). Teachers try to find their feet as people in the teaching field and try “to establish their basic confidence and competence as professionals. Can they manage large groups of students? Will the children like them? Do they have the respect of their colleagues?” (Hargreaves, 2005:970). New teachers also struggle with a transition from being children to being responsible and assertive adults in a school environment. This implies that teachers bring both their teacher education and personal experiences whether good or bad. These experiences will frame their professional identity and influence their teaching trajectory either positively or negatively depending on the context of the school. The factors may include learners, colleagues, employers and many more. Usually, what
is found pertinent to the profession, especially in light of the many educational reforms currently taking place, may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good. Such a conflict can lead to resistance in teachers' professional identity in cases in which the ‘personal and the professional’ are too detached from each other (Reynolds, 1996; Bullough & Gitlin, 2001; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2006). I argue that ignorance of the trajectory of teachers in planning for reforms will lead to displacement of their professional identity as teachers will lose their sense of being. Policy makers need to approach systemic change more sensitively if they want to avoid destabilising established professional identities.

Reynolds (1996) emphasises that what surrounds a person, what others expect from the person, and what the person allows to impact on him or her, greatly affects his or her identity as a teacher. She noted that a teacher’s workplace is a landscape which can be very persuasive, very demanding, and in most cases, very restrictive. The emphasis should not be on the personal only, but also on the contextual side that plays an important part in the construction of professional identity. Teachers’ landscapes are linked and connected to teachers’ identities by cultural scripts which structure their thoughts and actions. The inference here is that, policy makers should endeavour to harmonise the teachers’ personal and professional identity by prioritising their needs and context.

Similarly, Gibson (1995:127) carried out a study on eight developing social science teachers. She concluded that “teachers identity is strongly influenced by our prior conception of teachers, and that most emerging teachers had formed some ideas about the nature of social studies and pedagogy well before they began their formal teacher training” (Gibson, 1995:127). Despite the influence of their experience as students in social studies classes, most participants agreed that extended teaching experience during teacher training was beneficial in helping them shape (or re-shape) their professional identities. Again, this shows the need for acknowledging the prior learning teachers bring to school, including what they gained during their teacher education training, to enhance the development of a healthy professional identity.
Becoming someone in the workplace is a critical point of the teachers’ career trajectory and requires agency and active participation. Teachers need to feel the sense of worth in order to grow and to realize their potential. Reforms that neglect or overlook this aspect will be treated with suspect by teachers who fear the loss of what they know as their professional identity. Necessary support structures have to be availed to help teachers and to encourage the growth and develop in their career.

2.3.3 Growing in the workplace and in society

Teachers are usually not passive in the process of identity articulation. They are active agents who act towards becoming someone in the work place. This issue of agency in the workplace is also highlighted by Schmidt and Datnow (2005) who argues that teachers become active agents in making sense of educational reforms. Drawing from the sociological theory of symbolic interactionism they developed the overarching belief that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning they derive from them. In other words, teachers do not only become active agents in their professional development, but they must also be active agents interpreting and making sense of the reforms in the school and classroom. This part of professional identity creation is in line with a constructivist view of meaning making and symbolic interactionism - as teachers make meaning individually as well as in cooperation with others. Again, Coldron and Smith (1999) argue that professional identity is not something teachers have, but something they utilise so as to make sense of themselves as teachers.

Timosutsuk & Ugaste (2010:1563) drawing from Rogers and Scott (2008) and Bullough & Giltin (2001) see the “development of teacher identity as a continuous learning process where not only behaviour, but also the creation of related meaning and social context in a wider perspective should be a focus”. In other words, teachers’ have to be afforded the space to grow. The programme created within the school must encourage the continuous learning process. This implies then that the education policies should inform how teachers see themselves. Moore et al (2002) and Grosvenor & Lawn (2001) are among the scholars who suggest that education policies have been used to determine, manipulate, and indirectly enforce predefined
notions of teacher professional identity. This has resulted in influencing curriculum delivery and teaching as a whole. In their investigation on the links between national education policy and teacher identity in the twentieth century, Grosvenor and Lawn (2001) found that, one cannot separate national identity and teaching.

2.3.4 About being and becoming a teacher in (the new) South Africa

South Africa, like the rest of the world has gone through a process of educational reform and transformation. The reform and transformation that began in our country in 1994 has placed challenging demands and expectations on our teachers: “The areas of identity orientation…and professional identity are impacted upon by the growing diversity and rate of change in our educational environment” (Stout, 2001:2). This transformation had an impact on the education system as a whole and has affected the role of teachers. The education system is being transformed in order to redress the past imbalances and injustices, to ensure equal education for all South African citizens. The new policies and a new curriculum (Outcomes-Based Education) were introduced as a means of ensuring quality and socio-economic growth in our country. The School Act of 1996 and other policies mentioned in chapter one section 1.1 and 1.5 changed operations and routine of teachers and replaced them with new roles and competences (Mattson & Harley, 2003).

As previously mentioned, Jansen (2003) argues that teachers were mainly bureaucratic and had to adhere to and comply with what the policy required them to do. Education was mostly teacher-centred and teachers were primarily responsible for the learning that took place. OBE changed this teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach. This means that learners have to take more responsibility for their own learning. Learning and competence took precedence over content (Department of Education, 2000a).

Teachers were faced with the task of having to accelerate the adaptation of their identities, in their everyday practice, to the one required by the policy with limited resources and support structures, such as in-service training (Jansen, 2003). As all of these are new to the teachers, they find themselves having to change their professional identity and what they believe teaching to entail. Jansen (2003) argues
that teachers slowly moved back from centre stage of control “into an invisible position on the margins of the classroom, facilitating a learning process in which young minds took charge of their own learning, design their own opportunities, and occupied the centre of what was to become ‘a learner-centred classroom’”. Teachers were to withdraw from teaching, and move from the comforts offered by subject competence and textbooks to learner-centred learning. The new policy failed to take into consideration the teachers’ legacy of how they perceived themselves, and how the apartheid education system framed their identity.

In the OBE context, educators were required to assume the following roles (Department of Education, 2000b):

- Learning mediator
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials
- Leader, administrator and manager
- Community, citizenship and pastoral role
- Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner
- Assessor
- Learning area, subject, and discipline and phase specialist.

Jansen (2003) states that these roles portrayed teachers as puppets and the department of education as the puppet master. The role of being learning mediators required a drastic shift from putting knowledge into learners’ minds, to assisting learners to construct knowledge themselves. The implication is that teachers needed to develop personal life-skills, work-skills, and a critical, ethical and committed political attitude (Department of Education, 1996). Furthermore, OBE demanded that teachers change and adapt their teaching methods, their perception of the learner and their view of learning (Jansen 2003).
According to Mattson and Harley (2003) teachers mimic change and the seven roles imposed on them. This means teachers pretend to be competent while facing serious challenges. Whereas policy portrays teachers as extended professionals with well-developed reflexive competencies, empirical findings show the opposite to be true as teachers demonstrate a restricted view of professionalism and lack some skills in the reflexive competences required to implement OBE (Mattson & Harley, 2003). Soudien (2001) argues that the curriculum changes and education reform that took place in South Africa had serious and many and wide implications for teachers especially that the policy implementation regional and the impact thereof is different for these province.

2.3.5 Educational reform at a price: vulnerable self in the workplace

This section will focus on how policy makers and reformists have ignored the emotional consequences of reform and left teachers vulnerable in the workplace. I will discuss this by presenting views from different scholars who conducted studies on the emotions of teachers. There are different studies conducted in relation to teachers and educational reforms, each with a different focus, theoretical stance and findings. Most of them show a common phenomenon that teachers’ professional identities are affected during the time of reform, either positively or negatively, for example, Schmidt and Datnow (2005), van Veen et al. (2005), Hargreaves (2001), Day, Kingston, Stobart and Sammons (2006) and Lee and Yin (2011) to name a few. This view is supported by Reio (2005) who argues that it is misguided to assume people will experience reforms and its accompanying changes in the same way, as age, career stage and generation might serve as determinants (Hargreaves, 2005), to show enthusiasm or to be resistant. Furthermore, there is little research on specifically education reform, identity formation and vulnerability. Most research has focused on the relations between identity, reforms, emotions and context. Recently, only three studies on teacher professional identity, addresses the education reform and vulnerability, especially how teachers become vulnerable during the time of educational reform.

The first by Lasky (2005:901) defines vulnerability as:
a multidimensional, multifaceted emotional experience that individuals can feel in an array of contexts. It is a fluid state of being that can be influenced by the way people perceive their present situation as it interacts with their identity, beliefs, values, and sense of competence. It is a fluctuating state of being with critical incidents acting as triggers to intensify or in other ways change a person’s existing state of vulnerability.

Her definition of vulnerability includes emotions which are understood as being a biological and social construction (Lasky, 2005). Lasky (2005: 899) examined the “dynamic interplay among teacher identity, agency and context”. She studied Ontario teachers who shows how educational reform impact on teachers’ professional identity, “teacher agency, and teachers’ willingness to be professionally vulnerable” (Reio, 2005:986). Lasky (2005:901) sees vulnerability as occurring in two spheres namely open/willing- which happens when teachers feel safe, trust, want to love and show compassion and to build a relationship. Teachers open themselves willingly to the possibility of embarrassment, to loss of identity, or emotional pain for the benefit of the learner. The teachers expose themselves to risk irrespective of the consequences and negative stress, whether they lose face; teachers feel safe in their environment to take the risk feelings of powerlessness, betrayal, or defencelessness’ in situations of high anxiety or fear (Lasky, 2005). The other type of vulnerability she referred to as inefficacious vulnerability – a phenomenon that arises when teachers withdraw, are not willing to take risk, are fearful, despondent, feel defenceless or see no value in taking such a risk, or close themselves off in a protective stance. They actually inhibit learning and trust building between them in the learners.

Secondly, the study conducted by Kelchtermans (2005) focused on teachers' self-understanding and biography and teachers' working conditions and investigated the micro political dimensions of the lives of teachers. Kelchtermans (2005) argues that “teacher’ emotions have to be understood in relation to the vulnerability that constitutes a structural condition of the teaching job” (Kelchtermans, 2005:995). Instead of employing the term ‘identity’ Kelchtermans (2005) preferred using self-understanding that encompasses how teachers perceive themselves. He argues that
vulnerability cannot be an emotion but should be conceptualised as the “structural condition teachers…find themselves in” (Kelchtermans, 2005:998). The structural conditions can be rules and regulations set for teacher to follow. It can also be the policies and curriculum to be implemented by teachers. Instead of teachers being allowed space to practice their skills the structural conditions can actually dictate the directions to be followed. He argues that teachers’ conditions of service inhibit their agency and practice because they do not have control of the situation. Although he agrees with Lasky (2005) on the relevancy use of mediated agency in making sense of the experience of vulnerability, he disagrees with her on conceiving vulnerability as an emotion. He argues that Lasky’s epistemological stance remains unclear and her definition of vulnerability “is tasted as a claim without much argument, nor any positioning in relation to other theoretical attempts to conceptualise emotions or emotional experiences” (Kelchtermans, 2005:998). On the other hand he supports Hargreaves (2005) conceptualisation of vulnerability.

Hargreaves (2005) also studied teacher vulnerability in times of reform and he takes into consideration the significance of vulnerability and risk-taking in the context of reform of Canadian teachers he studied. He acknowledges that although teachers were faced by educational changes, they failed to express their vulnerability such as frustration, fear happiness or anger. He attributes their failure to express their genuine emotions to fear of being ridiculed as behaving unprofessionally. Furthermore, he found that there was a contrast and difference in how the 42 teachers he researched responded to reforms; experienced teachers who were 20 years or more were not willing to adapt neither to change nor to embrace it, but those with less than six years welcomed changes and were enthusiastic to embrace it. He asserts that the resistance to change and unwillingness to take risk might be due to fear of losing their experiences (beliefs) and the unpleasant experiences with past reforms they had to endure. Most of these teachers did not want to embrace new skills. All three research studies use emotions and/or vulnerability to describe teachers’ reactions to reforms even though there are epistemological differences amongst them. Given the three conceptions of vulnerability, I will employ all of them to discuss teachers’ vulnerable self in the workplace.
Keltner and Ekman (2000:163) cited in van Veen et al. (2005:919), define emotions as “brief, rapid responses involving physiological, experimental, and behavioural activity that help humans respond to survival-related problems and opportunities. Emotions are briefer and have more specific causes than moods”. Similarly, Lasky (2005) conceptualises emotions borrowing, from Denzin (1984), as “heightened state of being that changes as individuals interact with their immediate context, other individuals, and while reflecting on past or future events (Denzin, 1984). Emotions are partially biological and mostly embedded social construction accordingly and as experiences of emotion are entrenched in belief, context, power, and culture (Lasky, 2000 &2005). Hargreaves (2001:103) adds that emotions are interpersonal and rational and these kinds of emotions are embedded in “people’s actual, remembered and imagined interactions with others”. All the definitions present teacher professional vulnerability as being contextual, and as an emotional experience (Darby, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Reio, 2005). One can argue that education reforms elicit teachers’ emotion irrespective of their standing. As a result, teachers interpret and experience reforms differently based on their prior practice and professional identity, and thus have diverse emotions.

The other argument is that emotions reflect the deeply held beliefs of teachers with regard to good and bad education. According to Kelchtermans (2005), the reform agendas are inclined to impose different normative beliefs that clash with those of teachers and consequently change the meaning of good professional performance as understood by teachers (Kelchtermans 2005). He contends for balance between teacher action (agency) and structure to bring acceptance of change by teachers. Furthermore, his argument is based on the bases that teachers want to experience congruence between their own professional orientations (prior standing) and the newly introduced educational reform so that they can react to changes more positively. If there is incongruence between their past experiences (orientations) and the reforms, teachers will react more negatively by opting for ‘self-preservation’ (van Veen and Sleegers, 2006).

Lee and Yin (2011), maintain that large scale educational reforms forms one of the significant situational factors that impact and influences teachers’ professional
identity construction and transformation. They argue that during educational reforms the following external and internal factors affect teachers’ professional identity “policy requirements, features of school organization, and teachers internal and personal experiences including their emotions as well as their beliefs, values and biographies” (Lee & Yin, 2011:27). Schmidt and Datnow (2005) writes that teachers will try to make sense of reforms in terms of their own prior practice, beliefs and based on the mentioned elements – for example, their pre service training - and what is comfortable and satisfying for them. They expect most, if not every new thing to fit within this prior practice and existing framework, at times resulting in them missing important aspects of the reform (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002).

Furthermore, Lasky’s (2005) study showed that there are two meditational elements that shape teachers ‘professional identity and feelings of professional vulnerability-these are their early prior influences on their identity and new education reforms within their context, which have to be considered during transformation. This means that teachers use their former learning as framework for any new educational aspect, and anything that does not fit into the teacher’s existing framework will result in conflict and consequently negative emotions. Schmidt and Datnow (2005:961) who found that “when teachers’ work is characterized by conflict, change and ambiguity, intense and negative emotional reactions can result”. Additionally, Lee and Yin (2011) and van Veen et al. (2005) concur by stating that policymakers and school change experts view teachers as the most important variable of educational change. They play a pivotal role in ensuring that the educational reforms are implemented at school level. Ironically, although they are viewed as the cornerstone and foundation of educational change, little is done to take their emotions into consideration when educational reforms are being conceived or implemented. Consequently, conflict and negative emotions are caused by ignoring and marginalizing voices, views and feelings when implementing educational reforms (Lee & Yin, 2011). Accordingly, I assert that in doing so, policymakers and reformist miss what is core to teachers during practice and what constitutes their individual professional identity. What teachers bring from the pre service training and how they teach forms part of their professional identity. I also argue that ignoring and marginalising teachers is actually
destroying their belief systems of what teaching is all about and leaves them frustrated and vulnerable.

As said above, educational reforms contain many human elements such as relationships between people and social interactions characterised by losses brought about by reforms. Emotions cannot be excluded when dealing with teacher identity or reform, because they form one part of the obligation that teachers transfer to the change process and thus expect them to be part of the changes. Sadly, Schmidt and Datnow (2005) and Hargreaves (2001) found that little is done in the area of teacher emotions during educational reforms. Zembylas (2003) argues for the interconnectedness of identity and emotions by stating that identity transformation and emotions are inseparable and inform each other and redefining interpretation of each other.

Bullough and Gitlin (2001) and Schmidt (2002) more found that contradictory, vague and ill-defined new policies and purpose that comes with it usually produce acute emotions in teachers. They found that these policies produce tensions between what a context demands of teachers, and who they are or want to become. Furthermore, Bullough and Gitlin (2001:25) see changes in context profoundly reshaping teachers' work, resulting in teachers asking, “Can I be who I am in the classroom?” To answer this question, teachers need to know who they are and where they stand.

The negative emotions experienced by teachers during reform are for example described by most authors as confusion, anxiety, anger, fear, pain, dehumanization, despair, ambiguity and mortification (Darby, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Reio, 2005; Chang; 2009). Chang (2009) argues that they also experience burnout. He sees emotional exhaustion “as the core element of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome” (Chang; 2009:196). He sees teaching profession as characterise by the negative high level of stress, burnout and emotion and he attributes that to the ‘habitual patterns’ of relationship teachers have with learners and their teaching tasks. His argument is based on the assertion that most of the time teachers feel drained intellectually and emotionally due to their learners
behaviour which ultimately lead to burnout (Chang, 2009). Furthermore, he argues that teacher burnout takes place on two levels internally and externally. Internally, he argues “for teachers who remain in the profession, fatigue may lead to ineffectiveness and burnout that adversely harm classrooms and schools” (Chang, 2009:194). External harm is teacher attrition and teacher shortage which can be traced and measured. He argues that most of the time and specifically in the USA up to 65% of beginning teachers put do not last for at least 3 - 5 years due to emotional stress that result in burnout.

Schmidt and Datnow (2005) found that there during educational reforms teachers construct their identities by accepting, resisting or transforming what they refer to as emotional scripts. Likewise, Lee and Yin (2010) in their study of Chinese perspective on teacher emotion during reform found three types of teachers who showed different emotions and professional identity, and these were the The losing heart accommodators who at first showed enthusiasm and were passionate with reforms, but lost their vigour during the implementation stage due to the contextual constraints such as the inflexible reform schedule, lack of time and resources. These teachers felt that they have no value and they could not make any difference in the education sector (Lee & Yin, 2010). The second type of teachers are the drifting followers, these teachers did not feel much excitement about the introduction of the reform. From the onset they perceived themselves of no value and less significance in the reform. They went along with anything introduced by the reform without questioning it or resisting the ideas it advocated. They accepted everything that came their way and had and thought ‘anything goes’. These teachers had no personal stance about to adapt or transform, but went along with both the old educational system and the reform. In actual fact one can infer that:

They left the power of decision making to the reform leaders and thought of themselves as “accessories” …of the reform machine. The only thing they needed to do was to follow the orders of the reformers…By nature, they were not “change agents” of the reform, but persons drifting with the reform tides (Lee & Yin, 2010:37).
The third and last, were the cynical performers, these teachers were resisters of the reform. From the onset they resisted and questioned the value of reform. Their resistance was emotional but behaviourally obeyed the reform policy. These were great pretenders and impressionists who in private believed that the reforms were not sustainable as they are going to fizzle out in no time. They saw the reforms as ridiculous and inconsistent with their cultural and educational contexts. To impress the authorities, they publicly behaved in the manner that supported the reform policy. They adopted new teaching and assessment methods to impress the authority. They used the attitude of “You have your policies, but I have my ways of getting around them,” (Lee & Yin, 2010:37).

According to Darby (2008:1161) many countries conducted research on teachers’ emotions during reform and found that teachers experienced “issues of intrusion, administrative leadership approach, and pedagogical differences between teachers and administrators elicit teachers’ positive and negative emotions”. Furthermore, in an ethnographic study conducted by Jeffrey and Wood (1996) to understand teachers’ emotions during educational reforms which resulted in the government oversight of classroom practice, they found that teachers felt that their professional status was lowered and also devaluated their professional judgment to make curricular decisions in their classrooms.

This means that teachers felt deprofessionalised by their government. They had a sense of professional inadequacy due to more work, reduction of positive emotions and more negative feelings and emotions, self-loss because they found that they were distracted from their core duty of teaching learners, lost their pedagogic values and coordination due to regulation of their work by the government. A feeling of being uprooted from what they regarded as being core, that is, from the “professional to technician status” (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996:328). For example in a study conducted in the Netherlands by van Veenen et al. (2005) it is argued that teachers’ sense of professional and personal identity have an impact in their commitment to change. The authors found that the way in which teachers adapt to change in their classroom can be influenced by the extent to which teachers challenge and construct their existing identities. They argue that in most cases reformists ignore important
aspects that constitute teachers’ identity when implementing reforms. But there are important aspects to consider, including content, relationships within and outside the school environment, professional roles, organisational structures, and external situational pressures. The authors argue that teachers’ professional identity is ignored and at risk of being compromised in current reforms. In their study they further emphasised the importance of taking teachers’ emotions into consideration without separating them from their cognitions (van Veen et al: 2005).

Mattson and Harley (2003) argue that the formal and prior standing (political, professional and emotional) that the teachers have, shapes their understanding of the ability to comprehend and implement a particular policy reform. If educational reforms are not congruent and do not complement teachers’ personal and professional identity, they may find these changes in conflict with what they need - leading to confusion. Thus, teachers expect policy to complement their personal identity and professional identity (Mattson & Harley, 2003).

2.4 SEEING TEACHER IDENTITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

2.4.1 Introduction

To understand how teachers construct their professional identity I used Symbolic interactionism (SI) - a social constructionist approach. Symbolic interactionism is used as a lens in teacher professional identity to show how identity is constituted through a process of symbolic exchange and to describe how identity is formed. SI indicates how symbols teachers use to form their identity as people interact with others with others and those around them. The following is discussed in this section: symbolic interactionism as a thinking device; why symbols matter; language symbols and gestures in the workplace; self as the centre of ‘who I am’ in interaction in the workplace; analysis of what is observed in interaction; vulnerability of teachers and the discourse of (radical) reform and lastly teacher professional identity as framed by symbolic interactionism. I will develop on a symbolic interactionist perspective of identity formation.
In this section I discuss Symbolic interactionism (SI) as the framework within which I conducted the study. SI is a social constructionist approach to understanding social life (Cuff et al., 1990). It is one of the three big paradigms of sociology that focuses on the way people interact through symbols, which can include words, gestures, rules and roles. Its basis lies largely in the social interaction between an individual (teacher) and society (others). The premise of this theory is that humans use symbols to understand and interact with the natural and social worlds. The proponents of this perspective believe that people interact with each other and their environment (natural world) and that they affect and impact their environment, and vice versa.

In the teaching profession, symbolic interactionism as a lens to look at a phenomenon can be used to explain how teachers interact with people around them and their environment, and how these interactions affect and impact their identity, and vice versa. Symbolic interactionism models human interaction among the following concepts: identity, language, meaning, labelling and roles. This school of thought bases its views on the premise that humans interpret symbols based on interactions with others. This section will focus on the works of prominent symbolic interactionists, specifically George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer.

2.4.2 Symbolic Interactionism as a thinking device

Symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective focuses on the processes taken by individuals to understand their world. This includes their constructions of reality, as formed during interactions with others. A central idea of symbolic interactionism is that humans are actors who constantly adjust their behaviour to the actions of other actors and the adjustment of the actions comes only through interpretation of these actions. We can adjust actions only because we are able to interpret them. Our ability to imaginatively rehearse alternative lines of action before we act assists us in the process of adjustment. Symbolic interactionists see humans as actively, creatively doing this as participants who construct their social world, not as passive, conforming objects of socialisation. SI thus is a heuristic tool to see people as
dynamic and multifaceted, premised by the fact that people act on and do not react to situations (Blumer, 1969; Nelson, 1998).

Other researchers, including Maines (1977) and Stryker (1980), have extended these ideas, and because symbolic interactionism has developed over the years, it is now a significant school of thought in social science research (Prasad, 1993). It is important to note that symbolic interactionism is not concerned only with the study of symbols. The term “symbolic” refers to a basic premise that humans live in a world of where objects (e.g., physical as well as social objects) do not have inherent meanings. Instead, the meaning of objects arise out of the interpretations that people assign to them during the course of everyday social interactions with others. Out of these interactions shared, as well as local (to the actor), meanings emerge, but they are always subject to the possibility of change. This continuing process of interpretation takes place primarily using the *shared symbols of language*. People make sense of their world using symbols which convey the meanings of different objects, and these meanings (including the concept of self) in turn influence people toward the objects (Swan & Bowers, 1998).

This theoretical perspective holds that people are surrounded by objects and thus act towards them (objects). They do not act towards stimuli, but focus attention on goals. No meaning of an act is fixed or stable but is determined by individuals as they act towards objects (and also objectives). This emphasises the fluidity of action and behaviour (Blumer, 1969; Swan & Bowers, 1998). Symbolic interactionists also believe that individuals create social objects as they engage in social acts. Meaning is made in three forms as individuals’ act on what they 1) plan to do, or 2) what others expect them to do, and the 3) kind of social object they are creating (Blumer, 1969; Canfield, 2002; Nelson, 1998). We, then, adjust our actions towards others based on the meaning that those other people have for us, as they co-create and interpret symbols with us. We engage in the interpretive process when we first create meaning internally and then later check it externally with people we interact with. We get our influence from culture and social processes, for example norms, and as a result these help us to develop our self-concept. Meanings are modified through an
interpretive process whereby we first internally create meaning, then check it externally and with other people.

The response is based on the symbolic meaning which individuals attach to such actions and situations, forming relationships around them. The act and human interaction are mediated by symbols, such as language and other objects in their environment, which determine the meaning of individuals’ actions (Blumer, 1969). Furthermore, symbolic interactionists are interested in patterns of human interactions. They see individuals as actors, producing patterns of interaction. It is important to note that there is no consensus with regard to the degree of local power actors have to change patterns, when and by how much. This means that there is more than one view within SI: the collectivist and the individualist views of orientation.

The different views extend to the core beliefs, theoretical interpretations, and the relevancy of research topics and methods of symbolic interactionism. There are some variations and differences with regard to perspective, despite the fact that SI theorists share common viewpoints and assumptions. They agree on rejecting the discovery of overarching structurally functional regularities, as held by psychology and sociology. This perspective asserts that every society is unique and has its basic actions and interactions. SI theorists all agree that action and interaction are processes that occur within the domain of symbols. Furthermore, they believe that people live in the world of objects with symbolically designated things.

For symbolic interactionists, individuals react towards what is happening in the present. As humans, individuals employ symbols, imagine the responses of other people, their own acts, and thus become conscious of themselves. An individual can become an object to himself/herself (Blumer, 1969; Canfield, 2002). This approach came from the writing of George Herbert Mead (1934), but an important contributor was Herbert Blumer (1969), who was a student of Mead who wanted to show the relevance of Mead’s teaching for sociology in a sense of papers written over many years (Nelson, 1998; Sandstrom, et. al., 2006). For my study I tried to see the
teachers as actors who were in interaction with the world around them, trying to form a place for themselves in the interaction – in making their professional identity.

2.4.3 George Herbert Mead: Why symbols matter

Mead introduced pragmatist philosophy into sociology, but never published his theory. “Mead sought to translate pragmatism thought into a theory and method of social science” (Sandstrom, et al., 2006:4). According to Mead, humans need symbols as the basis and foundation for the development of unique ways to communicate symbolically with increasing interactions. He adopted three methods from the pragmatists: 1) the interaction between actors and the social world, 2) a view of both actors and the social world as dynamic process, and 3) the centrality of ability to interpret the social world. In sum, both pragmatism and symbolic interaction view thinking as a process (Mead, 1934).

2.4.3.1 Language, symbols and gestures in the workplace

Mead emphasised the distinctiveness of human ability to use language and dynamically create social reality through this system of symbols. He prioritised society over mind and highlighted that it is the social part of individuals that brings about the development of the mind and mind is the process found in social phenomena and not within individuals. According to Sandstrom, et al. (2006:4), “The act is the fundamental of Mead’s theory, and it is represented by four stages: impulses, perceptions, manipulation, and communication”. He believed that people can acquire identity only through interacting with others. Interaction and action were important and basic to him. He asserts that interaction is a vehicle through which individuals learn the language of their social lives. In this study I will try to see teachers as actors in interaction, trying to trace the ‘slice of life’ of moments in their career when they had to adapt dramatically to an educational reform agenda (Schmidt & Datnow: 2005).

Mead based his theory on how humans first identify and then use symbols. He suggested that people are rendered distinct by the symbolic nature of human behaviour and communication: “(W)hen people use words or gestures that call forth
the same meaning for others as they do for themselves, they use significant symbols” (Sandstrom, et al., 2006:4). He believed that people’s interactions are characterised by the exchange of significant symbols. This necessitates the complex process of interpretation. Symbols allow individuals to exchange shared meaning with others. They also allow us to anticipate the action of others so that we can coordinate our actions with theirs (Mead, 1934). This is true, especially in the field of education and teaching where teachers focus on shared meaning of teaching which is negotiated through teaching terminology (language) and common responsibility.

2.4.3.2 Self as the centre of ‘who I am’ in interaction in the workplace

The self is key in Mead’s theory. He defines it as the “ability to take oneself as an object and identifies the basic mechanism of the development of the self as reflexivity – the ability to put oneself in the place of others and act as they act” (Mead, 1934:2). In addition, to Mead the self does not exist when individuals are born, but it develops as we interact socially with others, consequently taking on the role, attitudes and perceptions of the other. The self only develops through interaction with parents, other people, and through an array of experiences. He believed that the self develops in childhood as children are able to imitate the significant people around them. This self is not stable, as it continuously and consistently changes when the individual interacts with other people at different points in time and in various situations (Mead, 1934).

Mead also believed that individuals could be objects to themselves. He adopted the idea of the “I” and the “me” in the theory of self to show two phases of the process by which the self is continually recreated. The “I” is a shortcut term he used to indicate the immediate response of an individual to the objects or general others - the unpredictable and creative aspect of the self. This is the immediate and impulsive aspect of conduct. The “I” phase is the phase which individuals have no control of and do not know what to do until such time that action takes place (Mead, 1934; Sandstrom, et. al., 2006).

In these interactions the “me” is the generalised other, or the perceived view that others have of the individual - the image of the self-seen in other people’s reactions,
and “I” self-conception which is a subjective self, emerges. The “me”, on the other hand, is the responses and organised set of attitudes of others that an individual assumes; it is how society dominates the individual and is a source of social control. The “me” phase begins when an individual is aware of the initial response to stimulus. As individuals take the point of view of others they assume the “me” phase. As the individual continues to interact with others, the “I” and “me” alternate in an on-going human conduct and thus, control is exerted. The self is a social object that individuals can act towards, as they act towards other people, so that they can judge themselves (Mead, 1934). We are never totally aware of the “I” because the “I” is in our memories (only after the act) and our most important values reside in the “I”. Furthermore, the “I” constitutes what we all seek in the realisation of self. The “I” allows for the possibility of social change. By contrast, “me” is formed of the attitudes of others which one takes. It has social control over the “I” and dominates the “I”. It (“me”) allows the individual to live comfortably in society. The “Me” constitutes how others see us. The self is constituted by the “I” and the “me” (Mead, 1934).

2.4.3.3 “Self-interaction” according to Mead

Mead believed that individuals constantly engage in self-talk or “internal conversations” with themselves as a means of taking things into account, and to organise themselves for action. He argues that the first thing individuals do when they discover new things, is self-interaction. Individuals have to persuade themselves before they make a final decision by repeatedly asking themselves questions. This forms the basis for role taking. Communication is a process whereby an individual “takes the role of other people. One assumes the attitude of other people/person “as well as calling it out in the other,” which is made possible by self-interaction” (Mead, 1934). During self-interaction individuals think back and strategize the approach to different situations. In other words, individuals engage in the process of planning and preparing themselves to take the role of others through self-conversation.

Mead argued that the key elements of human behaviour and action, for example interaction, activity, role taking and others are not static or fixed, but are continuously
changing and fluid: “…they arise out of the process of communication and become sustained and transformed through this pre-process” (Sandstrom, et al., 2006:6). Mead also emphasised agency or free will in his theory. To him human beings are active and creative agents involved in shaping their world and behaviour. He criticised the usage of instinct or reflex-like responses to stimuli (Sandstrom, et al., 2006). His thoughts were embraced by his student Herbert Blumer (1969) who elaborated on Mead’s thoughts and tradition. This means that teachers do not interpret their worlds the same, each one of them have their way of making meaning of their world as they interact with their context and others and other different factors.

2.4.3.4 Analysis of what is observed in interaction: Herbert Blumer

Herbert Blumer is credited with the term “symbolic interactionism”, when attempting to clarify how social psychologists differed in their views of human nature (Blumer, 1969; Wallace & Wolf, 1986). Blumer perceived social psychology as being more interested in the social development of the individual instead of emphasising subjective experience, or covert behaviour. Blumer emphasised observable behaviour as the focus of scientific explanations of human interaction. He considers the central task of social psychology to be the study of how the individual develops socially because of being part of a group. Blumer’s significant contributions to SI are his work on interpretation and the three basic elements of symbolic interactionism: structure, process and methodology (Wallace & Wolf, 1986).

Blumer saw symbolic interactionism as a perspective that focuses on the process of interaction in the creation of meaning for people; the study of human group life and conduct. He was influenced by the writings of John Dewey who insisted that human beings are best understood in relation to their environment (Canfield, 2002). As a result, Blumer was opposed to the variable analysis methods of research. His argument was that it does not identify clear and discrete ‘objects’ and does not supply precisely defined properties that genuine variables possess. He believed that variable analysis looks for causal connections among variables – in effect, change in one variable leads to change in another (Cuff et. al, 1990:149). But according to Blumer, interaction involves more than just a simple stimulus-response framework.
Rather SI inserts the term *interaction* into the “stimulus-response” equation to become “stimulus-interaction-response” (Blumer, 1969). Blumer believes that “people interact with each other by interpreting or defining each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions. Their ‘response’ is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions” (Blumer, 1969). In place of variable analysis, he suggests a ‘naturalistic’ approach to research.

According to Blumer people need to focus on interpretive processes to understand how society works. In other words, the stimulus→interpretation→response articulation is necessary. He views the process of *self-indication* as essential to interpretation. He argues that we cannot account for self-indication by factors that precede the act. He sees the self as an indication that is integral to interpretation. He believes that individuals point out certain stimuli to themselves during the process of self-indication. And people are actors and are not acted upon by environmental stimuli. The individual is able to indicate undesirable things to himself and act on them, accepting or rejecting them, or even altering them in accordance with how he understands them (Blumer, 1969).

Blumer theorised that gestures are significant elements in the interpretation process. In order to interpret and understand the meaning of the interaction, individuals must “take the role of the “other” by getting into, the other’s shoes (Cuff et.al, 1990: 150). “The stimulus-response model emphasises the privacy of external events; human actions are such as relatively automatic response to external stimuli” (Cuff et.al, 1990: 150). Human beings do not just automatically react to each other’s actions as robots; instead they interpret or define each other’s actions. This interpretation takes place through the employment of the symbols at their disposal. To Blumer human beings have the capability to initiate the line of action, which can both be deliberate and creative. He views the *stimulus-interpretation-response* process as the synthesis of the perspective. He also proposed that SI rests on three premises: meaning, language and thought (Blumer, 1969; Cuff et al., 1990; Wallace & Wolf, 1986).

Blumer (1969:2) explains these premises in the following way:
The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they have for them... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

Blumer also says that “(t)he meaning for a person grows out of the way in which other people act towards the person with regards to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for the person” (Blumer, 1969: 4). Individuals learn the use of their tools when they interact with others of their same culture (such as the culture of schooling). People engage in an interpretative process to make meaning or modify their actions when they deal with the things they encounter in their everyday life. He states that, it is in the process of self-indication that someone arrives at such an account (Blumer, 1969; Canfield, 2002).

Blumer sees too much emphasis on structure as a ‘straight jacket because it confines people to inactivity. He believes that people are active beings, who are forever striving, ever adjusting and modifying their actions. Although Blumer points to the importance of structures as “social roles”, status position, rank orders, bureaucratic organisations, relations between institutions, differential authority relations, and the like”, he contends that it is not normal to believe that social interaction is an interaction between roles and that humans are ‘structurised’ beings. He argues that social interaction takes place between people and not between roles. People interpret and handle what confronts them and do not give expression to other roles. He also argues that the reference made by symbolic interactionists to roles does not imply that this is a social role that is assigned by culture or society; rather it is something more flexible and capable of creativity (Blumer, 1969; Canfield, 2002).
2.4.4. Vulnerability of teachers and the discourses of (radical) reform

It is clear from the discussion above that identity is a contested concept, that is neither fluid nor stable and it is negotiated as determined by the place, time and context. Although contested, there is consensus as far as identity construction is concerned. The difference is in how and from what it is constructed. This suggests that it might be different or similar aspects that construct identity and these aspects
will be influenced by time and context. Similarly, most authors cited in this section have emphasised agency as a source of identity formation.

The implication here is that the different or similar aspects of identity might be based on the symbols that define it. These symbols might be culture, language, race, class, politics and religion. Even with the construction of teachers’ professional identity, different and varied aspects constitute their construction. These aspects range from their professional roles, relationships with others, their experiences, and education policy changes. Symbolic interactionists also drew from social identity construction and states that identity involves shared significant symbols and shared meanings that as we interact with each other. Furthermore, it is argued that symbolic interactionism formed the basis for the development of the social identity concept.

2.5 A SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM PERSPECTIVE OF IDENTITY FORMATION

As explained in section 2.5, symbolic interactionism is premised on three core ideas: language, thought and meaning. This theory emphasises the use of symbols such as language and the importance of interpreting meaning. These are characterised by the interaction of individuals within a context to construct an identity. And in the case of the current research this is teacher professional identity.

Symbolic interactionism and identity formation theory both emphasise the importance of self. Although other researches do focus on aspects of identity, the self is used interchangeably with identity and there is no focus and emphasis on self as a component of identity. Besides Mead (1934) and Goffman (1969), most proponents of symbolic interactionism did not write directly on identity as a concept. Mead and Goffman’s views on self-enabled other scholars to investigate identity within the framework of symbolic interactionism.
Symbolic interactionism and identity theory have some common aspects that relate to each other, such as the use of language. Both acknowledge that individuals are social beings who are shaped to a certain extent by their context and people around them. Both acknowledge the process of interpreting meaning and the importance of social interaction. For example, Stone (1962, cited in Vryan, Adler & Adler, 2003) states that symbolic interactionism views identity as a social conception created in a specific location within a certain social structure. This highlights position, location and interaction in identity.

Vryan et al., (2003:367) informed by Stone (1962:93) came up with a working definition “… identity establishes what and where the person is in social terms. It is
not a substitute word for “self”. Instead when one has identity, he is situated – that is, cast in the shape of a social object by the acknowledgement of his participation or membership in social relations”. Thus, one can infer from this definition that there is emphasis on three aspects which are self, identity and the importance of social interaction. This definition also indicates that self and identity are not the same thing but different. According to Fraser (2011) identity is the aspect of self which is most public, even though they are not the identical. Within the symbolic interactionist framework, “self is what is and identity is the public face of that self. Identity indicates specific location within some form of social structure” (Fraser, 2011:80).

Symbolic interactionists, Vryan et al., (2003) used situational, social and personal identity as the three essential identities which are aspects of self to explore identity. This view is supported by Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000), who argue that there are three categories of factors which shape and influence the professional identity of teachers. These categories of factors are teaching context, teaching experience and the biography of the teacher. These three categories of factors, like the three mentioned identities, are often in interaction with one another, interrelated and have an influence on how teachers think and act (thoughts and action).

The teaching context, which is related to situational identity, is made up of the classroom and culture of the school. Situational identity has to do with where individuals find themselves at a given time. In this case, teachers can be head of department, colleagues, students and subordinates (Smit & Fritz, 2008). Social identity, on the other hand, can be said to be formed and forged within a socially constructed class of individuals and, as said above, a location within a social structure, in the case of teachers, within the school context. Teachers do not define themselves in the same way; they define themselves in terms of social identities as determined by the different contexts they find themselves in, which indicates continuity in their identity. They are teachers to learners in their classrooms and colleagues to their fellow teachers outside the classroom.

According to Reynolds (1996), the emphasis should not only be on the personal, as this underestimates the contextual side that plays an important part in the
construction of professional identity. Teachers’ landscapes are linked and connected
to teachers’ identities by cultural scripts which prescribe their thoughts and action.
Reynolds (1996) also emphasised that what surrounds a person, what others expect
from the person, and what the person allows to impact on him or her greatly affects
his or her identity as a teacher. She noted that a teacher workplace is a landscape
which can be very persuasive, and very demanding.

Vryan et al., (2003) believe that identities are shaped by role-internalised role
expectations. Thus they emphasise the importance of roles as part of social identity
because they see roles as attached to positions although individuals may like or
dislike the said roles. Personal identity develops from the construction of unique self-
narratives. This happens when individuals make choices regarding situations to act
on or information (Vryan et al., 2003). In other words, personal identity is dependent
on the context and the people within that context, because individuals may choose
when to expose personal identity. Carte and Doyle (cited in Beijaard et al., 2000) use
the term ‘the biography of the teacher’ which they see as the adjustment of personal
understandings and principles to institutional realities, and the decision about how to
express oneself in a classroom activity.

As indicated by Vryan et al., (2003), situational and social identities emerge from
joint behaviour and meaning-making with ourselves and others. On the other hand,
social and personal identities are trans-situational whereas situational identity
changes with every situation, constrained by cultural norms. The foregoing
explanation also shows that teachers’ professional identity is complex and
dependent on the three fundamental identities. As a result, teachers’ professional
identity becomes the centre of situational, social and personal identities. It is also
shaped by these three identities and does not exist independently and continually
interacts with the three (Fraser, 2011).

Herman-Kinney (2003) states that self is important and is separate from identity. He
believes the social contexts are complex and comprise complex interactions
between individual and a group. Usually these complex groups have different
conflicting views of life or beliefs and values, although they manage to work
effectively as one. This view is related to how scholars on identity see the formation of identity as both self, context embedded and connected to the actions of others. According to Vryan et al., (2003), identity theorists believe that identity indicates where and what the individual is in social terms.

Vryan et al., (2003) believe that identity is an element of self-most open and exposed to the public, but is not one and the same thing. Teachers’ identity in the current research is the most open and exposed to public. Teachers’ professional identity also draws from the three categories as identified by Vryan et al., (2003).

![Figure 2.4](image-url)

**FIGURE 2.4: THE INTERACTION BETWEEN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND THE THREE SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM IDENTITIES (ADAPTED FROM FRASER, 2011:81)**

Figure 2.4 shows the relation and interaction between the three identities that shape professional identity. As teachers interact with themselves and others within the school context the professional identity develops. This shows that professional identity does not develop independently, but continually interacts with the three identities as a means of adapting and accommodating the context in which the
individual is an active agent. A teacher’s teaching context (situation) has a strong influence on his or her identity. This context consists of the classroom, colleagues, policies, rules and the culture of the school.

Fraser (2011) argues that the situational and social identities arise from shared behaviour with people within our environment and ourselves. Personal identity on the other hand emerges from the creation of distinctive and sole self-narratives. Furthermore, he sees situational identity as dynamic and shifting with every situation and impacted upon by cultural norms of a group, while social and personal identities depend on the situational conditions. Thus, teachers’ identity as is shifting; they become the leaders, subject specialist and figures of authority in their classrooms and to their learners, but are subordinates and employees to the department of education. Sometimes they might also be supervisors and mentors if they are head of departments or just ordinary colleagues, parent and many more if they do not any position.

2.5 CONCLUSION

After elucidating the concept of identity by reviewing some of the relevant literature of teacher identity, I concluded that it is difficult to define the concept of identity from a single perspective. The scholars who were studied in this review presented different definitions and made it difficult to forward any conceptualisation that I could consider definitive. But I was able to suggest that there is consensus on the fluidity of identity. The process of formulating an identity depends on how individuals construct meaning from interaction with their social environment, which is the material they use to fashion their sense of self. This argument was highlighted in different sections of this chapter. A person’s ability to construct an identity depends on various aspects of the self. It is by nature subjective, and it is influenced by the people in our social environment.

Then I surveyed a particular manifestation of identity formation. The professional identity of teachers is an important facet of this study, since it is used to access the effect that educational reform has on the professional lives of teachers. Professional identity formation is constructed throughout time and in various professional
contexts. The professional identity of teachers is affected by educational reform as indicated by the different studies cited in this chapter. These studies showed that it is difficult to understand teachers’ professional identity as an all-encompassing concept. There are various definitions of professional identity. Authors agree that professional identity is not stable or static, and that it is a relational concept. Teachers form their professional identity by negotiating the demands of the workplace. The identities of teachers shift and change as they grow in their teaching profession and during the process of educational reform. My basic claim is that educational reform renders the professional identity of teachers particularly unstable making them vulnerable.

Identity is socially constructed as we interact symbolically with others and our environment. Through the symbolic interactionism I argue that the professional context is an important element in the process of constructing the “I”. I argued that that people in the work environment play an important role in formation of professional identities. I support the argument presented by symbolic interactionists, which hold that situational, social and personal identity are the three essential identities which are important aspects of self. Language, thought and meaning are conditioned as people interact with those around them. The teacher navigates the hierarchy of the system of education, the complexity of society and daily practice in various permutations of symbolic interaction.
CHAPTER 3: THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1 RESEARCH IN A SCHOOL: DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter outlines the processes followed in sampling, collection of data and the analysis of the data. The study employed a qualitative research design in order to investigate how teachers’ professional identity was re-shaped by the reform. According to Flick (2007), qualitative research is characterised by a multiplicity of approaches and searching for common ways of making sense of the world. Therefore, the current research drew on a multi-method approach to provide an in-depth and comprehensive description of the teachers’ professional identity. This methodology was deemed appropriate as it is concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their everyday life. Researchers try to capture some of this meaning.

According to Le Compte and Schensul (1999:113), “qualitative research is a term used to describe any research that uses the wider variety of qualitative data collection techniques available…” I agree with this view, but add that the study has a strong ethnographic character, because the inquiry took place within the school and it inserted many aspects of the school’s prevailing culture at the time, also reflecting aspects of “the way of life of an identifiable group of people” - as the ethnographer Harry Wolcott describes ethnographic research (Wolcott, 1994).

In using multiple qualitative research methods, as discussed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), this research concentrated on a few individuals at a given time in order to understand their realities as they lived their life in the school. The focus was on how teachers think and act in their teaching practice – how they perceive, interpret and make meaning (Henning et al., 2004; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) of policies that they had to implement. The researcher observed the school and each teacher’s daily experiences and routines (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) for an intermittent period of three years.
3.1.1 Research design assumptions

Guba and Lincoln (1998: 200) define a paradigm as “a set of basic beliefs ... that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a world-view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.” This definition suggests that a paradigm is a philosophy held by people; it influences how researchers view knowledge. Researchers thus work from a specific epistemological base, which is what I did in this study. I premised the inquiry on the notion that the knowledge I would construct would come from the teachers themselves and that I would interpret the data as best I could with their position in mind (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Henning et al., 2004). Guba and Lincoln (1998) explain that, a "paradigm" is a conceptual position with regard to how one views knowledge, the world, and the methods to investigate the world, thus - ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Lincoln and Guba (2000) add a fourth component to the concept of research position or "paradigm", namely ethics (or axiology).

Accordingly, ontology is defined as “the study of being” and seeks to answer the question: “What is the meaning of being?” (Crotty, 1998:15). According to Crotty, “it is concerned with ‘what is’, with the nature of existence, the structure of reality as such”. It is situated alongside epistemology in the conceptual framework when informing a theoretical perspective of a researcher. Ontology asks questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being-in-the-world (Crotty, 1998; Heidegger, 1962). The questions asked by ontology are the following: “what is the form and nature of reality and what is there that can be known about it?” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005:3).

The ontological stance of this research is that participants construct their sense of self and make meaning of who they are as they interact with others and their environment. It suggests that there is no single or absolute reality, but rather multiple and ever changing realities as created by circumstances and constructed by individuals - in this case teachers. The social self is not passive but is an active part of human agency. Human reality is, from this view, mutually and socially constructed
(Crotty, 1998). From this view, my position is that each teacher experiences the world through multiple and diverse realities that come together in the symbols and signs through which they interact. A set of ideas about this is represented in the theory of symbolic interactionism (SI), which is utilised in this study.

A researcher’s epistemological position is also an important part of her “paradigm”. Epistemology asks questions that refer to basic assumptions about the relationship between the knower, the researcher, and “what can be known” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Henning et al., 2004). The term epistemology is adopted from the Greek word *episteme*, which means knowledge. Thus, epistemology can be regarded as a theory of knowledge of a researcher (Henning et al., 2004). My position of how knowledge is made about teachers is that their meaning is the springboard for my interpretation. I thus first listen to their voices before I formulate my voice about them. The implication here is that an epistemological position includes an ethical-moral stance towards the life world and “the self” of the knower. This would mean that I, as a researcher, also have an ethical obligation to the teachers whom I am investigating.

Seale, Guba, Gubruim and Silverman, (2005) and de Vos et al. (2002) refer to this type of ethnographic work. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (1994), ethnographic research has always been subject to debate and disagreement because it means different things to different people. Some scholars see it as a philosophical paradigm, while for others it is a method that one uses to gather data. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) consider ethnography as having features that examine the nature of a social phenomenon, which focuses on “unstructured” data and investigates a single case at a given time. This does not mean that it has all the qualities of a case study (Yin, 2009), but that the teachers form a group of people as a unit of analysis in their expression of their identity in the various sources of data. I believe, like the authors in Henning et al. (2004), that design types and design genres cross many boundaries and the rules are flexible. However, for research to have an ethnographic flavour, I would argue that it has to be situated in a specific place and stretch over a period of time in which the place can feature as component of the participants’ reality. I could not collect data and depart after a few weeks. I had to remain at the school for a much longer period.
3.1.2 Purposive sampling

“In ethnographic research, data collection is tailored to meet the information needs of each study; the ethnographer determines the information required to address the study’s research question, and designs a mix of techniques to elicit that information” (Riemer, 2008: 209). I was looking for any information that could signpost teachers’ expression of identity or their sense of self during the peak of the first curriculum changes in the country, set in their specific locality. My ethnographic research is thus characterised by its local nature, with reference to local practices. In this study the shared and learned patterns of the “cultural group” (the teachers) which includes their behaviour, language; values and beliefs are examined, described and interpreted by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). I did not study the whole teacher population in the school, but sampled with a purpose.

Maximum variation sampling within the school’s teacher population was thus employed to ensure the diversification of identities from newly employed teachers to those who have experience, those who occupy managerial positions, to those who are members of a union. Maximum variation sampling aims at “capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participants [...] by identifying diverse characteristics or criteria for constructing the sample” (Patton, 1990: 170). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) see it as a type of sampling that helps one to select persons or settings that one thinks represent the range of experiences about the phenomenon.

Patton (1990) states that it is important to choose those "cases"(individuals)from which/whom one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research – the “information-rich cases”. Since the aim of this study was to understand the professional identities of teachers, purposeful sampling helped to select teachers in the school in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their identity-in-flux (Best & Kahn, 2003; Creswell, 1998). One school was selected and four teachers from the same school were purposefully sampled for the in-depth study.
Teacher 1 was a female teacher, named Sis Ann, who was in her late fifties. She was an experienced teacher with more than thirty years’ teaching experience. Ann held a primary teachers’ certificate and a bachelor’s degree. She was one of the deputy principals in the school and was previously an acting principal. At the time of the research she taught Economic and Management Sciences in the intermediate phase. She was trained as a teacher in the 1970s, using “traditional” ways of teaching. She had experienced a number of educational and policy changes that she perceived as challenging and demanding. She felt motivated to participate in her school and to mentor her fellow teachers. Ann was passionate about her school and perceived it as a great school. She derived pleasure from teamwork and boasted about the development and achievements of her fellow teachers.

Teacher 2 was a male teacher named Tom, who was in his early forties. He was a very soft-spoken person who was well respected and loved by his learners. Tom had a secondary teachers’ diploma, but intended to register for a business degree. He had been teaching for eighteen years. He was one of the library teachers in the school and also taught Sesotho and Natural Science in both the intermediate and senior phases. He was a natural leader and served as union representative of the school and the local area. He was trained in the 1990s and also had experienced many educational and policy changes.

Teacher 3 was a male teacher who taught Economic and Management Sciences. His pseudonym was Buti. Buti was in his early thirties and he was an opinionated, but gentle man. He had a secondary teacher’s diploma and had dropped out of the advanced certificate in education studies that he had enrolled for. He had been teaching for 17 years. He was a member of a union and trained sports in the school. He liked questioning issues.

Teacher 4 was a female teacher named Musa. She was in her mid-thirties and taught grade two. Musa had a secondary teacher’s diploma, an advanced certificate in education and a post graduate honours degree and had been teaching for 17 years. She was an ardent Christian who often withdrew for prayer during break with four other teachers. She was passionate about counselling parents and learners.
She was one of the events coordinators of the school. Musa saw herself as a social worker in a teaching environment. She was studying social work and aspired to become the full-time school counsellor one day.

TABLE 3.1: COMPOSITION OF PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>RACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>PTC &amp; BA</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>STD</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buti</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>STD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>STD, ACE &amp; BED HONS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3 Data collection methods

In qualitative research one can use a range of techniques based on observation, interviews, documents, range of artefacts, and recorded data on photographs. I used a variety of data collection methods to gather data, both primary and secondary sources. As suggested by Silverman (2005), I sourced data by way of non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal group interviews, document analysis, teachers' journals and photographic data. I kept in mind that a “diversity of research methods allows the ethnographer (researcher) to triangulate, or cross-check the accuracy of collected data and analytic statements” (Riemer, 2008:209). When utilising data from different source methods one can look at the central unit of analysis via different data. I would find out whether the teachers’
thoughts as expressed in interviews and their journals would coalesce with what I had observed and what was evident in artefacts.

Since teachers’ professional identities are constructed in two different landscapes, inside and outside the classroom, data was also collected from the school documents and learners’ books. Data was also collected through informal conversations with teachers who were not sampled. Minutes of staff meetings, lesson plans, work allocation of all staff members, school policies, and the school mission statement were all used to understand how the school operates and how activities impacted teachers’ identity. Riemer (2008:209) argues that the “the term document refers here not only to public and private texts, but to photographs, videos and film, as well.” But for the purposes of this inquiry the photographs and videos will be discussed separately under visual data. In order to understand participants I asked them all to provide a brief background narrative. These narratives served as a reference point during interviews wherein what was said by teachers was checked against their background (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Riemer, 2008).

3.1.3.1 Non participant observation

In observation activities the researcher can get a glimpse of “the way of life” (Wolcott, 1994) of the people who are studied as they enact their daily life and routines. Researchers spend time watching people, talking to people, reading materials in the field, checking artefacts used, and recording what they see and hear (Riemer, 2008). Observation in a classroom and in a teacher common room includes taking note of everything in the setting. One gets first-hand information on a wide range of participants’ behaviour through the observation of activities, operations and interactions within a given context. This means that the observer is not actually a passive onlooker, but has an aim and a purpose, noting moments in which salient things are said or done with specific objects. I looked at teachers in their settings, trying to decode their behaviour as expression of identity as professionals. The limitation of observation is that it is time consuming and expensive. Other limitations might be that the participants might act and behave according to the researchers’ expectation and extraneous factors, which might interfere with the purpose of
observation (Crang & Cook, 2007; Riemer, 2008). The observation that I conducted did not really pose these dangers as I was looking at the way things were said and happened. My position as researcher was therefore already discursive.

According to Mulhall (2003:306), ethnographic observation comprises four different ways of gathering data – observing in a structured and unstructured way (with a schedule or without), and as participant or non-participant. The choice of ethnographic observation is dependent on research, meaning that “which of these methods to choose depends on the research question but will be defined predominantly by the paradigm underlying each study”. I worked in a broadly interpretive and social constructivist mode and thus felt that I could utilise any mode of observation that suited the moment. Wogan (2004), cited in Crang and Cook (2007), refers to participant observation as “deep hanging out.” This is a good colloquial way of describing what I did in my time at the school. Participant observation “implies an immersion of the researcher’s self into everyday rhythms and routines of the community, a development of relationships with people who can show and tell the researcher what is “going on there” (Crang & Cook, 2007:37).

This did not mean that I blended completely with the environment, but that I kept a researcher distance, trying to control for my own bias by making notes during and immediately after an observation session. At the same time I had to ensure that participants were not deceived in any way. I checked the status of my notes with the teachers after each session. I remained cognisant of the need to “bracket” my own views and clearing the notes with the teachers helped a lot towards that. I learned from the work of Clifford Geertz (1973) how to blend with the environment without becoming part of it. The advice of David Silverman (2000) on how to remain distant, though close to the data, was also of great help.

The data were collected over a period of three years – 2005 to 2008. More data were collected after the three year period when there were more policy and curriculum changes, with the introduction of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in 2011. For this I returned to the school briefly. The additional collection of data was
planned to get an idea of how the four teachers had adapted after a while. Teachers were met separately, at different times: more than six times formally and informally.

During the first period of research the school was first observed, including the activities that took place in the school assemblies, on the playground and so forth. The interviews and observations in classrooms were staggered and the informal conversations as well. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. For the observations I used a specific format (Table 3.2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATE:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OBSERVER:</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>ARRIVAL TIME &amp; DEPARTURE TIME:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>VENUE:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REASON FOR VISIT/OBSERVATION:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTICIPANT(S) OBSERVED:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVENTS WORTH NOTING:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAIN THEMES OR ISSUES:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEW ISSUES TO BE TACKLED DURING THE NEXT VISIT:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE OF OBSERVER:</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.3.2 Photographic data

Photographic data are valuable sources to use in social research because they are everywhere and can reveal things that are not accessible by any other means. “...Visual methodologies are ...a method designed to take a researcher into realms that she may not have considered and towards findings previously unanticipated” (Banks, 2007:6). Visual data are annotated with writing notes during observation and are also guided by the main research aim and questions.

One of the functions of visual images is to document and “analyse aspects of social life and social interaction” (Banks, 2007:5). There is a great wealth of visual information in all natural events. There is a “variety of visual methods and forms of dissemination...” (Banks, 2007:10). For the purpose of this study, the focus was on mainly photographic visuals of the physical spaces of the school. Various forms of photography can be used for data collection and for organising, interpreting, and validating qualitative inquiry (Furman, & Langer, 2005). According to Crang and Cook (2007: 104) “photographs are taken purposively and displayed in contexts that can drastically alter their meanings.”

Teachers’ behaviour, activities and speeches were recorded using electronic equipment - video camera and still photography. The purpose of using visual methods was to expand the capacity to observe and listen through the creation of a complete and permanent recording of events and speech (Banks, 2007). Teachers were also supplied with a camera to take pictures of issues pertaining to the research. The camera was used by all four teachers and supplied the researcher with photographs that served as important supplementary data.

The visuals were valuable for discovery and validation of data as they provided an opportunity to discover things not otherwise observable by one person. Visuals allow data to recur and to reappear when needed. They also allow participants and researchers to validate the interpretation of data. During interpretation the researcher can validate and authenticate the data and visuals can be re-captured, if necessary, for further authentication. The limitations of working with visuals, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999:120) are “concerns about professional bias and the
interests of the filmmaker.” This is acknowledged as the researcher had to choose what was to be captured and how the interpretation was to be undertaken (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). At the same time, “filming can be very intrusive, affecting settings and events.... film cannot be included in a book, journal, or dissertation” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:120).

**FIGURE 3.1: EXAMPLES OF PICTURES OF THE LOCKED “PRISON” GATES**

These photographs were taken at the two main entrances of the school and administration which are described by teachers as “prison gates”. The school has five gates that control access to the school and main building Gate 1 is used to gain access to into the school. Gate 2 is attached to the administration building of the school and controls access to both the community and teachers. It helps control entry of people to the main grounds and building. It is the second controlled entrance, which separates the school community from the public. Staff, learner and public movements in and out of the school are controlled.
The grade 0 classroom accommodates more or less 70 learners. The classroom is made of asbestos and tin, it is not the same as other rooms in the school. It is a small room and there is no space to hang teaching and learning aids. These aids are too high on the roof and thus the teacher has to tilt her head back as she teaches learners. There is no furniture and learners sit on the floor. Learners have to face up to recite the months. There is little room for teachers to move around or to reach learners sitting at the back of the classroom. The teachers have no facilities and space to teach in these overcrowded makeshift classrooms.

### 3.1.3.3 Field notes

Field notes are written during observation and are guided by the research aim and questions, that is, what the researcher wants to see as guided by his or her inquiry. These are not structured notes, but they “are messy, loose texts that make no claim to be final or fixed versions... many would concede that field notes are only comprehensible to their author” (Mulhall, 2003:311). Field notes are valuable because they provide researchers with more in-depth background as a means of remembering salient events. Furthermore, they provide a summary of what has been covered in the field and what is still outstanding. There is no single linear way of writing field notes; every observer has a preferred way of writing and recording data (Appendix C).
The field notes in the current research were transcribed and analysed on leaving the site to ensure a fresh interpretation. A preliminary analysis took place to ensure accuracy (Mulhall, 2003). The field notes acted as a reminder of what took place and as a means to construct the events that took place in the field during data collection. Field notes also allowed me to access the teachers’ everyday lives – professional identity—and to record what was observed in an unobtrusive manner (Silverman, 2000). The field notes were used at an early stage of analysis, as data collection took place, and were used as raw data for more elaborate analysis. Mulhall argues that, “however, hard we try to be objective such descriptive accounts are theorised, and ethnographers choose to focus on certain activities, key events, and their reactions to them. In this way unconscious analysis of events is constantly occurring as field notes are written” (Mulhall, 2003:311).

3.1.3.4 Document Analysis

Researchers can also collect and examine site documents, which are secondary data, to complement the primary sources such as observation. Riemer (2008) considers site documents as a valuable source of data. Documents refer to all written records, for example school policies, teachers’ lesson plans, school records, and others. As in non-participant observation, Marshall (2006) states that, “probably the greatest strength of document analysis is that it is unobtrusive and nonreactive.” This means that the researcher can engage in the analysis without disturbing the environment. Furthermore, the researcher must make sure that the procedure is clear and that information can be checked. However, its disadvantage is that there is an extent of inferential reasoning, because it is based on the interpretation of the researcher.

As with visual images, this means then that, “care should be taken [...] in displaying the logic of interpretation used in inferring meaning from the artefacts” (Marshall, 2006:108). The current research collected the necessary documents as informed by the research question, paradigm and theoretical framework. The documents collected supplied the inquiry with more information. Documents were valuable because they had the potential of revealing information about the activities of the
teachers on site, that is, what teachers do or did and what they value. Thus, during the observation the documents shed light on teachers’ daily activities, school activities and learner activities. Documents were important in this study as an additional source of data and to ensure rich and thick description (Punch, 1998).

I collected and studied documents to see the roles and responsibilities given to teachers. The minutes were studied to check on issues discussed in meetings pertaining to policies and roles of educators, and to check on issues that impact on teachers’ professional identities. External documents and communication, such as the school’s newsletter, invitations, advertisement of events, notes to parents and year plans were also studied. Learners’ records, such as books, achievement records, attendance registers, performance profiles and comments from teachers on performance were all studied to determine how they impacted on teachers “self” and professional identity (Kvale, 2007; Trochim, 2005). The learners’ books were scrutinised to see what kind of activities teachers used and how these defined them as teachers.

These documents created and established the context for the data collected from interviews, informal group interviews and observation. A list of questions was used to summarise these documents.

Examples of the questions used in the analysis:

- What kind of document is it?
- What is the content of the document?
- What does it say about the daily activities of the school?
- How is this document viewed by the teachers?
- How does this document impact on teachers’ identity?
3.1.3.5 Teachers’ journals

Teacher participants received reflective journals to record their daily activities and feelings regarding their work and environment as a whole. Each teacher was requested to keep a reflective teaching journal for a few months, from 22 July 2005 to 2 September 2005. This journal was used to complement the observation of teachers. Teachers were asked to complete two pages for each school week for a month. They were asked to write a weekly record of their experiences in the school and classroom. They completed these journals to indicate their feelings and experiences as they went about doing their work and to learn about their day to day life as teachers.

The journals contained questions that required teachers to record their daily activities and events. The questions tried to elicit what the teachers did on a daily basis. These journals served as first-hand information that helped orient the researcher on how teachers viewed and experienced their profession (Appendix D).
**TABLE 3.3: EXAMPLE OF SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED AND RESPONSES FROM TEACHERS**

*Excerpt from Buti 24/7/2006*

**Question:** What were the two main tasks that you had to complete this week?

**Response:** I was supposed to fill in the department 450 forms. The second one is to write reports.

**Question:** Did I complete these two main tasks this week? YES/NO?

If not, what happened that prevented me from completing these tasks?

**Response:** I have more than 50 reports to write.

**Question:** What were the current problems that I had to solve this week? Describe the context.

**Response:** I am responsible for the feeding scheme and our stoves were broken and for long. This is where we feed hungry learners. Learners from poor families, orphans and the ones that come from unemployment parents get food from the feeding scheme. So I had to see to it that the kitchen staff has a stove to cook with. I was going around looking for a stove to hire and at the same time finish the reports. It was hard, but I managed to get one.

**Question:** Did I solve the problem? YES/NO

**Response:** Yes, after struggling to get money from the office to pay the owner of the stove.

**Question:** What made the problem difficult to solve? (E.g. lack of resources, lack of information, poor co-operation of staff, etc.)

**Response:** Going around houses to look for a reliable stove. The second problem was getting money from the office.
3.1.3.6 Teachers’ interviews

De Vos et al. (2002) assert that interviewing is a major technique of collecting data in qualitative research. Interviews can be defined as a one-on-one or face-to-face discussion or conversation with a purpose, wherein the interviewer or researcher draws out information from another person (Merriam, 1998). The current research used interviews to elicit personal information that could not be accessed by any other means. The interviews assisted me to access the teachers’ minds, feelings, thoughts, intentions, and meanings about their professional identity (Henning et al., 2004; Merriam, 1998). As teachers told their stories they made meaning of their experiences. Interviews allowed the researcher to access teachers’ perspectives which would have been impossible to access with other methods. This was a result of the interviews’ flexibility and adaptability to the setting and their ability to be administered to any person and any situation.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that researchers conduct interviews so that they can understand how participants interpret the world around them. Silverman (2000; 2005) describes three types of interview methods, namely: informal, conversational interviews; semi-structured interviews; and standardised, open-ended interviews. Semi-structured, face-to-face and group interviews were conducted in the current research. This allowed the researcher to be flexible and to afford the teachers an opportunity to express their personal accounts of experiences and feelings.

An interview schedule was constructed. This constituted a guide and served as a “script that structures the course of the interview” (Kvale, 2007:56). The schedule was then expanded and explored as the interviews progressed. The schedules were prepared with themes based on the research questions and were used with all four teachers. These allowed for open-ended questions, open-ended answers and elaboration on points of interest. They created an opportunity for teachers to use their own words and language (where necessary) to develop their own thoughts and simplify complex issues (Mouton, 1996; Kvale, 1996). Teachers were able to consider, reason for and against a specific proposal, thought, feeling, condition, or idea without constraints (Silverman, 2000). Again, teachers were able to complete
and qualify responses in their own words. It was also possible to clarify, expand, and ask for reasons for responses given.

I made appointments with each participant and ensured that they understood the purpose of the interview. The time allocated to each participant was forty-five minutes to an hour, although some sessions took longer. One of the participants, “Musa,” requested that she be interviewed in her home language Sesotho, which was later translated into English. The teachers were interviewed in private and confidentiality was maintained, pseudonyms were allocated to each one of them to maintain confidentiality (Kvale, 2007). I also engaged with some teachers in informal conversations. These participants were teachers who were not sampled but spoke to me while observations were taking place in the school. The issues discussed ranged from teaching experiences, to how they experienced teaching challenges within the school and policy changes.
TABLE 3.4: EXAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW EXCERPT

**BUTI’S 1ST INTERVIEW** Date 22 June 2008. Time: 12h45

**Interviewer**: And then, among other things that changed, how do you find the 7 roles of educators? Were they part of your training or not? There is one of pastoral role and community leader; meaning that you are a teacher 24 hours per day.

**Buti**: Ja I was trained with 7 roles of educators, you are everything. You are a police, you are a social work, you are a nurse, you, you, you are a traffic police. I mean all those thing are right on our shoulders, and I mean if ever I am going to carry all those things right on my shoulders, I mean reaching home round about 3 half past 3 I’m already tired (voice lowered as sign of tiredness or despair). Those duties, I mean, if ever I am, I’m suppose to go out and do ground duty rooster learners are having their short break, I must just go outside and look what is happening. I mean there are things that you cannot avoid, if learners play and they happen to collide with each other and then as somebody who was supposed to be there, monitoring the duty rooter. What am I supposed to do if they play and play roughly? What must I do as an educator?

**Interviewer**: So, do you mean that it is expected of you to stop that?

**Buti**: How can I stop that?

**Interviewer**: It is impossible yes.

**Buti**: I mean, how can I stop that because these learners are plus minus one thousand. I mean how can I stop that? Because I’m just standing there monitoring the situation, to see to it that learners don’t get injured, ehh without the educator being there for them, because if ever that learner get injured, I must be able to give a report and say what happened, and make maybe a follow up. Maybe try to call the, the, the, the parents, because some parents do not understand. The others will say, ja you neglect our children at school.

**Interviewer**: So you mean that you take responsibility where you are not supposed to take responsibility. You take responsibility for things that you cannot control. You are expected to do that.
3.1.3.7 Group interview

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), group interviews are an effective qualitative data gathering technique. The interview was organised in such a way that participants felt unthreatened, free, comfortable to talk and exchange ideas amongst themselves. The researcher conducted group interviews with all four teachers at the same time, and semi-structured questions were used to verify what they said during the individual interviews, and to determine their views, feelings and perceptions about the research question and topic (Kvale, 2007). Only one group session was arranged, since the sample was small. The session took place in the staff room which is always unoccupied except during staff meetings. Open-ended questions were prepared ahead of time, to allow an opportunity to probe the subject matter (Silverman, 2000).

The interviews focused on teachers’ experiences with regard to their professional identity and were based on preliminary themes identified beforehand. Some of the questions that were asked related to why they became teachers and how they perceived themselves as teachers. They were also allowed to expand on their personal view of what they believe teaching is or should be (Silverman, 2000). The questions were asked to understand their professional and teaching philosophy in relation to the education policy and their expected professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004). I also asked them to describe their feelings about the continuous changes in policy. The data was then compared to other collected data to validate the themes.
**TABLE 3.5: EXAMPLE OF INFORMAL GROUP INTERVIEW**

**Interviewer:** Ok. Do you agree? What is your view with regard to changes?

**Buti 2:** Mmm it is the same thing. I think is the same thing because we went to the workshop and we have to implement it and it was difficult. Ja we came confused and… (no.2 interjects)

**Buti 2:** And even the time that was given to us, it is not enough. You find that the workload is too much, but when you look at the time, the time of the course is only 2 to 3 days of which you have to implement for the rest of your life, of which is impossible.

**Tom 3:** And OBE basically is based on paper work. You deal; you take most of the time doing paperwork there more than teaching the young ones, and those people when they train us they don’t come back and do follow up. They are not even concerned that you are comfortable with what they are training us with and within short space of time the training; I think we need, I don’t know, year training.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and then no.2 what is your take in the changes. How do you see these changes because you said you concur with no. 1 that they are a problem? What is specifically a problem for you?

**Buti:** No as she said, neh, I think we are on the same level, ja, it was difficult because what they have taught us there it was not enough, as she has said.

**Interviewer:** Is it in the training?

**Buti:** In the training yes. (Int: 1 interferes) and when we has to implement in class it was difficult. It became eh frustrated you see, because (Tom: 3 interjects) ja is confusing and the time is not enough as they said.

**Interviewer:** One point or element that came out of the three of you is frustration, how do you as teachers deal with frustration; obviously it has an impact on you as a person and on your performance. How do you deal with the frustration that you face every day?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3.6 SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED FROM EACH TEACHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBSERVATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUTI</td>
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</tbody>
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3.1.4 Analysis of data

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002), data analysis involves reading through data numerous times, while at the same time dismantling and rebuilding it for the purpose of elaborating and interpreting the information. De Vos et al. (2002) sees it as a systematic process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the collected data. Data analysis is also seen as a non-linear, iterative process and interim analysis – the cyclical process of collecting and analysing data during a single research study which continues until the process is understood (Grbich, 2007; Henning et al., 2004).

In order to accomplish the above, this research consolidated the data, reduced and interpreted it to make meaning. This started with the writing of field notes (Gibbs, 2007; Riemer, 2008). Data was also written on paper so that it could be permanently available for use and analysis. Before analysing the data, it was safely stored by transcribing the data collected from all sources (Marshall, 2006). All nonverbal communication of teachers, such as facial expressions and gestures were also noted. Before interviews were transcribed I listened to the tapes to gain an overall picture about the response of teachers and to identify data that needed to be translated. A professional translated all interviews into English (Flick et al., 2005). These were then transcribed along with documents, teacher journals, visual data and observations into word processing documents.
TABLE 3.7: AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED AND TRANSLATED DATA FROM THE GROUP INTERVIEW

Tom: I think, I think, ah, I just wanted to comment. I just want to tell you that teachers are brave and strong despite all the stresses and frustration that we come across. One thing that we want to see is to see our learners being better citizens. I think more than “i frustration, si thatha I frustration ne stress sethu, sisi begele ngale nga phandle and concentrate ku laba ntwana” (we put away our frustration and focus on the learners/children) because that is what we are here for. They know nothing about “ama” (the) politics “wama” (of the) OBEs and whatever “uya bona” (do you see) so “thina” (we) we are trying our best giving them the best that we have “ukuthi babe” (so that they can be) better.

All the data was then moved to Atlas.ti - a qualitative computer software programme used to organise data. Atlas.ti was used as a means of organising, managing, and interpreting the data for further analysis. The data analysis involved numerous rounds of questioning, reflecting, rephrasing, analysing, theorising, and verifying after each observation or interview (Grbich, 2007; Patton, 2002).
TABLE 3.8: EXAMPLE OF DATA IN ATLASTI

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<th>HERMENEUTIC UNIT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Where the full project is located</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOURCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refers to the supplier of data or information</td>
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<tr>
<td>FILE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where Tom's data or information is located</td>
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</tbody>
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= HU MERGE REPORT CREATED 01/05/11 01:18:51 PM BY GAST

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Source – HU: TOM'S CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

File: [C:\Documents and Settings\valenciam\My Documents\Scientific ...\TOM'S CLASSROOM OBSERVATION.hpr6]

P 7: TEACHER TOM COMBINED.doc {0} [C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\My Documents\Valencia data\TEACHER TOM COMBINED.doc] text/rtf

P 8: 1.jpg {0} [C:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\My Documents\Valencia data\1.jpg] bmp

**Code Family: avoidance of conflict**

Created: 11/15/10 12:55:16 PM (Super)

Codes (19): [A considerate teacher] [Authoritarian and bully teacher] [Avoidance of unnecessary conflict] [culture of greeting] [D - teacher working space] [D - interdependency] [goal setting] [interdependence between staff members] [Relationship with colleagues] [Relationship with learners] [relationship with parents] [relationship with the community] [Sense of belonging] [symbol of gentleness and meekness] [teacher behaviour and attitude] [teacher treatment of learners] [teachers problems] [teaching challenges] [union rivalry:intolerance]

Quotation(s): 72
Inductive data analysis or open coding took place throughout the process of data collection (Patton: 2002). Open coding meant that I had to immerse myself in breaking down the data by reading through the transcribed data word for word, line by line, sentence by sentence and statement by statement beginning with a single data unit. At the same time the data was examined and divided into meaningful segments of texts. Thereafter it was compared to other data units to determine the emerging patterns. It was then named, or coded, and the emerging patterns were identified. Quotations or teachers’ exact words were attached as the analysis progressed (Flick et al., 2005).

The data collected from the first interviews were compared with the responses of the subsequent interviews. The repeated words and statements from teachers were placed under the relevant code and recorded appropriately, and were later developed into themes. Words, phrases and sentences were used as segment markers (labels) and this proceeded until all the data was coded. The codes were then reapplied to similar segments of data every time they encountered a relevant segment until all data were analysed (Grbich, 2007; Marshall, 2006).

**3.1.4.1 Content analysis**

Latent content analysis was used to analyse the data from multiple sources. This method allows the interpretation of a variety of texts at the same time. Content analysis is the process of organising, examining, identifying and listing data. In other words, it is the process of focusing deeply onto the meaning of data by analysing language, words or certain activities found in data (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Latent content analysis was selected as it focuses on interpretation of the underlying meaning of the text and relationship (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The units of analysis were teachers, their environment and their actions within their context. The content analysis focused on eliciting the deeper meaning of words and phrases by looking at the interactive nature of language, as language is situated or contextual. The manner in which words are used in one context, and what those words mean, may differ in how
they are used in another. Thus, the aim was to interpret data based on the teachers’
context to ensure that their thoughts were well captured.

Data was then sorted and categorised according to meaningful units and code families
were created. The code families were put under relevant code family names, also
referred to in the literature as categories/sub-themes, and explored in greater depth for
final themes. Tentative explanations were then developed for the emergent themes.
Each teacher’s transcript was analysed separately in order to elicit the uniqueness of
each teacher’s experience and meaning (Gibbs, 2007; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Throughout the processes the researcher noted whether data elicited the type of
information that described teachers’ professional identity. After this, I checked to
determine whether the themes occurred in all or some of the data. The relationships
between themes, any contradictory responses and gaps in understanding for further
exploration were also checked. After identifying the final themes, I related them to the
literature and the theoretical framework of the study to interpret the results (Grbich,
2007).

3.1.4.2 Discourse analysis

There are different explanations and definitions of discourse analysis. Some authors
focus on dialogue and others on written texts. Some authors combine both spoken and
written texts, and then describe discourse as all forms of spoken interaction, and written
texts (Woodilla, 1998). Fulcher (2005) defines discourse analysis as studying talks and
conversations by focusing on systems of social meaning and the process of the social
interaction. The present study adopted and combined Fulcher (2005) and Gee’s (1999)
definitions of discourse analysis. These views consider discourses as written or spoken
texts. That is, patterns of speech taken from different talks, written texts and
conversation characterised by social meaning and social interaction.
Since there is no one linear way of transcribing discourse from data, but rather there are various ways, this research placed the emphasis of analysis on the different features of conversation and interaction during transcription; moving back and forth to make sense of the data. The research question of this study required close attention to the kind of language teachers used; the grammatical and stylistic features (Fulcher, 2005). Discourse analysis is used to search for signs (Gee, 1999); the meaning and structure of language analysis that makes sense of social action and people’s condition (Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Henning et al., 2004; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

The data was first transcribed. The researcher read the teachers’ responses and notes that is the text, for clues. After a content analysis was completed, the data was again read for meaning and structure of language, such as word usage, figures of speech, views or claims, what is left unsaid, pauses, hesitations, use of passive voice, and so on. Attention was also paid to non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, clenching of fists, language preference, and so on. This was made possible as the researcher had paid attention to these features during the interviews (Silverman, 2000). Common patterns of speech and how teachers constructed and related issues of their lives were identified.

During the group interviews the researcher observed the teachers discussing matters and noted the patterns of conversation and power relations. During the later analysis stage, the researcher noted the language used by teachers as they interacted with their peers and learners, and the symbolic meaning of that language in pictures and metaphors. The focus was on the deep meaning of the teachers’ words because words may mean several things. Dominant and recurring discourses were used as units of meaning (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Specifically, the focus of the analysis was on any signs in the data indicating signs of language that show the manner in which the teachers make sense of their reality in relation to the school, their identity and their habits. Data from the documents were also
essential in analysing and understanding the predominant discourses that influenced or
drove the identity formation within the school (Gee, 1999). Related codes were noted
(Henning, et al., 2004) and related codes were later developed into discourse themes.
This was done by moving back and forth between data transcripts in search for
meaningful patterns. Furthermore, patterns of speeches, words and phrases within
transcripts, as well as in the informal conversations, were noted by examining the
presence or repetition of certain words and phrases in the texts (Babbie & Mouton,
2001). Once identified the patterns were then labelled.

The empirical data analysis is discussed in Chapter 4.

**TABLE 3.9: EXAMPLES OF DISCOURSES OF TEACHERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Family: discourses of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Created: 11/15/10 12:54:07 PM (Super)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes (12): [&quot;D-The pain and sin of being a teacher&quot;] [D- teacher working space] [D-teacher language] [D - aggressive language] [D - cleaning better than teaching] [D - Controlled entrance : symbol of a prison] [D - harmony versus coercion] [D - interdependency] [D - Lack of knowledge] [D - reasons for discontinuing studies: serving teachers needs] [D - spirit of despair and despondency] [D - Unhappiness can breed resentment and lack of cooperation from staff members.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation(s): 40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT/SETTING

The study was conducted at one township primary school, known by the pseudonym “Bontle” in Witwatersrand, Gauteng, South Africa. The school consisted of Black learners only, and was located in a middle class area, but accommodated children from a neighbouring informal settlement. The school was fairly well resourced in comparison to other schools in the area. It was the only one with an annual school magazine. The school had a good reputation, which led to an influx of learners from grades zero to seven; and neighbouring schools losing learners while “Bontle” was overcrowded. The teachers in the school were Black. The teacher-learner ratio was 39 teachers to 1138 learners (39:1138) at the time of the study. There were more female (28) teachers than males (11). Most of the teachers were experienced and had been teaching for a long time. Most had undergraduate degrees and some had post-graduate degrees. There were very few novice teachers in the school. The school had two deputy principals, one for the foundation phase and one for intermediate and senior phases. Some of the teachers were unionists and served at district and regional levels as officials. Their political affiliations differed, and, as a result, they belonged to unions affiliated with different political parties.

The school has had four principals since its inception January 2003. Two were acting principals. The principal at the time of the research perceived himself as a team leader and not a manager. He delegated duties to his subordinates. As a result, he formed twelve committees ranging from bereavement to the feeding scheme committee. Some of these committees, together with the School Management Team, had to look at the day to day running of the school. The principal did not make an individual decision, unless it was sanctioned by all the staff members or members concerned. At the end of every year all staff members, including administrators and general workers went on a strategic planning workshop and a team building holiday for seven days.
The parents in the school assisted with the maintenance of the school. They provided their services in building and upgrading of classrooms, and together with the school community, helped with the raising of funds for the school. The school had two computer rooms before one was broken into and all computers were stolen. The school’s official languages were IsiZulu and Sesotho. The learners were also predominately IsiZulu and Sesotho speaking, but there were also Setswana and IsiXhosa speaking learners. The classes in the school were also divided according to these groups. The classes were overcrowded due to the high intake of the school. The learners ranged from forty-five to seventy-two learners per classroom.

The school was recognised and awarded prizes several times by the Department of Education as one of the better-administered schools in the district, resulting in the principal being transferred to the district office. In 2005 the third principal of the school Mr MM was seconded to another school in the district to help with discipline and to bring order and stability among the staff members. The acting principal then embraced the culture of success, cooperation and shared responsibility. This school was chosen as the researcher lived in the surrounding area, and the school encouraged and welcomed the participation of the community members in improving the school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>LEARNERS</th>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>RACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary urban township</td>
<td>Grade 1-7</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>39 teachers plus the principal and the 2 deputy principals = 42–11 males &amp; 31 females</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sesotho &amp; IsiZulu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation phase</td>
<td>Grade 0-1</td>
<td>Grade 0 - 3 = 542</td>
<td>16 teachers including the HOD</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 0 – 3</td>
<td>Sesotho &amp; 1 IsiZulu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 1-3 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sesotho &amp; 2 IsiZulu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Each grade is made up of 2 IsiZulu and 2 Sesotho classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learners range between 48 to 56 per class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, “the human as an instrument.” It can also be referred to as a critical subjectivity. In the current research this entailed that I continuously checked personality and fluid self when in the field. I was conscious at all times of myself and my activities so that I could avoid any negative impact towards my participants. I monitored my behaviour, activities and characteristics at all times. I respected my participants and
prioritised their well-being over my own. Reinharz (1997) cited in Denzin and Lincoln (2000:183) argues that we do not only “bring the self to the field… [we also] create the self in the field”. Again, I continuously engaged in self-reflection to avoid bias and false assumptions. I was sensitive to the context and the teachers in order to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions and experiences of how they make meaning of their environment. Thus, I concentrated on how participants make meaning of their environment by looking at aspects that helped teachers make meaning and how this impacted on their identities. This was to ensure that I co-created meaning with the participants (Henning et al., 2004).

This notion of co-creating meaning is supported by Merriam (1998:5) who sees the researcher as a reflective research instrument who must ensure avoidance of biases or “subjectivities,” and who should always ensure that he/she do not shape the collection and interpretation of the data. Thus, during interpretation of data I avoided prioritising my voice. I ensured that I accepted the preliminary findings of two of the participants as they were dictated by the context. Furthermore, since it was my responsibility to employ relevant adjustment when necessary, I had to accept the delayed process of completion of my study and acknowledge the policy changes that took place by going back to the research site to collect more data. I found that things had changed from the time I was there and that I had to adjust and accept the changed contexts and situations.

I reflected on my research as part of the process of knowledge production. My interaction with the teachers and what I observed was used as data and incorporated for analysis. Both my subjectivities and those of participants formed part of the research process and I continuously reflected on all the activities we engaged in, including our actions and feelings. I recorded my behaviour every time I came back from the field; it became data, and formed part of the interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

My role as a researcher in interviews was of utmost importance. As a researcher I was tasked with the responsibility of establishing rapport in order to gain information from the
participants. Thus, I familiarised myself with the environment and endeavoured to know the participants better. The participants chose the place and room of the interviews. Those that preferred to be interviewed in their home language were afforded the opportunity to do so. This was a way of establishing the non-threatening atmosphere and ensuring that the atmosphere was characterised by a safe, caring, and trusting relationship. I respected the participants' contribution by accepting the responses I received from them even when they did not suit what I wanted to hear. I probed and prompted the participants respectfully to get clarification of their responses. The questions I asked were non-judgmental and non-threatening to participants; this was done to encourage positive interaction between myself and the teachers (de Vos et al., 2002).

I played a pivotal role as a researcher during data collection. My biases, values, and judgment had to be explicitly acknowledged (Mouton, 2001). I had biases about the impact of OBE on teachers' identity that I had to deal with. I held subjective views about the seven roles of educators and thus expected to find them in the field. For this reason, I ensured that my biases and my judgment of OBE did not influence my data collection and analysis. I used the words of participants and transcribed field notes as they were. I tried to write down the observations according to what I saw in the field. Furthermore, I reflected on my personality as it is part of the research process, including my actions and feelings.

As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the qualitative researcher is like a quilt-maker who employs the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, using whatever strategies and methods are at their disposal. As a quilt-maker, the researcher uses flexibility in designing and carrying out work (research) to be done. In other words, the researcher makes informed choices. In the process of quilt-making the researcher is systematically and rigorously conducting, taking into consideration the context of research. The researcher undergoes self-scrutiny and ensures active reflexivity
explanations that are generalizable in some form (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005).

Mouton (2001) states that researchers have the right to search for the truth but have the responsibility of considering the rights of the people they are researching. I respected the rights of the participants by ensuring that I did not violate their personhood through enforcing my views on them and respecting their rights to privacy. I asked them to set times that were suitable to them for interviews. Whatever step I took I ensured that I did not take it at the expense of participants. I ensured that their wellbeing was taken into account by setting boundaries for myself. Mouton (2001:239) refers to this as the “epistemic truth” that means “the moral commitment that scientists are required to make to the search for truth and knowledge.”

3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness means that others must have confidence in the findings of this research (Patton, 2000). To increase the trustworthiness of the study, four criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research were employed (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; and Trochim, 2005). The authors state that all research must have “truth value” (credibility), “consistency” (dependability), “applicability” (transferability) and “neutrality” (conformability) to be considered valuable.

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with establishing that the findings are believable from the participants’ point of view (Patton, 2002, Trochim, 2002). The nature and purpose of qualitative research requires participants to authenticate the results because the researcher has to see the phenomena through their eyes. According to Seale (2002), credibility is a process of ensuring the results of a study are accepted as true from the
teachers’ perspective. Each time interviews were transcribed, teachers were asked to check them to eliminate inaccuracies, misinterpretations and biases (Seale, 2002).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), qualitative researchers should ensure credibility through the techniques and methods they employ to gather data. The current research used the employment of multiple data collection methods or triangulation (Seale, 2002, 2004). All the interviews were recorded to reduce bias. In addition, segments of the raw data were provided to other scholars and researchers as peer reviews to check for bias. The following activities also provided for credibility: a detailed research report was compiled; an audit trail from extensive notes was also available; all notes were retained; and a detailed description of the research process and outcomes was provided to all stakeholders.

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the research findings can be transferred and applied to other contexts outside the area of study. The transferability depends on the degree of similarity between the researched context and the other contexts the findings are transferred to (de Vos et al., 2002). To enhance transferability, the research work needed to be thorough with detailed descriptions. All data was saved to a CD so that it can be submitted with the study (de Vos et al., 1998:349). Since this research needed to be transferred to a different context other than the original one, I had to make a judgment as to how sensible the transfers would be. According to Denscombe (1998:85), “transferability does not necessarily prove that the researcher ‘got it right’, but that the researcher achieved consistency across techniques and that the findings are not tied to a particular method of data collection”. The current research achieved a rich description of the context. It detailed the varied experiences of teachers from different data sources and so ensured that they could be transferred and employed in various contexts. This research was also compared to the work of other scholars who have done so or might embark on a similar study of teachers.
3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability is how one determines and verifies the findings of a study by checking whether these findings can be applied and repeated with the same teachers in the same situation. In order to achieve this feature, the research described and justified the changing conditions that affected the teachers in the design of the study (Trochim, 2002). The research also accounted for this ever-changing research context by adopting necessary strategies. For example, the change of principals and positions (promotion) of some teachers extended the research by six months.

I have taken into consideration what Lincoln and Guba (1985) state, that to enhance the dependability the researcher has to use an "inquiry audit," by creating an html file on Atlas.ti allowing the public to review and examine the process and the product of the research for consistency. A full audit trail of thick descriptions is available, and extensive field notes are available. Furthermore, a detailed description of the research process, methods and copies of data collected, giving a full description of individual participants, the context, and my role as researcher is also available.

3.4.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the confirmation of research findings by other researchers and participants (Trochim, 2002, 2005). It means the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. To this end a "confirmability audit" with an audit trail of raw data, personal notes and preliminary information is available (Trochim, 2005). (Appendix E)

All procedures regarding checking of the data throughout the study have been documented. These data will be accessible and available for public scrutiny by any researcher, or scholars who might need them for re-analyses. As stated above, teachers were given the preliminary results for corroboration and confirmation (Trochim, 2005).
3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) outline three ethical principles that have to be observed in research. The first is that the autonomy of participants has to be respected. The teachers volunteered to participate, and they gave informed consent to participate. The teachers could withdraw at any time, and their identities and information were kept confidential.

The researcher honoured the culture, procedure, and protocol of the school and the department by asking permission to conduct the interviews. This was done through a letter seeking permission to conduct the study from the Gauteng Department of Education and the school management. The school and the district office were both given a letter describing what the study was about, why it should be conducted, who should participate, and how they would take part in the study. Thereafter, a meeting with all the stakeholders and teachers was convened to explain the contents of the letter. This provided all stakeholders with the opportunity to ask questions, and clarify misconceptions. Teachers were informed that they would be observed in and out of the classroom, that they would be expected to complete a journal about their daily activities for three months, and that they would be supplied with cameras to capture daily occurrences. Each teacher who volunteered was given the letter of consent to participate in the research. The letter also ensured them of the confidentiality of the information they were going to provide. Furthermore, a letter to view learners' work was given to each teacher to give to their learners for permission from their parents. (Appendix B)

The second principle is that of non-maleficence, which implies that no one may be harmed by the research. To ensure non-maleficence all teachers were informed about the study. The potential risks of the study were outlined as social (their relationship with others), physical (their bodies), emotional (their minds) or anything that might harm their wellbeing. Because of different political affiliations in the school, the researcher ensured
that no negative or destructive information was divulged about other political unions or parties during the observations and interviews. No destructive criticism of the school, authority or anyone was allowed in the interviews and observations (de Vos et al., 2002).

Confidentiality was prioritised. To ensure ethical principles, since the interviews were conducted where participants work, and that the information they furnished has to do with their workplace, private lives and employer, interviews were conducted privately in the teachers’ classrooms or other preferred places. Participants were informed that they would be recorded during the interviews. According to different scholars, amongst them Taylor and Bogdan (1998), the researcher should always take into consideration the welfare and rights of the participants to avoid harm. de Vos et al., (2002), states that the participants have the right to choose when, where, by whom, to whom, and to what extent can they disclose and reveal their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

Lastly, beneficence – the researcher had to ensure that the research would benefit the community being researched and society at large, directly or indirectly. The results of the current research will be provided to the teachers, and their employer for improvement of teacher development. In the case of misinformation and errors, the researcher undertakes to acknowledge, recognise, and amend any which may occur. This research did not employ deception of any kind. Covey et al., (2003), in de Vos et al., (2002:67), describes deception as “withholding information deliberately and offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation by subjects when they otherwise may possibly have refused it. This involves lying about the research itself.” Denzin and Lincoln (2004) refer to deception as setting people up to get information, infiltrating and misrepresenting oneself."

Trust, according to Seale et al. (2004:234), “refers to the relationship between the researcher and the participants and to the researcher’s responsibility not to “spoil” the field for others in the sense that potential research subjects become reluctant to
participate in future research. In this way trust also applies to the research report or
discursive practices defining standards for presenting both the researcher and the work
as trustworthy. In this research, there was mutual trust from both sides. Participants
were free to question the researcher if they did not understand the procedure or any
other elements. The researcher also gave the teachers the right to not answer any
questions that they felt were deceptive and not beneficial to them (Seale et al., 2004, de
Vos et al., 2002).

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, the research design and methodology.
In addition, the rationale for the sampling, interviews, observation, visual data,
document analysis, teacher journal and informal conversations was provided.

Chapter 4 discusses the empirical data which were analysed for content and discourse.
It will also explain the data in terms of significance and refer to relevant literature.
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research design, along with the methods for this inquiry. This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from the site through interviews, visual presentations, teacher journals, informal group interviews, documents and observations. The chapter is the empirical nexus of the thesis. I cite from raw data liberally, because it reflects the tone and the identity of the teachers better than I could represent in academic style.

Specifically, this chapter will give a full description of each participant. This will be followed by a full description of the observation of the school, then the description of each participant’s own observations. Notes on the interviews and informal conversations will follow the observations and finally, an analysis of the documents is presented. The analysis of visual material (photos and so forth) will be presented in conjunction with other collection methods so as to complement them. Lastly, the themes and categories identified during analysis will be discussed and illustrated with ample inserts of "raw" data from the corpus of data used in the Atlasti analysis.

4.2 OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Two of the teachers were trained in the system of teacher education prior to the reform in teacher education and had been teaching prior to 1996. The other two were trained in the OBE system that has already been referred to in the thesis. The choice of teachers was based on various aspects ranging from experience to role and position held in the school. The teachers’ career trajectories stretch from 1980 to 2008.

Data was collected from all four participants using varied methods of data collection. The first data set was made up of observation, individual interviews and group interviews of all participants, which were later transcribed, computerised and analysed.
The second data set was made up of teachers’ journals, photographs and document analysis, and, like the first data set, was analysed by content and discourse analysis for common themes.

4.3 SCHOOL OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS

The collection of data took place over a period of three and a half years. I visited the school at least once every three months. The study started in 2005 and ran to 2008. The research started with a general visit to the school to see if it suited the research purpose and objectives. This visit was then followed by a more formal visit to request that the school participated in the research. A staff meeting was held where I explained the purpose of the study, how it would benefit the teachers, and if there were teachers who wanted to volunteer for the research.

Four teachers volunteered to participate and suited the study requirements, namely: a good mix of managers, novice teachers, veteran teachers, unionists, older teachers, and genders. The school observations were conducted from April 2005 – January 2008 intermittently, depending on the participants’ availability and permission granted by the school.

4.3.1 Observation of teacher Tom

Tom was observed in his classroom eight times. The lessons were different and varied as they depended on the grade he was teaching. The number of learners observed varied between forty-two and fifty-five and were from grade five to seven. The observation took place over a period of three years. Appointments were made to suit Tom’s availability as he was involved in several activities in the school. I took notes during the observations, but no audio tape was used due to issues of trust.

All the classes observed were overcrowded and lacked basic and necessary facilities such as projectors, tables, cupboards and others. I always sat at in front of the
classroom, at the teacher’s desk to observe the lessons. There was some uneasiness experienced during the first observed lesson, and the subject (Tom) later explained that he felt that I may criticise him. After this lesson he felt more at ease and trust was developed.

During the observation Tom explained that he was trained to teach that particular subject, but did not have resources to use, including textbooks. He relied on visits to the library and orientating himself about the learning area he was teaching. He also did not have the necessary apparatus and had to construct the items he needed. At one stage he used a model made out of sweets to teach the lesson. Tom also encouraged learners to make models. Tom had been trained to teach African languages but was teaching sciences. He was unhappy about this as he said it was imposed on him without consultation. He asked me to provide him with a textbook if possible. This created an ethical dilemma, but in consultation with the study leader, it was agreed the book could be provided.

4.3.2 Observation of teacher Musa

Teacher Musa was observed more than 10 times. She taught the grade two Sesotho group. Her classes consisted of between 50 and 70 learners for the three years she was observed. She taught her learners all the learning areas set out for grade two. Teacher Musa provided me with a visitation schedule with dates and times as she had other responsibilities in the school besides instruction. I collected observation notes to be transcribed later, and the audio tape was not used due to issues of trust.

Teacher Musa always prepared for her lessons thoroughly. Her class was overcrowded and lacked the basic and necessary facilities. I sat in front to observe the lessons, and as she did not have enough space to sit in her classroom, she had to improvise with her table. Teacher Musa shared her desk with learners who had various learning problems. Every time she was teaching she had to turn to learners behind her because there was
nowhere else to stand. She improvised to assist those learners with learning problems with a self-made book which they had to take home every Friday for supervision and assistance by their parents. The work in the book was more simplified than that of the rest of the group.

During the observation Musa explained that she did not perceive herself as a teacher but a counsellor. She also explained that she loved children very much and would like to help those with problems. She indicated her wish to register as a social worker, which she subsequently did.

4.3.3 Observation of teacher Buti

Teacher Buti was observed in his classroom eight times. The lessons were different and varied as they depended on the class he was teaching at the time. He taught grade seven. The number of learners he taught varied between forty and fifty at a time. The observation took place over a period of three years. The teacher made appointments together depending on his availability since he was involved in several activities at the school. Observation notes were taken and transcribed later. Audio tapes were not used due to issues of trust.

Comparatively speaking his classes were not overcrowded, but they did lack basic facilities. I always sat in front to observe his lessons. From the onset he was open and welcoming of me. He taught the subject areas he was trained in, and enjoyed it, although he did note reservations about the Department of Education. He did not have the use of resources—including the textbook. Like Tom, he relied more on improvised sources and resources. He also requested that I provide him with the necessary textbook. Again the ethics were considered, and the book provided. Nevertheless, he always had a comprehensive and detailed lesson prepared.
4.3.4 Observation of teacher Ann

This observation did not take place as Ann pulled out of the study citing her managerial responsibilities as a reason. Later, she asked to return. However, I was still unable to observe her in classroom. Nonetheless, teacher Ann was the acting principal when the study commenced and accommodated me and demonstrated a lot of pride in her school. Teacher Ann always welcomed me into the principal’s office until the new school principal was employed. She became one of the deputy principals of the school.

Outside the classroom, teacher Ann interacted with all the teachers who were under her leadership in a constructive and positive manner. She, Musa and other members of staff held prayer meetings during first break every day to pray for the smooth running of the school and the wellbeing of learners. She also interacted well with learners and was respected by the whole school community. She perceived herself as a hard working teacher who should be rewarded for her dedication. She indicated that she was unhappy about the process of how the new principal was appointed, but she also indicated that she was willing to support the new principal and to work harmoniously with him. She also aspired to be awarded the prize of teacher of the year. She asked me to write her a letter of reference to send in to the teacher awards. This was done after consulting with the research supervisor.

Teacher Ann encouraged team work. She always spoke well of her school and held her new principal in high esteem. She praised the leadership of the new principal and the other deputy and thanked them for being part of her team. She encouraged other teachers to participate in academic and teaching activities.

4.4 OVERVIEW PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS AND EMERGING THEMES

Data analysis involved reading through captured data a few times and at the same time dismantling and rebuilding it (data) for the purpose of elaborating and interpreting the
information (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). In order to accomplish the above, the data was consolidated, condensed, and then interpreted.

Observation data analysis started with the writing of field notes from observation (Gibbs, 2007; Riemer, 2008). While observing, I took pictures and recorded events that were relevant to the study. At the same time, preliminary analysis took place to begin to identify which themes were emerging.

**TABLE 4.1: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED FIELD NOTES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation 2: The second visit: 9th February 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As I approached the gate, I met the learners running towards the school gate which was locked. The learners appeared tense because they were late and were locked outside the school gate. I stopped at the school gate at 8h09, there were other learners waiting at the gate, they too looked tense maybe because of the locked gate. They did not talk to each other but just waited quietly at the gate. Outside, in the school there were only ground workers who were busy working. The gatekeeper won't open the gate for some time and I waited at the gate for about five minutes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation 3: 2 March 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I arrival at the school at 10h45 am. The gate was locked as usual. All learners and teachers continued as usual with their work. There were only grounds men outside the school busy with their work. I entered the school through the administration block. There was no one in the foyer and it was clean as usual…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photographs were downloaded to the computer, and transferred to Atlas.ti, a Hermeneutic Unit (HU) file which keeps data and the project, which is then summarised.
as indicated in the pictures below. (The field notes were also uploaded as were the interviews and all other recorded data).

**FIGURE 4.1: LOCKED GATES**

These photographs were taken at the main entrance of the school. This is the main gate and the gentleman depicted here is the one who gives access to the school. The main gate gives access to the school and it is the first gate before the second gate that leads to the ground or access to the school building. Everyone who wants to enter or leave the school premises must enter via the gentleman (gatekeeper) including the teachers and principal.

**FIGURE 4.2: SCHOOL GATES PREVENTING ENTRY TO MAIN YARD**
In the process of observation all four teachers were interviewed individually and as a group. Before the interview all four teachers were given the questions to peruse so that they could ask questions before the interview started. The same interview schedule was used for all four teachers and only differed during probing or prompting of teachers to get clarity from them. Data from the interviews was first transcribed and then sent away for professional translation. Two of the teachers used both English and their mother tongue.

| The first photo in Figure 4.2 shows the window that teachers, learners and other stakeholders use to communicate with the principal, the deputy principals and the administration staff. It separates the occupants of the administration block from the rest of the school. |
| The second photo in Figure 4.2 shows the second gate before entering the main ground or access to the school building. This gate is attached to the administration building before entering. It helps control entry of people to the main grounds and building. It is the second controlled entrance of the school that separates the school community from the public. Staff, learners and public movements in and out of the school are controlled. |
TABLE 4.2: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED AND TRANSLATED DATA OF THE GROUP INTERVIEW

Buti: I think. I think, ah, I just wanted to comment. I just want to tell you that teachers are brave and strong despite all the stresses and frustration that we come across. One thing that we want to see, is to see our learners being better citizens. I think more than “i frustration, si thatha I frustration ne stress zethu, sizi begele ngale nga phandle and concentrate ku laba ntwana” (we put away our frustration and focus on the learners/children) because that is what we are here for. They know nothing about “ama” (the) politics “wama” (of the) OBEs and whatever “uya bona” (do you see) so “thina” (we) we are trying our best giving them the best that we have “ukuthi babe” (so that they can be) better.

All four teachers were given a journal to record their weekly activities and experiences. The journal was made up of questions as indicated in section 3.1.3.5. All four teacher journals were analysed manually, that is, by hand. The analysis of this data was guided by the aim and question of the study. The codes that emerged from the journals were incorporated into the other codes so as to complete the analysis (Riemer, 2008).
FIGURE 4.3: EXAMPLE OF TEACHER JOURNAL – MUSA’S JOURNAL
**TABLE 4.3: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW**

**Interviewer:** Tell me why you chose teaching as a career?

**Ann:** It is such a funny story *(She laughs and positions herself right on the chair)* a friend of mine coerced me to become a teacher. She influenced me and told me that we should go and train as teachers because we will make go teachers.

**Interviewer:** How did she do it?

**Ann:** Hey, hee!!!!!! *(SHE LAUGHS PASSIONATELY AGAIN)*, we were at boarding school you know, and were in our room and she just said.... *(NAME CONCEALED FOR ETHICAL REASONS)* “We must go for teaching; you will make a good teacher”. I thought she was joking. I was wrong because she continuously spoke about it until I fell in love with it. My friend … Would not stop.
### FIGURE 4.4 EXAMPLE OF THE STAFF ROSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT TO BE DONE</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>TARGET</th>
<th>CO-ORDINATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Term Plan</td>
<td>24.07.2006</td>
<td>Grade 6 &amp; 7 Educators</td>
<td>Mangena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll Learners and Teachers Books</td>
<td>07.08.2006</td>
<td>Grade 6 &amp; 7 Learners &amp; Educators</td>
<td>Mangena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LE Tests</td>
<td>14.08.2006</td>
<td>Grade 6 &amp; 7 Learners</td>
<td>Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish Support Evidence</td>
<td>05.09.2006</td>
<td>Grade 4-7 Educators</td>
<td>Mangena &amp; Msihi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Awareness</td>
<td>08.09.2006</td>
<td>Female Educators</td>
<td>B. Lebeto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of LD &amp; SD</td>
<td>15.09.2006</td>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>Mangena &amp; Msihi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reorganization of Marklists</td>
<td>21.09.2006</td>
<td>Grade 6-7 Educators</td>
<td>Mangena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Possible Retention</td>
<td>28.09.2006</td>
<td>Grade 4-7 Educators</td>
<td>Mangena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FIGURE 4.5: SCHOOL VISION

TO BE A SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE WHOSE GOAL IS:

- TO INFORM, NURTURE AND DEVELOP AN INNOVATIVE, RESPONSIBLE AND ASSERTIVE FUTURE LEADERSHIP THAT WILL PLAY A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN SOCIETY.
- BREAKING GROUND, BY EMBRACING DISADVANTAGED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND EQUIPPING THEM WITH LIFE SKILLS THAT WILL UPLIFT THEIR LIVES AND ADD VALUE TO
4.4.1 Organisation of data

The transcribed data and transcripts were typed up using pseudonyms. After this a manual analysis of one script, that of teacher Tom, was undertaken to determine the themes which would emerge as codes. Teacher Tom’s scripts were used as a framework to code the data. These codes were then confirmed with the research supervisor at the time.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSCRIPTION</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>MEMOS</th>
<th>Emerging Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Res:</strong> How do you perceive or see yourself as a teacher?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom: I am <strong>enjoying</strong> due to experience and growth in teaching.</td>
<td>Professional fulfillment.</td>
<td>Seem to be content. Body language does not show it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Res:</strong> What do you mean by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹This supervisor relocated but left notes for the persons who took over the supervision
enjoying, growth and experience?

**Tom:** I mean, my experience is growth and has helped me enjoy my work. There are things I am not happy about like money.

**Res:** what do you mean you are not happy? You've just said you enjoy your work.

**Tom:** I need a change of field due to remuneration. Teachers no longer have powers, learners have more powers. Parents have no powers. Learners rights counts a lot. Currently learners cannot be punished; corporal punishment has been abolished. Lack of parental and co-operation in learners’ lives is not up to professional fulfillment.

**Res:** I'm puzzled. He does not seem to be happy about teaching which is contradictory to what he said above.
Learners can't be retained even when there are valid reasons.

This process was a long one, and the amount of data then necessitated the use of a software programme to manage it. All data was then transferred to Atlas.ti, Hermeneutic Unit (HU) file which keeps data and projects. The Atlas.ti workflow describes the process of data analysis that took place after uploading data into the software.

**TABLE 4.5: EXAMPLE OF PRIMARY DOCUMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDING 15 PRIMARY DOCUMENTS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ P26: MUSA'S CLASSROOM OBSERVATION.DOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P27: MUSA FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW SEPTEMBER 2008.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P28: OBSERVATION REPORT2007.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P29: SANPAD OBSERVATION REPORT.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P30: VISIT APRIL 2006.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P32: VISIT 15 MAY 2007.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P33: SANPAD OBSERVATION REPORT.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P34: OBSERVATION 15 FEB 2006.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P35: TEACHER TOM CLASSROOM OBSERVATION 3 2007.RTF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ P36: TEACHER TOM CLASSROOM OBSERVATION 4 2007.RTF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The process of analysis started with inductive analysis of the teachers’ responses, with specific attention to discourse markers which related to professional identity. This included many rounds of questioning, reflecting, rephrasing, analysing, theorising, and verifying after each observation or interview (Grbich, 2007; Patton, 2002). After this, content and discourse analysis was undertaken systematically. The process of content analysis involved organising, examining, identifying and listing data using the technique known as “latent content analysis”. In other words, the focus was on the deep meaning of data by analysing language, words or certain activities represented in the data (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The units of analysis were teachers, their environment and their actions within their context.

The relationships and commonalities of small utterances were coded and later divided into code families – an Atlas.ti name referring to categories and given a new label. The next step was to compare the data segments with each other and to see similarities and possibly assign more segments to the code. Then, the segments were compared to other data units to determine the emerging patterns. The emerging patterns and attached quotations or teachers’ exact words were then labelled (Flick et al., 2005).

**TABLE 4.6: EXAMPLES OF SOME CODES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMERGENT CODES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>Resources: books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents expectation of teachers</td>
<td>Respect for work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass one pass all</td>
<td>Responsibility and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of colleagues</td>
<td>Retention problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Perception of leadership
- My children, my learners...
- Need for respect and support from district
- Need for respect from parents and district
- Negative teacher behaviour
- OBE-cut and paste professionals
- OBE teaching versus traditional teaching

### Role of teaching
- School experiences as a child
- School magazine: makes me proud
- Self-perception
- Teaching: in the past we had support
- Teaching: pastoral role
- Teaching: view of the future
- The old times
- There is nothing challenging
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Religion and union

The researcher used two principal modes of working with ATLAS.ti in analysing the data. These were the *textual level* and the *conceptual level*. The *textual level* focuses on activities such as segmentation of data files; coding text, image, audio, and video; and writing memos. The *conceptual level* focuses on model-building activities such as linking codes to networks. Thus, at the *textual-level*, the primary document (PD) was segmented into quotations and comments were added (when necessary) to passages to make notes for (Atlas.ti User’ Guide, 2004: 17). Selected primary documents passages, memos and comments were also coded for future retrieval.
TABLE 4.7: AN EXAMPLE OF SEGMENTED DATA

All current quotations (231). Quotation-Filter: All

HU: VALENCIA_PhD july 2010
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\valenciam\MyDocuments\Scientific Software\A...\VALENCIA_PhD july 2010.hpr6]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 06/14/11 02:55:11 AM

P 1: ANN'S INTERVIEW.doc - 1:11 [In our times we use to really, really do practical...] (41:41) (Super)

Codes: [teaching: in the past we had support]

In our times we use to really, really do practical work in class, people in authority use to come to class and demonstrate practically how things are done, there after he will observe you and give you the report on this and that and that, and maybe he will leave you for some months and then come to check if you have improved, whether you are coming ok, gives you the right to do the it again. He will show you that your chart should be this way or that way English. You know what my mother says about us and this generation?
P 1: ANN'S INTERVIEW.doc - 1:7 [She says "oh my child, you mix English and you just..."] (29:29) (Super)

Codes: [Language: use of English]

No memos

She says "oh my child, you mix English and you just throw one word here and there. I always listen to you talking, one English word here and there (SHE LAUGHS), hey, and I said' Oh! no! no! Mama! What do you mean? And she says "please listen to me, I speak good English" Yes, my child you do speak English but it is not so good, listen to me, mine is so good" your children are worse.

P 3: MUSA INTERVIEW COMBINED.doc - 3:15 [It depends; I do give spiritual and academic couns..] (160:160) (Super)

Codes: [teaching and social work]

No memos

It depends; I do give spiritual and academic counseling

P 3: MUSA INTERVIEW COMBINED.doc - 3:16 [I'm a Christian and as a Christian I must help and..] (162:162) (Super)

Codes: [teaching and social work]

I'm a Christian and as a Christian I must help and aid those in need. I tell them about God's ability to help, and that they must take their problems to Him. I also check what to say before; I don't just tell anyone who does not want to hear about God.
Musa: I found difficulty in adjusting and change what I know to something new. A trained teacher, but in a wrong school. I had to do away with my high school teacher training experiences and adopt a new one that meant real change to me. It took me long to adjust and get use to it. As I was adjusting then came OBE. What is OBE by the way? I was taken from one training to another. I was confused and lost. Education changed and changed and changed. We were trained by people who do not know what they are doing. Bossy IDSO, subject advisors who know nothing. (She sighs) I am teaching in primary school because I had no alternative. I work in a school where everything has to be perfect and submitted everything on time, participating in fund raising stuff. My principal is a perfectionist come at 07:30, lock gates at 8:00. (Throws hands in the air).

FIGURE 4.6: EXAMPLE OF CODED DATA FROM ATLAS.TI

FIGURE 4.7: DRAPE Empty STAFFROOM
All similar codes were grouped together, and were allocated a new label or name. The grouped codes or new labels are referred to as code families. In qualitative terms the codes families are referred to as categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Family: Choice of profession</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Created:</strong> 07/20/10 09:11:59 AM (Super)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes (10):</td>
<td>[Administrator. So most of the funds are administer..] [After training I became so much in love with teach...] [black schools vs white schools] [change: confuses us] [Christian faith] [communication with other teachers] [reason for choosing teaching] [teaching as community contribution] [There is nothing challenging] [Why teaching as a career]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation(s): 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Family: discourses of teachers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Created:</strong> 11/15/10 12:54:07 PM (Super)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes (12):</td>
<td>[&quot;D-The pain and sin of being a teacher&quot;] [D- teacher working space] [D-teacher language] [D - aggressive language] [D - cleaning better than teaching] [D - Controlled entrance : symbol of a prison] [D - harmony versus coercion] [D - interdependency] [D - Lack of knowledge] [D - reasons for discontinuing studies: serving teachers needs] [D - spirit of despair and despondency] [D - Unhappiness can breed resentment and lack of cooperation from staff members.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation(s): 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Code Family: need for support

Created: 11/15/10 01:04:40 PM (Super)

Codes (40): ["D-The pain and sin of being a teacher"] [" it is not easy to teach something that I was not..] [Attitude of the department towards teachers] [Authoritarian and bully teacher] [Avoidance of unnecessary conflict] [Being treated like people “ya ka batho, eseng li p..] [Challenges of personal life] [Classroom appearance and organisation] [Condition of the classroom] [Conducive working conditions. Conditions of where ..] [Coping skills] [D- teacher working space] [D - cleaning better than teaching] [D - harmony versus coercion] [D - interdependency] [D - Lack of knowledge] [D - reasons for discontinuing studies: serving teachers needs] [D - spirit of despair and despondency] [D - Unhappiness can breed resentment and lack of cooperation from staff members.] [Disparate for help] [discontinued studies] [feeling of despair with department and union] [feelings powerlessness and despondency] [goal setting] [HIV and AIDS as a concern] [Impartation of life skills] [Lack of resources] [Money as a determining factor of a profession] [money as a source of leaving the teaching profession] [need for further studies] [negative impact of pressure from the department of education] [overloaded teacher] [Teachers are suffering] [Teachers just do not have an identity] [teachers problems] [teaching challenges] [Teaching responsibilities] [team work] [there are no textbooks and I always have to go to ...] [we are teachers and “ha re li clerks” (we are not ...]

Quotation(s): 89

Working on the textual level was followed by the work on the conceptual level, which allowed me to visually see the segmented or selected parts “and codes into diagrams
that graphically outline complex relations" (Atlas.ti User’s Guide, 2004: 26). The networking assisted in constructing concepts and theories as prescribed by the relationships between codes and other parts of text. The conceptual level refines the code families (categories) and enables one to unearth other associations in the data that were not noticeable or apparent before and through manual analysis.

FIGURE 4.9: A NETWORK TO REFINE CODE FAMILIES
4.4.2 Renamed categories

The code families/categories were further refined and renamed to enable me to see the emerging patterns and to make them more meaningful. All the thirty six (36) code families were compared with each other to validate the data. In the process, the code families were integrated with each other manually. While refining the code families, those that were coherent, similar, relevant and suitable to the research question, aim of study and theoretical framework, were integrated into one final code family or theme. The code families that were not making sense were disintegrated and were compared and reintegrated into a newly formed final category (Patton, 2002). The final code families (themes) were created manually by comparing, linking and grouping the same code families. These categories form the basis on which the themes will be discussed. Thus, the renamed final code families/ categories that emerged were the following:
TABLE 4.9: RENAMED CODE FAMILIES/CATEGORIES

Some codes are repeated to show the frequency that themes emerged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers see themselves as administrators</td>
<td>Confusion, burnout and despondency constitute teachers professional identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional teaching is preferred to OBE because it perceived as flexible</td>
<td>Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers’ teaching practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers express negative impact of policy in their classroom experiences as inhibiting their practice</td>
<td>Teachers express negative impact of policy in their classroom experiences as inhibiting their practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion as a vehicle for view of life</td>
<td>Teachers religious belief determines their behaviour and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity as a view of life</td>
<td>Teachers do not appreciate and value assigned seven role of educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ have to multi task both in school and outside home</td>
<td>Continuous changes confuse teachers because it creates instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not appreciate and value assigned seven role of educators</td>
<td>Teachers do not appreciate and value assigned seven role of educators because they see them as imposed and oppressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers’ teaching practice</td>
<td>Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers’ teaching practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a poor relationship between teachers and the department of education</td>
<td>There is a poor relationship between teachers and the department of education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers’ embrace different teaching philosophies and teaching method
Confusion, burnout and despondency constitute teachers professional identity
Continuous changes confuse teachers because it creates instability
Traditional teaching is preferred to OBE because it perceived as flexible
Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers’ teaching practice
Most of the discourse is of discouragement and they wish to leave the teaching profession
Teachers express negative impact of policy in their classroom experiences as inhibiting their practice
Teaching challenges experienced by teachers within the school
Teachers perceive themselves as day parents, care givers and guiders of learners
Controlled gate or entrance is conceptualised as a symbol of a prison
Affiliation to different unions and political party serve as hindrances to individual professional growth and development
Teachers prefer collegiality with teachers and learners as a means of creating a conducive atmosphere
Love for learners’ strengthen and sustains them to continue in the teaching profession
Union rivalry: intolerance
Unionists and unionism
Community value and needs are paramount in teachers’ lives
Teachers have the need to improve skills
Teachers are in dire need of training in teaching and life skills
Personal development is required for teachers to cope within the school environment
Community value and needs are paramount in teachers’ lives
They feel serving the in different committees and community activities like HIV-AIDS are vital.
Political affiliation as a dual tool of impediments and community service.

4.5 IDENTIFICATION OF THEMES AND PATTERNS

According to the data analysed up to this point the teachers saw themselves as deeply troubled and demotivated, having lost their professional identity during the big political change in the country and the wave of educational reform. There was no replacement for the professional identity of servitude of the apartheid era. It left a big void. The transfer to an autonomous and critical practitioner identity was not achieved during the two successive education reforms in 2005, with the revised curriculum, now referred to as the National Curriculum Statement.

In the patterns that were constituted by the various themes of the analysis, the teachers expressed themselves using images of schools as prisons, day caregivers and security guards, administrators and so forth. Despite this sense of despondency the teachers persevered and saw themselves as resilient, mostly because they were driven by their identity as citizens, their place in a community, and their collegial relationships.
FIGURE 4.11: THE DIAGRAM THAT SHOWS THE PATTERN IDENTIFIED FROM THEMES
Thus, eleven final themes emerged and were described as follows:

- the classroom demotivates teachers
- teachers see the profession as expression of knowledge and their faith systems, with religion as a source of strength
- the policy on the norms and standards assigning the seven roles of teachers is viewed as unreliable and even oppressive
- rules of social conduct inhibit their work
- a dominant discourse of despondency pervades teachers' interactions
- using multiple images and metaphors to capture teacher identity influx
- political affiliation and unionism which inhibits practice
- collegiality and relationships with learners as a driving force
- serving the country as patriotic citizens
- a dire need for professional development
- resilience due to community values.

In the next table, I indicate how the themes were derived from the categories.
### TABLE 4.10: THEMES WHICH EMERGED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers see themselves as administrators</td>
<td>1. The classroom demotivates teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion, burnout and despondency constitute teachers' professional identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional teaching is preferred to OBE because it is perceived as flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers' teaching practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers express negative impact of policy and curriculum in their classroom experiences as inhibiting their practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion as a vehicle for view of life</td>
<td>2. Teachers see the teaching profession as expression of knowledge and their faith systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers religious belief determines their behaviour and actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity as a view of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers do not appreciate and value assigned seven role of educators because they see them as imposed and oppressive</td>
<td>3. The policy on the norms and standards assign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional teaching is preferred to OBE because it is perceived as flexible</td>
<td>seven roles of teachers which are viewed as unreliable and even oppressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ have to multi task both in school and outside at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous change confuses teachers because it creates instability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ have to multi task both in school and outside home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers’ teaching practice</td>
<td>4. Rules of social conduct inhibit their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a poor relationship between teachers and the department of education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion, burnout and despondency constitute teachers professional identity</td>
<td>5. Dominant discourse of despondency pervades their interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous change confuses teachers because it creates instability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional teaching is preferred to OBE because it is perceived as flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support by parents and employer inhibit teachers’ teaching practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the discourse is of discouragement and they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers express the negative impact of policy and curriculum in their classroom experiences as inhibiting their practice and professional growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching challenges experienced by teachers within the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers perceive themselves as day parents, care givers, prisoners and guiders of learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled gate or entrance is conceptualised as a symbol of a prison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers use multiple images and metaphors to capture their identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union rivalry: intolerance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unionists and unionism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political affiliation as a dual tool of impediments or enabler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers source of motivation and strength is collegiality and with and learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love for learners strengthen and sustains them to continue in the teaching profession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community values and needs are paramount in teachers’ lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teachers use multiple images and metaphors to capture their identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Political affiliation and unionism inhibits practice,</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8. Collegiality and relationship with learners are driving forces</td>
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<td>9. Serving the country as loyal and</td>
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<td>patriotism citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers have the need to improve skills</td>
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<td>Teachers are in dire need of training in teaching and life skills</td>
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<td>Personal development is required for teachers to cope within the school environment</td>
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<td>10. They expressed the dire need for professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community value and needs are paramount in teachers’ lives</td>
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<tr>
<td>They feel serving in different committees and community activities like HIV-AIDS is vital</td>
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<td>11. They are resilient because of their community values</td>
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Each theme will be discussed individually in the following section. I utilise diagrammatic representation to situate my thinking graphically to show how categories were clustered in themes.
4.5.1 Theme 1: The classroom demotivates teachers

Teachers’ environment or space plays an important role in defining their identity. Their experiences are created and shaped within the school, in their classrooms as they teach learners, outside the classroom as they interact with colleagues and authority figures and with the interpretation of the education policies. Thus, in this case, teachers find their classroom demotivating and unrewarding. Teachers find themselves doing more administration work than teaching or focusing on learners. The rules they receive from the department of education are confusing resulting in burnout and despondency. This resulted in some of them comparing traditional teaching to OBE and showing preference for the former.

Furthermore a lack of support by parents with regard to homework and projects given to learners inhibits teaching practice. The department of education is perceived
by teachers as inhibiting their practice because they do not avail themselves for help in times of need. The other demotivating factor came as a result of continuous policy changes which impact classroom practice negatively and retard general teaching practice.

4.5.1.1 Teachers see themselves as doing too much paper work

The general analysis indicates that most teachers see themselves as administrators of too much paper work instead of teachers. Teachers indicate the following: they feel more like administrators than teachers, they spend most of their time in the classroom doing administrative work instead of focusing on their learners, the paper work is excessive (as indicated in teacher Tom’s interview), overcrowded classrooms are a hindrance to their wellbeing, they have to deal with each learner’s work and record their individual marks and performance, which is perceived as too much administration.

Teacher Tom’s response (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 022- 055)

**Interviewer:** How long is your school day?

**Tom:** It starts at 7:50 to 15:30. Learners start at 7:50 to 02:00 eh, from 02:00 to 15:30 Staff does admin work, like marking and remedial teaching. Ei too much paper work. I can’t study now. I studied in 2005 and intend to register next time.

**Interviewer:** Which courses were you registered for in 2005?

**Tom:** For a Diploma in learning barriers. And now I want to register for a B Com or Industrial Psychology.

**Interviewer:** How do you perceive or see yourself as a teacher?

**Tom:** I am enjoying due to experience and growth in teaching

Musa (Atlas. ti P27 Line 23 -24)
Interviewer: Paper work again, don't you think maybe you should be finishing the paper work now so that you are ready by the time they are needed.

Musa: Ja I know there is just too much paper work. I will not finish even if I start now. Some of the papers have to do with learners’ assessment so I must wait till then. I will do whatever I can now, let me tell you again. I hope you guys will tell the department to do reduce filling of papers, we are teachers and “ha re li clerks” (we are not clerks). They should avoid too much paperwork. When they come they don’t ask about my teaching they check how I filled in papers or the CASS. Teaching is boring now. We must just do away with this OBE.

4.5.1.2 Confusion, burnout and despondency constitute teachers’ professional identity

Teachers stated that the continuous policy changes are confusing to them because of instability of the curriculum. They are not sure of what to do in their classrooms anymore. Every time they think they understand the policy and curriculum requirements, there are abrupt changes which interfere with their comprehension of education and teaching practice. They alluded to the fact that teaching has become meaningless to them because they struggle with terminology that is continuously changed. They can hardly comprehend what is going on with education, especially the retention policy.

Musa had Teacher this to say (Atlas.ti v6 P3 Line 174 - 183)

Res: Another thing, how do you see the continuous policy changes in education?

Interviewer: hmm… they are a problem. Today there is this policy, when you get used to it, they change it and bring another policy, when we get use to the policy they change it again, it’s because they don't know what to do, hmmm… confusion only.
Res: How do these changes impact on you as a teacher and on your work and learners?

Interviewer: Sometimes I get confused not knowing what I’m doing is right or wrong

Musa: What do you mean?

Interviewer: What I’m supposed to do in class with my learners is confusing at times. When you think you are right with your learners they introduce something new. They tell you that do it this way, and not that way.

Musa: What is the specific thing that confuses you or that is continuously changed?

Teachers Musa and Tom also highlighted problems with assessment, especially Common Task Assessment. Musa stated that they are experiencing problems with assessing learners in the Foundation Phase, especially the grade two learners. Teachers do not know what to do with assessments because no one is sure of what is going on. Teachers do not feel confident with what they do and how they assess learners. Tom also stated that the department of education does not treat them like human beings.

Teacher Musa had this to say (Atlas.ti v6 P3 Line 183-190)

Interviewer: Assessment policies and other policies

Musa: Assessment is worse. CTA for grade 2 who some of them are not ready for this grade is difficult

Interviewer: What is CTA?

Musa: External tests. These are tests written by all grade 2. Like this one (Picks up a paper and shows it to me).

Interviewer: Oh, I can see.
**Musa:** It is not practical, look at this girl (pointing at a girl next to her table), she is struggling to complete, she copies other learners’ work. CTA is not good for this grade because some of the work is difficult for the learners.

**Interviewer:** How do these changes impact your personhood and your performance as a teacher?

**Musa:** Hmm…bad…very…bad. Like I said you end up not knowing what to do as a teacher. I feel that my performance is affected negatively by the changes. They make me want to leave…ja, that is why I feel over burdened by teaching. Sometimes I just teach because I love my learners and I always want to help them.

Teacher Tom’s response (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 022-033)

**Interviewer:** How do you view changes in education?

**Tom:** Assessment is ever changing I’m unsure. Inclusion is a problem due to lack of training.

4.5.1.3 Lack of support by parents and employer inhibits teachers’ teaching practice

All the teachers complained about a lack of support and resources. They indicated that there are insufficient teaching and learning resources. The infrastructure was also said to be insufficient. Teachers complained about overcrowding and lack of teaching equipment and they said that the department of education is doing nothing about it. During observation it became clear that some learners used chairs as make-shift desks which made it difficult for teachers to teach them. The foundation phase teachers needed space to move around and demonstrate activities, but the lack of space limited their actions and movements. For instance:

Teacher Tom’s response (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 022-033)
Tom:... infrastructure - not well equipped. We have no good resources. Teachers are not properly trained - only trained during eh, eh, eh OBE training which a fraction of training is. More training is needed.

Teacher Tom's response (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 256-273)

Interviewer: And then how do you find your school environment to be? You said good but overcrowded

Tom: Ja

Interviewer: Too much of a crowd and there is not enough equipment to use.

Tom: Ja

Interviewer: What do you mean by overcrowding?

Tom: That means we have more learners in our class, maybe a teacher is expected to 60 to 70 in a class whereas the ratio says 1:40 learners but when you go to white schools you find one teacher teaches only 20 or 25 learners, so that is overcrowding.

Interviewer: You said other school is 25 learners.

Tom: 25 learners.

Interviewer: A teacher is 1:25

Tom: And to us is 1:50, 1:70

Interviewer: How does overcrowding affect your job?

Tom: Ja, it affects it very much because you cannot even do an individual teaching, you cannot eh take the individual method or maybe individualised a problem for a particular learner, see or give a learner a particular or specific attention
Interviewer: So you can’t give learners individual attention?

Tom: Ja, you can’t, ja.

Interviewer: Ok, what do you mean by “not enough equipment”

Tom: Maybe teaching materials like textbooks maybe you want to do some experiment you don’t have apparatus, you don’t have eh like if you do skeletons, learners they don’t know what skeleton is, they see it on a book but they can’t touch it in concretise eh objects.

Interviewer: So how do you think this equipment will enrich your teaching?

Tom: I think by seeing you can remember and by touching you can remember but by just being told you easily forget. So if the learner sees that even though he cannot write it but whenever he sees it he can remember that oh! This is a skeleton and it looks like that.

Buti had this to say about support:

Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 49 - 50)

Interviewer: Why. So what do you think is best for you as a teacher?

Buti: I think the respect for us, less administration work and more care. Get support from the district and officials instead of being treated like uneducated people. They must come regularly to schools to see what we are doing and what we put up with daily. Very difficult stuff.

The pictures below are from the observations of the school. Teachers did not have the necessary resources and they decided to improvise by designing learning support material and combining learners from three classrooms in one small classroom as evidenced below. They used group work to improvise for lack of enough teaching material. At the same time overcrowding made them use their
tables as desks for learners with learning problems, and some learners were given chairs to use as desks. The picture below is an example:

FIGURE 4.13: AN OVERCROWDED CLASSROOM – BUT IMPROVISING SPACE WITH A FELLOW COLLEAGUE

FIGURE 4.14: AN OVERCROWDED CLASSROOM


One female teacher comes into the foyer to ask for 43 copies of learners’ activities that are used for learner assessment. She addresses the administrator through a window with a burglar bar that is used by the public and everybody. She was told by
the administrator to put it in the paper tray, and she does so and leaves the foyer. I then decide to follow her so that I can find out why she did not enter the room instead of using the window. I greeted her and because we had met before I asked her about work and how she was coping and she said she is trying her best under the circumstances. I then asked “which circumstances?” She frowned and said “ku ningi sisi” (there is a lot sister). She then said everything about education and this school are sick. “Mme gao etse, ke expectilwe gore ke etse di copy tse di fitang 40 for di activities tsa bana ba from my pocket. Department ga emphe allowance yao g dira se. ke chelete ya bana baka, nka si dietsel. "Ga baas a dietsi yaka ba tlwaetse, ke tla tlogela bana ba bale so. Ke ka seke ka sacrifaisela department, never! “(I am expected make more than 40 copies of learners’ activities from my pocket, The department does not give me allowance for that. That is my kids’ money. I won’t do it. If they don’t copy them now as they usually do, then I will leave these learners as they are. I won’t sacrifice for the department, never).

**VISIT: 17 May 2007 (Atlas.ti v6 P31 Line 6-7)**

*Musa’s classroom:* We leave the administration block and go towards Musa’s classroom when we meet Tom who agrees to see me after I have finished consultation with Musa. We enter Musa’s classroom which is situated in the third block from the office. The classroom is full with more than 75 learners. I quickly notice that some of the learners sit on the floor and Musa explains that these are learners with learning barriers and other learning needs. She uses her table to accommodate them next to her, but they cannot all fit there since her table is small because there are more than seven learners. So she improvises by letting them sit next to the table. She states that she asked them to use their chairs and they said that they can’t write properly on their laps but write better on the floor.
Teachers stated that they have no support in what they do in their professions. The school and the department of education are perceived to turn a blind eye to their needs. Teachers are merely allocated a Learning Area regardless of expertise.

According to Teacher Buti, the department uses teachers as “scabs” to teach learning areas they were not trained for, and provides no adequate training and resources. The department of education does not support teachers or reskill them properly to master the content. As a result, teachers say they lose focus of who they are and what they have to do. This is evident in the following excerpt from Ann, one of the four teachers. Teachers feel that their professional roles are not clear and at times are disregarded by their employer. The department likes dictating to them about their learners’ performances whereas they do not have first-hand experience.

Teachers feel that their expertise and ability to teach and perform their professional roles are undermined by the department of education as evidenced in Musa’s responses with regard to retention of learners. At times their specialisation needs as
professionals are ignored and disregarded by the department of education as stated below by Buti.

**Teacher Buti presented his feelings as follows (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line17- 26)**

*Interviewer:* Which LA do you teach?

*Buti:* Maths grade 7, Zulu grade 4 and EMS intermediate and senior phase.

*Interviewer:* So you teach 3 LAs, okay?

*Buti:* Ja.

*Interviewer:* Were you trained for those LA, because according to policy you have to be an expert and competent in the LA you teach?

*Buti:* Ja, but not EMS senior phase. These people write a policy and then don’t help implementing it. They do not hire enough teachers to teach these LAs or at least, give us proper training to be able to cope. So you see, we are forced by our circumstances to be jack of all trades and master of none. I do not even have EMS textbooks. Can you please get me some if you can because I’m struggling to teach or even preparation?

*Interviewer:* Mm.mja, so who are these people?

*Buti:* The Department.

*Interviewer:* Ok. I assume you mean the department of education?

*Buti:* “Yebo” (yes).
4.5.2: Theme 2: Teachers see the teaching profession as expression of knowledge and their faith systems

Religious affiliation and identity played a big role in how the teachers related to others in their lives. To a certain extent, their religion influenced the way teachers performed their duties and saw life in general. It also served as a lens from which life and education were viewed. Three of the teachers always referred to how their faith and belief in Christianity framed their thinking.

4.5.2.1 Religion as a vehicle for view of life/ Christianity as a view of life

All four participants were affiliated to a Christian religion although some have not been to church for a long time and were practicing mixed religions - Christianity and traditional religion. Ann and Musa were mostly influenced by Christianity and held prayer meetings with other teachers at school during break. Tom was a Christian believer and Buti practiced both Christianity and traditional religion. Most teachers believed that one cannot succeed without God’s and Christ’s guidance. To them, Christ is a giver of life. Two of them, Ann and especially Musa, verbalised that they serve Christ when they serve learners and their community. Like the other
participants Musa emphasised that she depends on divine strength to survive the teaching environment.

Teacher Musa referred to the spiritual and religious aspects when she was asked about how she understands the seven roles of educators. Instead of answering the question directly she related the pastoral role to religion and gave the following response which is the indication of how she uses religion in all avenues of her life:

**Musa (Atlas.ti Vs6 P3 Line 161 – 164)**

*Interviewer:* What do you mean by spiritual counselling?

*Musa:* I’m a Christian and as a Christian I must help and aid those in need. I tell them about God’s ability to help, and that they must take their problems to Him. I also check what to say before; I don’t just tell anyone who does not want to hear about God.

**Musa (Atlas.ti Vs6 P3 Line 235 – 249)**

*Interviewer:* Does your religion influence you as a person and your teaching at all, does it influence your daily activities?

*Musa:* A lot.

*Interviewer:* Ja.

*Musa:* It does, because I think the strength that I get, that I have, is from God, and I believe that with my strength I won’t do anything but with God’s strength I’m able to do anything especially with the type of work that I’m doing now and with some other things that I’m doing in my community, like voluntary work. …

*Interviewer:* Ok. Let’s go back again to the one on religion. Do you incorporate you religion? Do you find your belief influencing your teaching to a certain extent?
I think so, though (Change of voice and tone) ...I’m careful about that we are having a democratic country, so every religion is important, I don’t like to impart much on my learners, but I think I do have influence.

4.5.2.2 Teachers’ religion determines their behaviour and action

Teacher Ann also show how she values her religious Christian background that she grew up in; she does not want to take her husband’s faith and church that are different from hers, but rather sticks to what she knows best. That is how she was brought up. This is indicated in the following interview about her religious affiliation. Ann also states that she found strength in God. God is her power and the guider of her life and everything she does is informed by God.

Ann (Atlas.ti P3 Line 009 -020)

Interviewer: One thing that I realised about you is that you are religious, because I’ve seen you and even joined you with your colleagues praying as a group, and I just assumed that you subscribe to Christianity. How does it influence your personality and your being?

Ann: Eeh, you know my father and mother brought me up in a church environment. Ja, while I still lived in Atteridgeville we went to Anglican church, but I was married to the… (name concealed) who are Apostolics,…

Interviewer: how does your religious belief impact your teaching and work?

Ann: Mmmm, it does, there is no way I do anything without acknowledging God. It helps me to work hard with my learners and to work harmoniously with my colleagues. That is why you saw us praying that day during break. We sometimes close the door with some of the ladies and ask God for wisdom because we cannot make it on our own. I try not to impose it on other people. (She laughs).

Buti boasts about being African and being helped by his ancestors to survive in teaching. He believes that the ancestors guide him and protect him against
everything. When asked what motivates him as teacher, a follow up question, he states that “God of course” … the God of this world and ancestors”

*Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 29-34).* This shows the double dipping in religion by Buti – He is a Christian and a traditionalist.

*Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 29-34)*

**Interviewer:** For curiosity, please tell me how you get through the day as a teacher? I saw from your journal that you have stated that you always have too many things to do and little time for yourself. What keeps you going?

**Buti:** God of course, I pray to God through my grandparents to give me strength. I believe that the aba phansi (zulu for ancestors) are always with me. They guide me and when I obey them, then all is fine… the God of this world and ancestors are help to me uya bona (zulu for can you see).
4.5.3 Theme 3: The policy on the norms and standards assign the seven roles of teachers which are viewed as unreliable and even oppressive

4.5.3.1 Teachers’ views and reactions to the assigned seven roles of educators

The categories that made up this theme were put together and one comprehensive category was identified. The department of education had “allocated” and assigned seven roles to educators as if the prescription itself could convert them straight away into the assigned roles. Teachers view these as intrusive and oppressive because they are imposed without training or guidance. All the categories indicated how confused and despondent the teachers were about the seven roles. Teachers believe that the roles define them in different ways: as police, a social worker, a nurse, even a traffic officer. The seven educator roles are found to be oppressive.
because they impinge on their private lives and time. Buti was unhappy with the expectations as stipulated in the seven roles:

**Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 081- 088)**

*Interviewer:* And then, among other things that changed, how do you find the 7 roles of educators? Were they part of your training or not? There is one of pastoral role and community leader; meaning that you are a teacher 24 hours per day.

**Buti:** Ja I was trained with 7 roles of educators; you are everything. You are a police, you are a social work, you are a nurse, you, you, you are a traffic police. I mean all those thing are right on our shoulders, and I mean if ever I am going to carry all those things right on my shoulders, I mean reaching home round about 3 half past 3 I’m already tired (voice lowered as sign of tiredness or despair). Those duties, I mean, if ever I am, I’m supposed to go out and do ground duty rooster learners are having their short break, I must just go outside and look what is happening, I mean there are things that you cannot avoid, if learners play and they happen to collide with each other and then as somebody who was supposed to be there, monitoring the duty rooster. What am I supposed to do if they play and play roughly? What must I do as an educator?

*Interviewer:* So, do you mean that it is expected of you to stop that?

**Buti:** How can I stop that?

*Interviewer:* It is impossible yes.

**Buti:** I mean, how can I stop that because these learners are plus minus one thousand. I mean how can I stop that? Because I’m just standing there monitoring the situation, to see to it that learners don’t get injured, ehh without the educator being there for them, because if ever that learner get injured, I must be able to give a report and say what happened, and make maybe a
follow up. Maybe try to call the, the, the, the parents, because some parents do not understand. The others will say, ja you neglect our children at school.

**Interviewer:** So you mean that you take responsibility where you are not supposed to take responsibility. You take responsibility for things that you cannot control. You are expected to that.

**Buti:** Yes, according to the, to the, to the government, we must take that responsibility and control whatever that is not controllable. And you look when this learner go to, go to their… different places in the afternoon, they use ehh… most of them use transport. They just wait for their transport and transport arrive late. Sometimes transport arrives at half past 3 when one knocks off here, half past three, the learner has knock off at 2 o’clock, the transport is supposed to be there between 2 and quarter past 2 to take the learners home. And if that learner has missed his or her transport it is my baby as an educator, I must phone the parent, tell the parent to come to the school…

4.5.3.2 The “seven roles” as cause for some confusion and despair

Most teachers observed and interviewed did not understand the seven roles of educators as stipulated in the norms and standards document. When asked what they are, some teachers repeatedly showed no knowledge of what they were, and some found them confusing.

**Teacher Tom’s (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 350-371)**

**Interviewer:** Ok. Do you understand what the 7 roles of teachers require from you?

**Tom:** Eh maybe if I may ask what are the 7 roles, eh me being a leader, whatever, whatever, whatever.
Interviewer: Ja those 7 roles. Those are the roles governing you now. When they look at you as a teacher, they look at you according to 7 roles and when they evaluate you, they evaluate you according to them. They say you have to be the mediator of learning, do you know them?

Tom: Ja

Interviewer: Ok, how do you understand them?

Tom: Eh eish (Laughs and hesitates to answer) What do I say to that? I do understand them clearly and they demand a lot, because at times we are human beings and we make some mistakes but we have to live according to those rules that people see you as that particular forgetting that we are human beings at the end of the day.

Interviewer: What do you mean by “our education is not original”?

Tom: Ok

Interviewer: You already said that we copied education from other countries. When Teacher Ann was asked about the pastoral role as outlined in the policy of norms and standards and she showed no understanding at all. She was first hesitant to answer and she had the following to say:

Ann (Atlas.ti Vs6 P1Line 080 – 086)

Interviewer: Ok. How do you experience the pastoral role?

Ann: Pastoral role?

Interviewer: Ja, because if I may interpret it for you, it has issues like counselling, embrace learner, be inclusive. How do you experience it?

Ann: Ahh! It is right because it moulds children. I do not know if I have answered it correctly.
Interviewer: Yes you did. How do you perceive it. Are you able to practice it?

Ann: Do you mean in the classroom?

Interviewer: Yes, with your learners and colleagues.

Teachers also assumed other roles imposed on them by their colleagues, occupational circumstances and environment. This elicited the theme of undefined multiple roles of teachers. Teacher Ann had this to say:

Ann (Atlas.ti v6 P1 Line 083)

Interviewer: The teachers should be doing it because one of the 7 roles, states that they should be scholars, is it not true?

Ann: I do not know, I think as teachers we are not doing our best, I don’t know

Interviewer: Ok. How do you experience the pastoral role?

Ann: Pastoral role?

Interviewer: Ja, because if I may interpret it for you, it has issues like counselling, embrace learner, be inclusive. How do you experience it?

Ann: Ahh! It is right because it moulds children. I do not know if I have answered it correctly.

Interviewer: Yes you did. How do you perceive it? Are you able to practice it?

Ann: Do you mean in the classroom?

Interviewer: Yes, with your learners and colleagues.

Ann: Ahhh (hesitation) no not a lot because we handed it over to … (Name concealed) because she deals mostly with Life Orientation.
Interviewer: Ok, but according to policy everybody has to practice them.

Ann: “Maar” as you are rightly saying has to lend a hand here and there; so that learners can they can know values and norms.

Interviewer: Is it possible to be a community leader, an administrator, which means you are at work 24 hour and an all-rounder, are they practical, is it easy to practice the roles as stipulated or is it difficult?

Teacher Ann (Atlas.ti v6 P1 Line 198 - 200)

Ann: Ja, I’m in the finance committee, I’m the one who signs cheques, eh, at the end of the month I help with issuing receipts.

Interviewer: Are you like the finance administrator?

Ann: Administrator. So most of the funds are administered by me here at school. Like today we are going to meet. Ja.

Teacher Ann also acts as foundation phase planner.

Ann: Eh, that is why you hear me say I run the foundation phase and I work well with most of them, the HODs and then when the principal makes comments most of the time he will say “miss...department is doing well.Ja.(She laughs passionately)

Interviewer: What is your responsibility as a deputy principal?

Ann: Is to see to it that tuition is taking place, the HODs are executing their duties, and then they give me reports and then at times they plan the management plan where they invite me in the meeting, so that I can be able to contribute wherever I can.

(AnnAtlas.ti v6 P1 Line 150-152).
The observation and interviews validated the multiple roles teachers have. They also demonstrated that these roles are allocated and defined without their input. There are also those that are imposed by others or the environment (for example, assuming the role of a subject specialist for the learning area one was not trained to teach). Teachers also volunteered to participate within the school and in the community. For example:

Teacher Tom’s (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 211)

**Tom:** I should think that the first thing that has to be done is to be eh, involved in maybe eh, allocation, maybe whenever, they have to give you a certain learning areas, they have to involve you first, you see whether you like the subject or are you interested in the subject. And then maybe to enhance whatever knowledge you have is to undergo the training and maybe more of the workshops should be offered to the, those teachers who are first time teaching on the learning area.

Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 29-34)

**Interviewer:** What other roles do you have either than teaching responsibilities?

**Buti:** I’m a sport master and I serve in several committees, about four committees.

**Interviewer:** Do you have further training except your teaching profession?

**Buti:** Eeh, I’m not clear. What do you mean further training?

**Interviewer:** Have you studied further in your field or done something else?

**Buti:** Ja. I’m registered with UJ doing ACE, but I failed because I did not submit 2 assignments. I have stopped because of workload and will continue next year.
Musa is a choir conductor and serves in four committees including the cultural day committee.

Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P4 Line 137-142) also serves in the following school committees:

**Interviewer:** Ha, ha, ha!(interviewer laughs) and are you involved in any committees in the school?

**Buti:** Ja

**Interviewer:** Which committees are those?

**Buti:** the finance committee, the bereavement committee, the tuck shop committee, mm what are other committees? Others I can’t remember.

**Interviewer:** So are they more than 5 or less?

**Buti:** Others I can’t remember. Oh it’s eh… school policy which has been given to me recently, some are here (he points at the notice board, stands up and start searching for more). Ah let me check for you.

Buti (Atlas.ti.v6 P4 Line107 – 111)

**Interviewer:** Are you involved in any community activities? Community involvement?

**Buti:** Ja, I am involved

**Interviewer:** Please tell me about it. How are you involved? What do you do in the community?

**Buti:** Hmm(Pause)…( I’m a political person and I belong to the ruling party. So belonging to the ruling party I’m the deputy secretary of the branch, so I’m helping in terms of people getting employed in these eh… projects that are being eh. . .
Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P27 Line 31 -34)

*Interviewer:* ... Please tell me about the upcoming cultural day. What have you planned for it?

*Musa:* Ok. A lot. We have different things from singing dancing, cooking, drama, a lot. We are going to start in the morning and finish late in the afternoon. Each learner has to pay about R2.00 or more. It is a way of raising funds for the school and of distressing some of us, but it is demanding because I have to balance teaching and singing practice.

*Interviewer:* Oh I see, it is demanding hey, and when do you practise?

*Musa:* Every day during school hours because some learners use transport, and it comes just after school.

Teachers at this school also serve as nurses and family planners. They try to guide and mentor learners not to fall pregnant at an early age. Below is a description of how they go about helping learners to avoid teenage pregnancy:

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**Grade 7 learners with dolls as babies. They act as mothers and boys in the background act as fathers.**

The grade 7 girl learners are required to carry baby dolls for a period of 1-3 months to school and at home. They have to feed these dolls at a given time and change nappies. At home parents are expected to help with ensuring that they continue with the process and make notes about the whole experience. They are expected to care for these dolls 24 hours a day without any help from an adult including waking up 3 times at night to change nappies and to feed the babies. The boys are given a task of calling girl learners’ homes 3 times at mid night to ensure that the girls are awake and they also have to keep the girls company wherever they go. Then, the boys stay awake until the after 25 minutes – 1 hour, when the girl has finished feeding the baby on the other side. Boy learners carry water, supply milk, nappies and get food for the babies. When girl learners do tasks that require them to use their hands
or when they are tired they have to give the baby to the boy learner for as long as they want. Marks are allocated for completion of this exercise. Teachers claim that parents have reported less active sexual activity and teenage pregnancy because of the strenuous experience.

FIGURE 4.18: TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTATIVE PROJECT

Grade 7 teenage pregnancy prevention project: Grade 7 learners during the school break changing nappies feeding “their babies” and carrying them on their back whilst the “the teenage father” watches.

FIGURE 4.19: TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Feeding time! Moms have to feed babies during break. They spent about 15 minutes of their time feeding babies, while fathers keep company until they finish feeding.
4.5.4 Theme 4: Rules of social conduct inhibit teachers’ work

**FIGURE 4.20: DIAGRAMMATICAL PRESENTATION OF THEME 4**

Teachers have to multi-task both in school and outside home.

4.5.4.1 Lack of support by parents and employers inhibit teachers’ teaching practice

The rules of social conduct inhibited teachers’ work and performance. The teachers found themselves caught in what they perceived as a “prison” environment. Their interaction was inhibited by the manager who did not allow them to use the elegantly decorated and draped staffroom except for staff meetings or visitors. The teachers were not allowed to visit each other in their classrooms nor to sit and have a social conversation because that was perceived as laziness and a waste of learners’ valuable time. Teachers who had been in the school from its inception were seen as a threat to the manager who prevented new teachers from interacting with them. Not only were they prohibited from interacting with the new teachers, “old” teachers were labelled. Teachers are given labels according to any assumed negative behavior. They mentioned that the principal is not receptive to their needs and is very domineering. They alleged that he is not even-handed when it comes to the treatment of staff members.
Teachers also alluded to the fact that their environment is hostile and this is attributed to the principal’s leadership style, which is authoritarian. Here is what teachers had to say:

**Informal group Interview (Atlas.ti v6 P41 Line 339-341)**

**Interviewer:** And then, how do you find the environment, as we have already touched on the issues of principal making decisions on your behalf? How do you find the school environment to be?

**Interviewee 1A:** You know the school environment to be honest – it is just that we are not the same and we don’t view (izinto) things the same way but (i) the environment is no longer conducive, (ja) yes whenever you think of going to work, you just think oh my God what is going to happen today. Am I going to be lashed for eh, somebody’s wrongs because always things are generalised, nobody is prepared to confront a colleague (ukuthi) that you are not supposed to do this. Instead we all going to be called and tongue lashed for somebody’s faults, (u ya bona) you understand, so that one on its own it’s a stress, (ukuthi) that if I did wrong why didn’t you call me and tell me (ukuthi) that you were not supposed to do this, so the environment really is no longer conducive for me, I am no longer happy to be here. I like my job but the environment under which I am working it’s no longer conducive for me.

**4.5.4.2 There is a poor relationship between teachers and the department of education**

All the participants perceived the employer negatively. They felt a lack of support and motivation. Some even mentioned that their employer did not respect them. No proper skilling is given by their employer. The employer fails to take their needs into consideration and makes unfulfilled promises. Their financial needs were not taken into consideration. Here is what teachers had to say:
Tom is upset about empty promises:

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 669-674)

Interviewer: Ok, and then another thing that came up from what you said the last time, you said you were… eh, you, you were not happy about teaching, because of the circumstances and what has been going on in the school. Where are you today?

Tom: Ja actually I still feel that I’m not happy about teaching because our department of education is promising us many things; hence we resort to eh, industrial actions in terms of monies and maybe eh, the labour practices and other things, so at times one become frustration in order to come to work because you don’t get what you deserve.

Interviewer: You feel that you are not happy?

Tom: Ja.

Interviewer: Ok. The other thing is that you highlighted is that you wanted to do BCom.

Tom: Ja

Interviewer: So did you register for BCom?

Tom: Ja actually I just eh…had to, to leave it because, because ja of financial problems, ja I could not have enough money to re-register again. So now what I’m doing is, I’m with Wits University. I got a bursary from department of education.

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 058 -067)

Interviewer: What is your perception of the Department of Education?
**Tom**: Not up to scratch. Their trainers are unsure of their work. There are continuous changes and difference in 2005 and RNCS.

**Interviewer**: What are your perceptions of the seven roles of the teacher?

**Tom**: They inconvenience teachers. We are human beings; we cannot be all that.

In support to what other participants alluded to, Musa emphasises the issue of respect.

**Musa (Atlas. ti Vs 6 P3 Line 052 – 056)**

**Musa**: I think the officials need to respect us. They, they should take what we are telling them because we are spending of the time with these learners. (Change of tone, she looks angry, uses gestures and frowns as she talks).

**Interviewer**: so you feel that they do not know the learners as you do?

**Musa**: Ja

**Interviewer**: OK

**Musa**: ja, ja.

Ann had a different view from what her colleagues said. Whereas others saw the employer organising unprofitable workshops, she saw them as a vehicle to network, support and learning from fellow colleagues within the teaching fraternity.

**Ann (Atlas.ti Vs6 P3 Line 079 -083)**

**Interviewer**: How do you experience the role and help from the department of education?

**Ann**: Silence
**Interviewer:** How do you perceive the role of the department of education in relation to schools, especially yours?

**Ann:** It does work because most of the time they organise these workshop and we learn a lot from them, you see. I learn from other, I discover that things that are difficult to me are easy to others and they excel in them, and then I say “Oh, is this how it is done”? Then, when you get back to school you market the idea and if everybody buys into it, you then go on and implement it.
4.5.5 Theme 5: Dominant discourse of despondency pervades their interaction

FIGURE 4.21: DIAGRAMMATICAL PRESENTATION OF THEME 5

4.5.5.1 Confusion, burnout and despondency constitute teachers’ professional identity

Teachers’ daily experiences varied from quite positive to extremely negative. They developed coping mechanisms and skills to get through the day both inside and outside the classroom. They indicated that they were usually drained by their environment and learners who did not want to do their work. Those teachers who taught the foundation phase indicated that parents sent young children to school who are not ready for school. These learners have difficulty coping and differentiating the day care from the school. As a result they (teachers) have to become the day parents and day caregivers.

Teachers also experienced problems related to learners who did not want to progress to the next class and who appeared extremely demotivated when they had to adapt to a new teacher in the next grade. These learners would request to go
back to the previous class teacher and they caused stress for the new one. Learners end up being unable to read and write properly in the new class because they are emotionally upset.

Teachers also complained that parents do not cooperate with teachers. They argued with teachers when their children were retained in a grade. Together with the department of education they put the blame on teachers and insisted that their children should progress to the next grade. Teachers argue that learners were going to become cut-and-paste professionals who cannot read and write.

Teachers who teach higher grades have to first teach basic competencies because children are not ready for the grade to which they had been promoted.

The issue of lack of respect by parents and their employer also came to the fore.

**Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 53-61)**

*Interviewer:* Okay. So how do you cope daily as a teacher, or go through the day?

**Buti:** Ja, ja. Very difficult. You have to tell yourself that you are there to work and serve the learners not the employer, and then you will cope. Sometime is very difficult because you even become angry with those same learners who don’t do their work. They also frustrate us. Their parents are rude because sometimes they expect too much from us. They think we are a day care centre (change of tone and voice).

Musa speaks on lack of respect from the employer. She states that teachers’ feelings and wellbeing have to be prioritised by their employer.

**Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P27 line 41 – 46)**

*Interviewer:* So what do you wish to see happening?
Musa: Being treated like people “ya ka batho, eseng li phofolo” (like people not animals). The department must know that we are people and we have got needs. They should not sit in their offices and make rules and then expect teachers to accept them. I hope one day they will give us a fair distribution of work and conducive working conditions. Conditions of where there is respect and care.

Interviewer: You are bringing up the “respect issue” again.

Teacher Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 260 - 285) explains that different personalities and overcrowding and the lack of enough equipment hinder their teachers’ expertise and teaching practice. He compares white schools to township schools:

Interviewer: What do you mean by overcrowding?

Tom: That means we have more learners in our class, maybe a teacher is expected to 60 to 70 in a class whereas the ratio says 1:40 learners but when you go to white schools you find one teacher teaches only 20 or 25 learners, so that is overcrowding.

My observation notes from teacher Musa are also relevant here.

Visit to Bontle school Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P28 Line 6)

“...If these learners fail to do something in the higher grades everybody blames you. They go yara,yara, yara (become loud), you are a bad teacher. So “ausi” I must work hard because some of them will be crying tomorrow, refusing to come to my class, they expect to remain with the same teacher”. (She shows me the lesson plans for the coming days which are on the scribbler and are to be transcribed into a proper book or plan). I can see and feel despair as she speaks to me. She shows my last year’s results from a mark sheet and explains that only two learners failed and that did not go well with the district officials who feel that teachers are lazy and lack innovation.
Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P3 Line 046) is demotivated by the attitude of the officials and the department of education and this is what she had to say:

**Interviewer:** ja, it...in actual fact it made one to be... demotivated because you are reading a report, neh you, you’ve been observing this learner for the whole year and you are reading a report, you are having everything, neh, as a proof and then you, you, you, you take the proof and a report and then you say.

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 326 - 330)

**Interviewer:** Ok, share your emotions with regard to all the issues you have just discussed. How does it affect you emotionally as a teacher?

**Tom:** Eish, ja it discourages one in a big way. Ja, we turn to be more discouraged and demotivated, ja. Eh and times you take these problems from school to home and at home they don't understand why you are so frustrated and is due to that.

**Interviewer:** So it even affects your family life?

**Tom:** Ja, it's transferred

Tom also states that he needs some incentives to motivate him. Accordingly, he is no longer interested in teaching due to lack of support and money.
4.5.6 Theme 6: teachers use images and metaphors to capture their identity in flux

Teachers perceive themselves as day parents, care givers, prisoners and guiders of learners

Teachers use multiple images and metaphors to capture their identity in flux

Controlled gate or entrance is conceptualised as a symbol of a prison

4.5.6.1 Teachers perceive of themselves as day parents, care givers, prisoners and guiders of learners

Teachers perceived themselves differently according to what took place at a particular time and place. They describe themselves according to what they feel and experience based on their context. The images they gave of themselves were both positive and negative, for example, “slaves”, “prisoners”, “fathers”, “mothers”, “shepherds”, “social workers”, and “care giver” to name a few. Their context and roles framed the metaphors they used to capture their identities. Parenting plays a significant role for all the participants. All of them perceive themselves as parents to their learners. They feel that they are indebted to their learners and have to serve and care for them regardless of their working conditions. They use words such as
“my children” and “I am their mother or father”. Three of them described the school as a prison because of the locked gates and how it is managed. This is how they perceive themselves as stand-in parents:

Being a father figure. *He is a soft spoken and humble gentleman who is referred to by learners as Ntate (father) “….“ (Identity withheld). He then offers them ten minutes to finish or see him after school.*


Musa had the following to say

**Musa:** ...I will not stay in this forever that is why “ke registaretsi social work” (that is why I registered for social work).

**Teacher Tom classroom observation (Atlas.ti v6 P35 Line2)**

He says:

“All stand and he then asks one learner to go get the something to clean the chalkboard. (“My children, stand up and pick up all the papers and the dirt from the floor so that you can greet Mrs Mabalane. Boy, please go next door to ask for something we can use to clean the board.”)

This is confirmed in what he has to say *(Atlas.ti v6 P35 Line291 - 294)*

**Tom:** Eh, I have good relationship with learners; they also like me as a teacher, as a father and as a role model.

**Interviewer:** I like that, as a teacher as a father and as a role model

**Tom:** Ja.
Musa (Atlas. ti Vs 6 P3 Line 105 – 106)

_Interviewer:_ So based on that, how do you perceive yourself in relation to your learners?

_Musa:_ I see myself as the mother of these learners; I know everything about them, more than what their parents understand about them because I spent most of the time with them.

Musa (Atlas.ti Vs 6 P3 Line 261 – 266)

_Musa:_ I think a good teacher need to honour her work, a good teacher has to have passion with what she is doing, to be supportive, to give guidance to the learner; a good teacher needs to be a mentor to the learners.

_Interviewer:_ That leads me to the next question that I . . ., How do see your relationship with your learners? How do you perceive your learners, your relationship with your learners? You are obviously a mother I know and you also told me about a good relationship you have with your kids: maybe relate the relationship about your learners and your kids.

_Musa:_ Which kids, the learners in the classroom or mine?

_Interviewer:_ The learners in the classroom and your real life children.

_Musa:_ With my real children, I don’t think there is a difference because I treat my learners same as the way I treat my children.

_Interviewer:_ How do you perceive and understand a learner, especially when you teach in class?

_Musa:_ As my child (She giggles).

She continues to state that she perceives herself as a mother as stated in the following quotation:
Musa (Atlas.ti Vs 6 P3 Line 105 – 106)

**Interviewer:** So based on that, how do you perceive yourself in relation to your learners?

**Musa:** I see myself as the mother of these learners; I know everything about them, more than what their parents understand about them because I spent most of the time with them.

Ann takes a parental role, supplying learners with food and clothing.

Ann (Atlas.ti Vs6 P3 Line 85 – 93)

**Interviewer:** Oh I almost forgot to clarify something, please forgive me. The last time I was here, you told me here is no learner without uniform. You said to me and the colleague there is no kid without uniform. How do you ensure that every learner has a uniform?

**Ann:** At the end of the year when children come to register we call some of the parents and give them requisition form of what is needed the following year, so when the year starts, they already know what is expected of them. So they go to that shop that belongs to B…’ in our local shopping centre, and they sometimes sponsor us for needy learners:

**Interviewer:** So, you identify needy learners within the school?

**Ann:** Ja, the needy ones within the school; so they sponsor uniforms.

**Interviewer:** Ok.

**Ann:** There are also other women who frequent our school and they bring shoes for them

**Interviewer:** So, who qualifies to benefit from the feeding scheme?
In contrast, Buti does not feel the same as his colleagues. He feels that parents take advantage of teachers and do not care about their wellbeing or that of their children:

**Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 53-61)**

*Interviewer:* Okay. So how do you cope daily as a teacher, or go through the day?

**Buti:** Ja, ja. Very difficult. You have to tell yourself that you are there to work and serve the learners not the employer, and then you will cope. Sometime is very difficult because you even become angry with those same learners who don’t do their work. They also frustrate us. Their parents are rude because sometimes they expect too much from us. They think we are a day care centre (change of tone and voice).

Musa used an image of a prophet. She said:

**Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P27 Line 46)**

We are expected to perform miracles jaka ba porofita gore bana ba pase (We are expected to perform miracles like prophets to ensure that learners pass). Parents don’t put effort and their children do the same," hee" (no) we are not God, only Him can perform miracles.

**Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P27 Line 38- 42)**

*Musa:* What do you think? You are also a teacher. Everything new is tested on teachers. New democracy, new education, new everything, new OBE, now coming to school over the holidays. Double punishment.
4.5.7 Theme 7: Political affiliation and unionism inhibit practice

Political affiliation and unionism also play a significant role in how teachers perceive themselves professionally in the South African context. The previous regime divided teachers politically, which affected teachers’ lives. From early in life teachers were involved in political issues that affected learners and their community. Some of the teachers served as political student representatives affiliated to a particular party as students and later as union representatives. Some of them are just members of unions; they are affiliated to different unions. The example of teacher Tom is described below.

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 091 - 098)

**Interviewer:** Oh so you were involved in student issues?

**Tom:** Yes, I served as a Congress of South African Student Association (COSAS) leader in my school and as a member of Student Representative Council (SRC), to ensure that their needs are taken care of.
Interviewer: If I may ask, needs such as?

Tom: Such as their rights to learning and good education. You know, those were the apartheid times. We wanted to get equal rights.

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 641 - 668)

Interviewer: Which union do you belong to?

Tom: SADTU. South African Democratic Teachers’ Union.

Interviewer: Do you have a position at SADTU?

Tom: Yes.

Interviewer: What position do you occupy?

Tom: Yes. I’m a site steward. Ok. You are being told that this is the situation that…, this is the particular route that you have to take of which is wrong, is like they are imposing on us, maybe particularly the authorities or the principal, but as the member of the union you become capacitated in terms of how to deal with such issues and also in victimisation of other colleagues and how to solve problems at school level.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you solve problems at school with regard to victimisation or unfair labour practices?

Tom: Ja, ja unfair labour practices maybe. Ja.


He complained about the government ministers who get a lot of money and yet refuse to give some to workers like teachers. As a unionist and a leader, he is happy about the pending strike which will cripple the country.
These two unions do not see eye to eye and this inhibits the practice of teachers in the school. SADTU accuses PEU of being an apartheid union and not progressive. On the other hand, PEU accuses SADTU of harbouring lazy uncommitted teachers who always abscond from work. The union and political affiliation of teachers influence the decision making and practice in the school. In this particular case the principal and some head of departments were leaders of PEU and were accused by SADTU members of dealing with issues unfairly. The principal was said to favour those members of staff who belonged to his union and to ignore those who were members of the other.

Ann (Atlas.ti Vs 6 P1 Line247-251)

Interviewer: Unionism? How do you see yourself as a leader and a union member? The last time I came here you told me that you work harmoniously with all unions.

Ann: Ja, because here we have PEU, we have SADTU. I do not know men, but there is this harmonious relationship. You know, they are unique people, eh, it’s like we were born of the same person, Ja, I don’t know how to put it, we are just a happy lot, ja.

Buti (Atlas.ti Vs6 P4 Line 101-102)

Interviewer: Please tell me about it. How are you involved? What do you do in the community?

Buti: Hmm… (Pause) I’m a political person and I belong to the ruling party. So belonging to the ruling party I’m the deputy secretary of the branch, so I’m helping in terms of people getting employed in these eh… projects that are being eh… designed or created by the government.

Musa (Atlas.ti Vs6 P13 Line 27)

She then asks the rest to recite the prayer she taught them for break and going home. The school was going to close early since all teachers; especially
the SADTU, teachers were going to attend the meeting in connection with the strike.

Musa (Atlas.ti Vs6 P9 Line 8-12)

**Musa:** Ausi, it is not easy. The teachers on the ground have been betrayed by everybody. I feel that SADTU has misled us. Hey Ausi, I heard rumours that they are going to deduct our money. The department is going to take money from all SADTU members for absconding from work. There is no work no pay system. Those that did not sign-in during the strike are going to lose out even if you had no choice or you stayed home in fear of intimidation.

**Musa:** Ja, they lied to us. They promised to fight for teachers but I don’t see that, they are safe with their money. Teachers are suffering because they made empty promises which led teachers like me in trouble “wa bona moes” (as you can see).
4.5.8 Theme 8: Collegiality and relationship with learners are a driving force

Contrary to the negative experiences that teachers had, this theme shows a positive aspect of how teachers see themselves. In the previous themes the mood was sombre as most of the participants mentioned that they are discouraged with what is going on in the teaching fraternity at the time when the research was conducted and there was lack of support from the department of education. Teachers highlighted that learners are their source of strength and motivation. The learners are reasons why some of them like Musa, Ann and Tom are still in teaching, even though they all indicated that they wanted to leave the profession. Their love, care and concern for children are some of the reasons they are still holding on to their profession. Though Buti had different feelings about learners who do not exert themselves when it comes to school work, and those who demotivate him because they cannot speak their mother tongue, he still shows the love for learners, and is motivated and encouraged by learners who show appreciation of his efforts by passing. He puts it this way:

Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P 25 Line 64)
**Buti:** Mmm, Ja. Most of the time; the negativity is brought about by the demands of teaching and lack of support from the district. It is also brought about by learners who are not serious with their school work. The learners who do not do their homework and cannot be punished for that behaviour, their parents and how teachers are perceived by the community as the lowest professionals. The good times are when my learners have achieved something, passed or succeeded in their work. When I have managed to let learners and colleagues do the right thing, then, ja, you see. I love that moment. Sometimes arguing with colleagues drains you.

He continued to state that he never expected to receive that kind of feedback from learners and that gives him strength and energy to carry on for their sakes.

**Buti** (Atlas.ti v6 P 25 Line 64)

> These are things that make us endure pain … teaching is not for me but my learners serve as my source of strength. When you receive such feedback, eh, eh, eish (smiling) you just say one more day, you know… there are times when you feel like these kids are not serious they don’t appreciate what we teachers do for them, especially in language. Some kids are not fit to be in grade 6; they can’t read, spell or construct a sentence.

Unlike teacher Buti, Musa has no negative feeling or perception about learners. She loves them regardless of their behaviour or performance. This is evident in how she positions them in her life and how sees them as her source of comfort when she is not well emotionally. To her, learners are suffering because of stubbornness and attitudes of teachers and their parents. Musa perceives of herself as a teacher who is as caring as biological parents. Her passion and love for children also motivates her to remain in the teaching fraternity.

**VISIT: APRIL 2007** (Musa Atlas.ti v6P30 Line 15 – 16)

> She also explains that the learners are her source of comfort and strength, unfortunately “ba thupega bakeng sa batho ba kgopo and selfish. Bana ba
Musa (Atlas. ti Vs 6 P3 Line 105 – 106)

*Interviewer*: So based on that, how do you perceive yourself in relation to your learners?

*Musa*: I see myself as the mother of these learners; I know everything about them, more than what their parents understand about them because I spent most of the time with them.

Musa (Atlas. ti Vs 6 P3 line 109 – 114)

*Interviewer*: Just your general experiences as a teacher, maybe from when you trained until now. What are your experiences?

*Musa*: (Pause)… I’ve experience that eh, mmm, as I have said before that I have more passion

Tom also adds that the learners are his children and he is their “father” and their “role model”. This implies that as a father he must provide for his children; in this case, he will provide good education and model good behaviour so that they can emulate him:

Tom (Atlas. ti vs P5 Line 289 -298)

*Interviewer*: Now, we go back to the original question. How do you perceive yourself as a teacher?

*Tom*: I would say I am self-motivated, ja and hardworking per se, ja
Interviewer: In relation to learners? How do you relate to learners?

Tom: Eh, I have good relationship with learners; they also like me as a teacher, as a father and as a role model.

This is what he had to say about the relationship with colleagues. He states that the relationship is good although there are sporadic tensions:

Tom (Tom Atlas.ti v6 P 5 Line 35-37)

Interviewer: What is the working relationship amongst you as staff?

Tom: Good working relations. More of teamwork eh, eh, tension at times eh, caused by personal problems eh, attitudes.

During the informal group interview with all participants the following was emphasised by one of the participants. Interviewee 1 believes that teaching is a calling and not for the faint-hearted who are impatient. He stated that teaching is for patient individuals who are loving and caring of learners regardless of their working conditions.

THE INFORMAL GROUP CONVERSATION (Int 1 Atlas.ti v6 P41 Line 85)

Interviewee 1A: So hence every time and every day we try to change our attitudes to be role models to them, so that when they look up to us they must know “ukuthi” (that) this is a mother and this is a father and there is something I got from this person, I mean in future, we are not referring to “I nto ya mhanje” (presently), present tense, we are looking at “I” future and the same time “I” teaching according to me is a calling.

Furthermore, during the informal group interview, teachers reemphasised that they are still holding on to the profession because of their learners. They felt that they are mothers and fathers to their learners. They still wanted to prepare their “children” for the future and to fit well within the society. To emphasise their relationship with learners they see themselves as having a calling as teachers. One of them actually
emphasised that teaching is more of a calling and it demands dedicated and patient individuals.

Not only do the teachers and learners relate in the classroom, but their relationship and teachers’ care transcends the classroom. It also extends to learners’ homes and personal lives. Teachers take care of orphaned children who are heads of their families. They also from time to time organise welfare and provide basic needs for these learners whom they perceive as their own. They also use their resources to help such learners, as can be evidenced from the quote below.

**TEACHER TOM CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS 5:2007 GRADE 6**

*(TOM Atlas.ti v6 P19 Line 2)*

As a result, he has teamed up with other teachers to identify learners with such needs so that they can organise the welfare and provide basic needs for them. The school has since intervened and they will do all they can to help them. At that time Musa approached us and joined the conversation. She stated that she knows of more than five learners who are orphaned due to HIV-AIDS. Some of these learners are known to the school and some are not. The social committee in the school has agreed to keep it a secret for fear of stigmatisation. She also explained that she has joined hands with some staff members to make sure that these learners are cared for at school and at home, which to a certain degree is difficult to do.

Like other teachers, Ann also perceives learners as her own children. Her biological children are adults now and she feels that she is has other small children to fill the space. She loves her learners to such an extent that she sacrifices her administration duties when approached by learners to do something for them. She refers to learners as “my learners” and like others perceives herself as their mother. In response to the question ‘How do you view your learners’, Ann explains that there is mutual respect and love between them. There is intimacy between them which is indicated by hugs from each other when learners approach her.
Ann’s 2nd Interview (Atlas.ti Vs6 P2 Line 105 – 116)

**Interviewer:** How do you see your relationship with your learners? How do you relate to your learners?

**Ann:** My children, my learners, are the learners who are eager and ready to learn, who listen and are obedient.

**Interviewer:** And how do you perceive your relationship with them?

**Ann:** Ja, I see when I will delay to go to class, five minutes and two minutes before I get to class, ehhh four will come and say teacher B… it is your period. Then, I will say I am busy and then they will say bye-bye teacher B…, then I will leave everything, change my mind and say “ok I am coming now, let’s go” and they will put their hands around me and hug me as we walk, until we reach the classroom. Even when they find me busy, abnormally busy, I just say “hey let me quickly go; and give them work to keep them busy, will come back.” I will then write class work on the board and they will write and one of them will bring their books to me after they have finished.

**Interviewer:** how do you perceive your relationship with them?

**Ann:** I see love between them. (She laughs)

**Interviewer:** What about your love towards them?

**Ann:** I perceive myself more of a parent than a teacher and maybe it is the combination of the two, ja because I love these children; they are my children.

Buti, too, see the learners as his children. He believes that he has to go beyond the call of duty to serve them. He always wants to embrace his learners as a father by creating an invitational environment in the classroom and occasionally does not teach but advises them on issues of life that are not related to his learning area, to empower them for the future. He believes not only is he there to teach learners but that it is also his duty to guide them in the journey towards adulthood. The last
“Maybe they expect that today we are going to write a class work, no don’t write a class work today, just have a session whereby eh… you talk to them and talk sense with them, they will get you where you want to get them, where you want to go to”.

(Interviewer: (pause) Mmm OK. How do you view your learner in the class? What is the relationship with your learners in the classroom?)

Buti: Ehh the relationship in the classroom is that, they view me as their educator but then I have overlapped that one of being an educator; I’m just their father in the classroom and they are my children. So usually when you are a father, you’ve got children, and you expect your children to do as you say, not as they want to do things, (change of voice and tone) as you say (strong emphasis). So that is the relation that I create with the children, and I create a … eh, eh… user-friendly environment in the classroom because eh…in most cases I like to talk with them.

The other aspect that I observed during the interviews was the influence of people around them and their colleagues on teachers. The collegiality with their colleagues and other staff members motivates them to continue in the teaching profession. As social beings teachers, cannot live without others. The other(s) in their lives influence and sometimes shape their identity as evidenced in this section.

Those teachers that are leaders or managers felt that it is their responsibility to mentor their subordinates. The teachers were mentored differently. Although teachers admitted that there is understanding, Tom admitted to occasional strife between colleagues, who sometimes bring problems from home and offload them at school. For example,
Ann (Atlas.ti Vs6 P3 Line 058 – 064)

**Interviewer:** The last time you asked me to recommend you for teachers’ awards and I did. How did it go?

**Ann:** I got the ehh, what is it? Achievement in leadership, I will bring it for you to see; it was for now, but we enjoyed so much, yoooo! (face lights up).

**Interviewer:** (Laughs)

**Ann:** What do we call it? Excellency! Yooo! yooo! (She laughs passionately), you know what? This is mine, neh? Then I took my children, I told them that “I do not want to go alone, those of you who want to join can come, and can enter for these awards”. Yoo! I had six from junior section who received awards, all of them got awards.

**Interviewer:** Are you referring to teachers or your subordinates?

**Ann:** Yes, yes.

**Interviewer:** So the applied because you invited them and received their own awards?

Musa support Buti’s opinion that there is unity in the school between the teachers although they later contradict themselves during the informal group interview. She speaks of committed teachers who are respectful of each other and she attributes the success of the school to that collegiality and commitment of all staff in the school.

Musa (Atlas. ti Vs6 P3 Line 271 – 273)

**Interviewer:** What makes you say that? What are the things that stand out?

**Musa:** The commitment of all teachers. How we do our thing, how we committed to our work. We are committed to seeing the school succeed in all respect, financially, academically and otherwise. As you know we all are involved in raising funds and seeing order in the school.
4.5.9 Theme 9: Serving the country as a loyal and patriotic citizen

The other important aspects that came up about the identity of teachers is that they felt obligated to be patriotic to their country and to serve it as reliable citizens. Teachers took the role of being spiritual leaders in the community, role models, mentors to their learners and serving in different structures of the community as a sign of showing reverence to their country. Teachers believed that it is their responsibility to model good behaviour to their learners so that they can impact their communities positively when they leave school.

*Tom (Atlas.ti vs P5 Line 169 -171)*

*Interviewer*: Where do you see the part you can play in helping learners, see yourself in moving learners’ from one grade that is from Grade 4, Grade five to Grade 7?

*Tom*: Okay, I see myself maybe as a role model or maybe a role-player (clearing his throat) a role model or a roles player in assisting them, ja, guiding them and also eh helping them towards achieving maybe eh their goals and understanding eh the world in a broader perspective.
Teachers also alluded to the fact that they have to produce good citizens who will lead exemplary lives in the community. These were the views of all teachers during the group interview. Their felt obligated to honour their community by making sure that no ill-prepared learner comes from their school because that will be an embarrassment and failure of their school and its teachers. So, their responsibility as loyal citizens was to perform their pastoral duties perfectly by producing “good citizens” who will be of benefit to their community. As evidenced below, the community needs to make a priority of these teachers. They preserve their identity and dignity by supporting the needs and values embraced by within their community.

THE INFORMAL GROUP CONVERSATION (Int 1 Atlas.ti v6 P41 Line 85)

**Interviewee 1:** Haa (in amazement), like “u” … (name concealed for ethical reasons) have said like “i” pastoral duties “ukuthi”(that) we are staying with these learners for long hours, their parents are not. So you end being a father and a mother to them because they bring “ama a” (the) different…Just imagine that you’ve got… you are caught up with about…there 50 learners and all of them are from different families and your duty is groom them to be one family because we need not, when we are here we don’t have to say … to differentiate that “wena (you) are poor “wena” (you) are rich. So while we are together here we are one family and you are a mother, you are a father to them. So “i” pastoral duty I think is a major one because as they are here when they go out they are looking at … (name of school concealed for ethical reasons) as a school “ukuthi” (that) what does … (name of school concealed for ethical reasons) bring to the community? Is it bringing “Abantwana” (children) that will be good citizens in future or “Abantwana” from…(Name concealed for ethical reasons) will be children from that school definitely.

Not only do they prepare learners to be good citizens, but they also help them with everyday life problems. Teacher Musa helps in that aspect. She uses her counselling skills to help solve community problems. She states that helping people is her “life and passion”. For example, Musa feels that she is finished serving the school; now
she has to change her career to become a social worker. She even registered to be a social worker so that she can serve her community well because she feels that teaching is limiting her to serve them properly. This is how she puts it:

**Musa (Atlas. ti Vs 6 P3 Line 205 – 206)**

*Interviewer: What about your personality?*

*Musa: Ja, as I explained to you before, I love helping my community, ehhh…. I like seeing people get out of problems, I just love people and counselling them; it is my life and passion.*

Furthermore, one of the teachers roles as stipulated in the policy is to be community leaders; teachers seem not to understand what is required of this role although some are volunteering to help in their communities. Their involvement ranges from being community care givers to working in HIV centres. All participants are involved in their communities either as care givers, religious leaders or political leaders. Musa wants to leave teaching to help with HIV issues in the community. She is passionate about HIV people and as a result, helps as a volunteer in one of the hospices in her area. Her service to HIV positive people is paramount in her life. Not only is she passionate about HIV positive people but also issues concerning abused women; and this is evident in her involvement and service of abused women through one of the organisation mentioned below.

**Musa (Atlas. ti vs. 6P3 line 118 – 128)**

*Musa: I think I’ve done exhausted everything when it comes to helping my community on the side of learners. So I want something different with my community, to go there, outside there, I can do many things out there, with my community.*

*Interviewer: Community, you mean the society you live in? We won’t mention the name of the area where you live. So, you want to go out there and do work, what kind of work would you like to do there?*
**Musa:** I have passion with people who are HIV positive. Mmm.

**Interviewer:** Have you worked with any?

**Musa:** Ja, I’m doing voluntary work with St Francis and I’m also doing voluntary work with POWA, ja.

**Interviewer:** What is POWA?

**Musa:** POWA, is People Opposing Women Abuse

**Interviewer:** Ja, so you have passion for both, eh for community with regard to women’s issues. (Interruption)

**Musa:** (face glows as she answers.) Yes, women abuse and HIV and AIDS.

**Musa (Atlas.ti Vs 6 P3 Line 169 – 170)**

**Interviewer:** Yes. What attributes makes you feel like a social worker?

**Musa:** Ehhh!! I’m a caring, caring somebody, hmmmm… (Pause) especially, I care a lot about my community and ehhh… maybe you know me better man, tell me, tell me. (Laughs)

She also wants to transfer the skills she gained in teaching beyond the school premises. She states that she wants to impart the knowledge she gained to her community.

**Musa (Atlas.ti Vs 6 P3 Line 225 – 230)**

**Interviewer:** just as Musa, where do you see yourself, as a teacher or what?

**Musa:** Let’s leave it as a teacher, neh.

**Interviewer:** Ja.
Musa: In five years now as a person, I want to see myself being fulfilled as specially with the knowledge that I have and the skills that I have; imparting them to my community and seeing my community benefiting out of what I have.

Interviewer: Skills such as?

Musa: Skills such as counselling skills, mhm, mhhm.

Ann, on the other hand, works with the community by inviting them to motivate and encourage learners, using the community to advise them on life skills and other issues. She occasionally invites motivational speakers from the community to address learners.

Ann (Atlas.ti Vs6 P3 Line 97 – 98)

Interviewer: Do you invite such people to sponsor you? The last time you told me that you also invite motivational speakers to speak to the school as a whole.

Ann: Yes we do sometimes and we ask motivational speakers on special days to speak to learners on current issues and issues that affect them, for example, on cultural days.

While Musa and Ann serve the community socially, morally and spiritually, Tom and Buti serve as political leaders. They both occupied prominent positions in their political organisation that is viewed by them as a means of being patriotic to their country, although Tom is now just a member. He feels that it is his responsibility as a teacher to keep abreast of the community or societal issues so that he can instill them in his learners for future use:

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 091 - 093)

Interviewer: Oh so you were involved in students’ issues?
**Tom:** Yes, I served as a Congress of South African Student Association (COSAS) leader in my school and as a member of Student Representative Council (SRC), to ensure that their needs are taken care of.

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 769-783)

**Interviewer:** Are you also involved in community activities?

**Tom:** Mmm (Hesitation) No.

**Interviewer:** Outside the school.

**Tom:** Ja, I was involved in ANC, but I’m now only a member in ANC.

**Interviewer:** How does being a member of a political party influence your teaching?

**Tom:** Ja. (Hesitation)

Buti perceives himself as a community leader and he refers to himself as a politician, “a political person”. He helps people whose houses are repossessed to negotiate with different financial institutions. He believes that as a teacher and a government employee he must plough back to the community. In his own words, he feels that he is obligated to serve the community irrespective of who they are, both young and old.

Teacher Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Line 107 - 114)

*Now I’m serving the community in fact, you see.*

*At the same time while I’m teaching their kids I’m serving the community in terms of highlighting to them that what needs to be done. Where can one maybe get, eh, eh eh, eh employment?*
Interviewer: Are you involved in any community activities? Community involvement?

Buti: Ja, I am involved

Interviewer: Please tell me about it. How are you involved, what do you do in the community?

Buti: Hmm... (Pause) I’m a political person and I belong to the ruling party. So belonging to the ruling party I’m the deputy secretary of the branch, so I’m helping in terms of people getting employed in these eh... projects that are being eh... designed or created by the government, making sure that people, those who are being evicted from their houses, we get to the bottom root of what are the... what are the, what, what, what are the reasons of people being evicted from their houses.
4.5.10 Theme 10: They expressed the dire need for professional development

4.5.10.1 Teachers are in dire need of training in teaching and life skills

The introduction of OBE created feelings of instability in teachers. Teachers struggled to adjust to the new curriculum and demands. Most teachers, especially those who were already teaching before the introduction of OBE, found themselves at the receiving end of these unprecedented changes. All teachers needed to change and adjust to the curriculum demands and this required thorough training and preparedness on the part of the teachers. Unfortunately, according to the teachers interviewed, the training they received was inadequate because it was conducted for one to three days only and they had a mammoth task ahead of them. One of the teachers interviewed stated the following:
Interviewer: Teachers are not properly trained and are only trained during, eh only trained during OBE training which a fraction of a whole.

Tom: Of a whole, ja. They need more training

Interviewer: What do you mean by fraction?

Tom: That means we get a little part of it, not a whole, so it makes it to be difficult to understand eh, a certain learning area because it is little training. It can take two or three days and then we are expected to teach for a whole year on that particular subject.

Interviewer: What will your suggestions be?

Tom: Eh, is to give the teachers more in-service training and to help them with development.

Interviewer: More in-service training: what do you mean and roughly, how should it be done?

Tom: Like maybe assessing whether the teachers are experiencing problems with those with those learning areas and to have meetings and to attend trainings organised by the department or maybe the school....

During the group interview with all participants it also became clear that the participants felt inadequately trained and in need of further training or follow up programmes. This concurs with what Tom said — that he was not properly trained and that he needs more training in other areas. Here is what they had to say:

Informal group interview (Atlas.ti.v6 P41 line 47- 54)

Interviewer: Ok. Do you agree? What is your view with regard to changes?
Interviewee 2: Mmm, it is the same thing. I think is the same thing because we went to the workshop and we have to implement it and it was difficult. Ja we came confused and…(no.1 interjects)

Interviewee 2: And even the time that was given to us, it is not enough. You find that the workload is too much, but when you look at the time, the time of the course is only 2 to 3 days of which you have to implement for the rest of your life, of which is impossible.

Interviewee 3: And OBE basically is based on paper work. You deal; you take most of the time doing paperwork there more than teaching the young ones, and those people when they train us they don’t come back and do follow up. They are not even concerned that you are comfortable with what they are training us with and within short space of time the training; I think we need, I don’t know, year training.

Interviewer: Ok, and then no. 2 what is your take on the changes? How do you see these changes? Because you said you concur with no. 1 that they are a problem? What is specifically a problem for you?

Interviewee 2: No as she said, neh, I think we are on the same level, ja, it was difficult because what they have taught us there it was not enough, as she has said.

Interviewer: Is it in the training?

Interviewee 2: In the training yes. (Interviewee: 1 interferes) and when we have to implement in class it was difficult. It became eh frustrated you see, because (Interviewee: 3 interjects) Ja, is confusing and the time is not enough as they said.

Furthermore, each teacher embraced a personal philosophy of teaching that defined him or her within the profession. The change of curriculum and the introduction of new roles meant change of their personal teaching philosophy and embracing the
imposed one. Whereas the role of the teacher was central before OBE, now it was expected that education should embrace learners, needs, space and pace.

**Ann (Atlas.ti.v6 P1 line 38- 41)**

**Interviewer:** How do you compare the old traditional way of teaching with OBE?

**Ann:** Oh, sister I don’t know what to say, but there is so much; it has failed our country. I don’t know what is wrong with our children, like I’ve already said, maybe it is due to overcrowding.

**Interviewer:** How do you perceive or experience the seven roles because they differ from how you were trained? You were trained in the traditional way and the seven roles have changed that is not true

**Ann:** In our times, we used to really, really do practical work in class, people in authority used to come to class and demonstrate practically how things are done; thereafter he will observe you and give you the report on this and that and that, and maybe he will leave you for some months and then come to check if you have improved, whether you are coming ok, give you the right to do it again. He will show you that your chart should be this way or that way.

Some participants believed that learners have been given too much power and control and teachers have lost their grip. Most of the teachers were the sole dispenser of knowledge and leader of their classrooms prior to the introduction of OBE. The focus on learners as the central figures in education disconcerted them and posed a threat to most of the teachers interviewed. Teachers felt that they have lost control of their territory.

When Tom was asked how he perceived himself as a teacher, this is what he had to say:
Interviewer: How do you perceive or see yourself as a teacher?

Tom: I am enjoying due to experience and growth in teaching. I need a change of field due to remuneration. Teachers no longer have powers; learners have more powers. Parents have no powers. Learners’ rights count a lot. Currently learners cannot be punished - corporal punishment has been abolished. Lack of parental and co-operation in learners’ lives is not up to scratch. Learners can’t be retained even when there are valid reasons.

Others felt that their original personal and professional identity has been eroded by the introduction of OBE. They are more like clerks, administrators or even less than street sweepers. Most embraced traditional teaching methods which they felt made them better teachers than being producers of “cut and paste learners”. Buti sees himself as a “Jack of all trades”

The other contributing factor to the need for further training is the trainers themselves. Almost all teachers interviewed stated that they were trained by teachers who are unsure of the content. Most OBE facilitators were found to be ill equipped with the necessary curriculum content. Participants stated that sometimes these teachers could not even answer basic questions relating to the content of OBE.

Informal group interview (Atlas.ti.v6 P41 line 41- 47)

Interviewer: You started working in 1999? So how are the changes? There were changes between 1996 when you trained and 1999 when you finished. Firstly, we had the new syllabus which is OBE and that we referred to as curriculum 2005; in the process there were changes, lots of introduction of policies with regard to OBE. How that did affect you as a teacher?

Interviewee 1: You know what, what I can say is those facilitators didn’t even know the content themselves. That is what I can say. The facilitators were
taken from somewhere and brought to us to bring about changes of which when you asked questions, no one will be able to tell you. The terms that were also brought to us, they were new terms, also the same people that were presenting the course also they did not know anything about. So now it also brings the confusion when you come to class, they are also confused as to how are you going to implement.

**Interviewer:** It confuses you as a teacher?

**Interviewee 3:** You as a teacher, yes.

Musa had this to say about the readiness of OBE facilitators:

**Musa**(Atlas.ti.v6 P3 line 285 - 290)

**Interviewer:** I just want to go back to the issue of burn out because it is a buzz word amongst teachers. You mention that you are suffering burnout as a teacher. Can you please explain that?

**Musa:** Ja, the lot of paper work that we are doing and the lot of workshops that we undergo. Sometimes we undergo workshops this year for 2007 and then 2008 we go to workshop what they taught us last year is something different they change, hey keep on changing things every time when we attend “ama” (the) workshops.

Ann also showed inadequate knowledge of OBE terminology; not only did she avoid answering questions regarding OBE, but every time she was asked about the seven roles of teachers, she referred to overcrowding as a hindrance. I also perceived that she was less concerned about OBE because she lacked understanding of it, but rather spoke about her past and what happened then and the discrepancy with what is happening now with learners. For example:
Ann (Atlas.ti.v6 P1 line42-73)

**Interviewer:** What about the seven roles; there is the one on pastoral role, assessor, researcher and scholar, administrator, instructional designer and learning area specialist: how do you perceive them? Have they changed your roles or are they still the same?

**Ann:** Heish, there is a lot of change.

**Interviewer:** Ok and where is the change? Please tell me where the change is. Do they minimise your work or maximise it?

**Ann:** Heish, I do not know. It is because some say this education is good, and others say it is not, “maar” (maybe), is because I belong to the old school of thought.

**Interviewer:** Ja, this is the difference I’m interested in, is there a gap, where is the gap?

**Ann:** (Pauses and laughs). Hey, I do not know.

In the following segments, Tom starts by saying that he enjoys teaching and then he quickly changes and complains about teachers being disarmed of their powers and that he wants to leave teaching.. He perceives himself as a powerless and unhappy teacher.

Teacher Musa, like most participants, also highlighted that she still needs more training with regard to assessment because it confuses her and she ends up not knowing what to do in the classroom. She is confused by the continuous changes which are not consistent and are not followed up by the department of education. She complained that the CTA is a challenge for her because it is not at the level of her learners, who are not conversant in English. She also explained that she is not trained to deal with cases of learners who cannot read English.

Musa (Atlas.ti.v6 P3 line 178 - 188)
Interviewer: How do these changes impact you as a teacher and on your work and learners?

Musa: Sometimes I get confused not knowing what I’m doing is right or wrong.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Musa: What I’m supposed to do in class with my learners is confusing at times. When you think you are right with your learners they introduce something new. They tell you that do it this way, and not that way.

Interviewer: What is the specific thing that confuses you or that is continuously changed?

Musa: Assessment policies and other policies. Assessment is worse. CTA for grade 2 who some of them are not ready for this grade is difficult.

Interviewer: What is CTA?

Musa: External tests. These are tests written by all grade 2. Like this one (Picks up a paper and shows it to me).

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

Musa: It is not practical; look at this girl (pointing at a girl next to her table), she is struggling to complete copies other learners’ work. CTA is not good for this grade because some of the work is difficult for the learners.

Buti’s view is similar to the view expressed by Musa. He feels that their employer is not supportive with regard to everyday problems they experience as teachers. He feels that the employer likes making unwarranted demands on teachers without clear indications or instructions and as result teachers find themselves confused and in turn confusing their learners.
Interviewer: Okay, I’m impressed. Another thing, how do you see the continuous policy changes in education? How do these changes impact you as a teacher and on your work?

Buti: They are problematic. They are not sure of what they are doing, just like us. I get confused.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Buti: They must get their act straight once and for all. Let the district decide because we confuse our learners with these changes.

Interviewer: What is the specific thing that confuses you or that is continuously changed?

Buti: Everything: inclusion, assessment policies and other policies. Almost everything.

Tom, like Musa and Buti, perceives himself as a confused teacher who does not know which teaching method to adopt because it is forever changing:

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 274 - 277)

Interviewer: How do you feel about these continuous changes? What are your feelings? We had curriculum 2005 and now we have RNCS. You have your own teaching style, you were trained in a certain way at college, then you adopted a certain way of teaching

Tom: Hey, it confuses one. It makes me to be confused because if you are trying to adopt a certain system or a style and after a review you have to change and do the other one and whenever you are acclimatising yourself to that you have to change again, so there is no consistency.

Ann corroborates her fellow teachers’ statements by stating that the changes
confuse teachers and as a result they need help. She feels that she needs training for learning areas allocated to her, which she did not train for as a teacher, but which were imposed on her.

Ann (Atlas.ti v6 P1 Line 118 - 129)

*Interviewer:* Yes. The training you get so that you can be able to implement new policies.

*Ann:* The changes confuse us at times; when you are think you have settled with something else, they change another policy you need to change and use it again. As far as I’m concerned, there is a lot of confusion. I really do not know, but according to me, as a person, no.

Teachers also need a follow up programme after having received training from the officials where help was necessary. They feel that there should be a workshop or meeting planned post-training to help with the confusion. This is highlighted by all participants who feel that after training, the department of education just distanced itself and only comes when it is time for accountability, to accuse teachers without giving necessary post-training support.

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 274 - 277)

*Interviewer:* So are you saying, in other words, there should be a follow up programme.

*Tom:* Yes.

*Interviewer:* Continuous follow up programme; there shouldn’t be only one training?

*Tom:* Yes

*Interviewer:* Ok. You say more training is needed, explain what do you mean?
**Tom:** More training, meaning that with the curriculum because it’s changing all the time, so we need to get more training on that, ja.

It further emerged from teachers that there are serious relational problems amongst teachers. Most of the time some teachers like Tom and others find themselves at the receiving end of their colleagues who transfer their family problems to school. These angry teachers usually don’t know how to deal with such issues. They lack the necessary skills to deal with stress and thus off-load it on innocent colleagues. This was also highlighted by the teachers during the informal group interview, when one said that when stressed, she just pounces on any teacher who dares to talk to her. The teachers wish to receive skills in stress management and in conflict management.

**Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Line 799- 802)**

_**Interviewer:** The working relationships amongst the staff: you said there are good relations but more team work and tension at times caused by personal problems and attitudes. Will you please elaborate on tensions?_

_**Tom:** Ja, maybe a teacher comes with a problem from home and he or she did not resolve it and whenever you approach, he is still angry about that from home and it becomes difficult for us, yes. Ja at school._
4.5.11 Theme 11: They are resilient because of their community values

They are resilient because of their community values

Community value and needs are paramount in teachers’ lives

They feel serving in different committees and community activities like HIV-AIDS is vital

They are resilient because of their community values

FIGURE 4.27 DIAGRAMMATICAL PRESENTATION OF THEME 11

4.5.11.1 Teachers are in dire need of training in teaching and life skills

It also emerged that the teachers remain in teaching not because they love it, but their driving force is their community values that help them to be resilient. Teachers are unable to cope on their own but their love and commitment to their community help to sustain them. They believe that they owe it to their community to educate the learners and to transfer positive attitudes and behaviour. The teachers are perceived as torch-bearers by their community and thus feel that leaving teaching would be unfair. The needs and expectations of the community with regard to their expertise in education and literacy motivate teachers to be resilient. Tom feels that the community is supportive of their profession and recognise them as such. This means that their identity as professionals is of importance to their community. This is what Tom had to say when he was asked about his relationship with his colleagues:

Tom (Atlas.ti v6 P5 Lines 802 – 806)

Tom: Mmm… I can say eh… (hesitation)the relationship with my colleagues is harmonious. Ja, we work as a team and with the community also, we have
an interaction eh… a working relationship with the community, ja.

**Interviewer:** With issues such as?

**Tom:** Like whenever we have to make eh… fund raisings we invite the community and the community respond positively so…

**Interviewer:** Ok. How does this impact on your profession as a teacher? The relationship at the school -positive or negative?

**Tom:** I think is positive because, eh in the community you become somebody who is recognised and that is a positive attitude towards eh… my profession.

**Musa (Atlas.ti.v6 P3 line 167 - 170)**

**Interviewer:** What really makes you feel despondent like that?

**Musa:** Like I’m a social worker?

**Interviewer:** Yes. What attributes makes you feel like a social worker?

**Musa:** Eh!! I’m a caring, caring somebody, hmmm…. (Pause) especially, I care a lot about my community and ehhh…..maybe you know me better, man, tell me, tell me. (Laughs)

On the other hand, Buti became a teacher to serve his community and to bring changes. Although he initially wanted to study towards a bachelor of commerce degree, he opted for teaching because he loves children and wanted to serve them, thereby serving his community. He also chose teaching to undo the damage of the previous teaching that he alleges ill-treated the learners. He wanted to improve on the legacy of bad teaching left by previous teachers.

**Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P25 Lines 03 – 08)**

**Interviewer:** Tell me about your profession. Why did you become a teacher?
Buti: Ehh… I became a teacher because I love teaching. I initially wanted to do any other things but I chose teaching because I love children and I wanted to bring changes in the community. I wanted to better the lives of my community. I wanted to do financial courses or BCom, but another thing is due to financial problem…

Interviewer: Ok, thank you. Would you say there is someone or something specific that motivated you to become a teacher?

Buti: The kind of teaching I received as a learner was not so good. I had good teachers who cared for us as learners and there were those teachers who were very bad with learners. Those were teachers who ill-treated us and who did not know their subjects. I wanted to do away with that, you see, that element of bad teaching. I wanted to be like those teachers who endeavoured to help children in a difficult situation during apartheid. You know there was this “meneer “ (teacher), ja, heish, ja, good neh, ja, in sports teaching and kind; and at the same time an activist teacher.

Interviewer: What do you mean by an activist teacher?

Buti: A teacher who was politically active. He did not fear arrest during those times, ja, “qabane” (activist) in the true sense of the word. He taught me Business Economics and always encouraged us to be educated so that we can be able to reclaim what is rightfully ours from the colonist whites. He told us that education was the key to everything, you see. The “meneer” was very strict, but full of love and care. He used to punish us with a broom stick for not performing.

Although teachers like Musa experience teaching very negatively and intend to leave in the near future, the love for their learners as allegiance to their societal values sustains them. Musa and her colleagues believe that one of the societal values is to serve your learners unconditionally and help better their lives; which in turn will help
inculcate good societal values. The education changes have caused Musa and her colleagues enormous stress, to such an extent that they want to leave the teaching profession. However, their commitment to the betterment of their society via their learners sustains them.

Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P3 Lines 189 – 190)

**Interviewer:** How do these changes impact your personhood and your performance as a teacher?

**Musa:** Hmmm…bad…very…bad. Like I said you end up not knowing what to do as a teacher. I feel that my performance is affected negatively by the changes. They make me want to leave…ja, that is why I feel over burdened by teaching. Sometimes I just teach because I love my learners and I always want to help them.

Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P3 Lines 200 & 206)

**Musa:** (Pause)... Pastoring, not in a sense of ministering, but in the sense of being there for your learners, neh, in a sense of giving them guidance, in a sense of teaching them morals.

**Musa:** Ja, as I explained to you before, I love helping my community, ehhh.... I like seeing people get out of problems, I just love people and counselling them; it is my life and passion.

Teachers also stay in teaching because it is the place that enables them to help their community and to plough back the skills they gained. They volunteer because they believe in what is referred to as “Ubuntu” (I am because you are) in South Africa. This is shown in their volunteer work in helping in HIV-AIDS centres, political parties and other community social issues. They help their communities with issues like eviction from unpaid house bonds, counselling and many others. The service rendered by these teachers within the school environment includes learners from child headed household –providing basic needs like food and clothes – as a means
of upholding an African principle that a child belongs to a village and not only to the parents. Musa had this to say regarding her community when responding to a question of where she sees herself in five years:

**Musa (Atlas.ti v6 P3 Lines 225 – 230)**

*Musa: In five years now, as a person, I want to see myself being fulfilled as specially with the knowledge that I have and the skills that I have, imparting my knowledge and skills.*

**Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P4 Lines 113– 114 & 128)**

*Interviewer: Because it highlights the social aspects of the community? How does that impact on your work and responsibilities as a teacher? How does this political involvement impact on your career?*

*Buti: It gives one a political responsibility that I mean, as I’m employed by the government which is the government elected by the people, so therefore it is my duty that I must plough back to the community, now I’m serving the community in fact, you see. At the same time, while I’m teaching their kids, I’m serving the community in terms of highlighting them that what needs to be done.*

**Buti (Atlas.ti v6 P4 Lines 252 - 253)**

*Interviewer: Ok. You mentioned that there was a particular teacher who inspired and motivated you to become a teacher. The other thing I want to ask is “what do you perceive as a professional identity of a teacher”?*

*Buti: Good morals, respect.*

**4.6 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this chapter provided an overview of the analyses of the data as presented by all the participants. All data – interviews, field notes, photographs,
group interviews, teacher journals and documents collected from the school were analysed. I presented the process of data analysis and showed the process of how codes and categories were abstracted from each of the data sets collected. This was complemented by a brief discussion and quotations from the actual texts of raw data – then a brief discussion of each theme and category was provided. I also discussed categories and themes that were identified from the codes, followed by the discussion on identification of patterns. The data gave a clear understanding and description of teachers’ professional identity after the two changes, which are Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement, which were introduced.

The final themes of the analysed data are presented in figure 5.2 and 5.3.

The following chapter will discuss the findings of the study and the conclusion.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter contained an account of the analysed data from different sources. It had a strong empirical slant. The previous chapter also showed how the eleven themes of this study emerged from the analysis process. These themes revolved around a core idea: that teachers’ professional identity has become unstable during the time when many policy changes were effected, especially since 2001, when a radically different national curriculum was implemented. Teachers became confused about who they were (expected to be) during this time. At the time of this research the Department of Education had asked them (teachers) to be "new" teachers, who worked with a new school curriculum and performed according to standards that were also not stable across time. It was a period of destabilisation, and for the teachers in this study, it was also a time in which they perceived themselves as teachers without a reliable professional identity. This thesis has argued that they had lost their professional identity to some extent.

Teachers’ identities were embedded in how they perceived themselves during a period when they were no longer the "old" teachers of apartheid South Africa, but they were also not yet the "new" teachers that had been envisioned by policy changes and expectations. Already, in the first wave of policy changes, Mattson and Harley (2003) and Jansen (2003) were commenting on the adoption of discourses for which the teachers had not been adequately prepared. In the drive to reform education and, with that, to reform teacher professionalisation, the continuous policy changes that had been intended to be their greatest enabler, became the teachers’ greatest obstacle. Of course, they were hopeful that their identities would be enriched by the characteristics of what most citizens were hoping for in the country, that is, freedom, better living conditions and better education, but there were simply too many confounding factors.

This research argues that the teachers’ identity had become unstable to the extent that it could impact the quality of their work, although at the time no one would
acknowledge this. The restlessness in the teacher community only increased and, by the time of writing this thesis, the media had reported amply on the education crises in the country and the unrest in the teaching community. Even though authors agree that professional identity is dynamic and that it moves as time goes by and, although that is an acceptable premise for looking at teacher development, what I found in this study is that the required shifts had been excessive. The teachers in this study felt that there was simply too much change expected of them without sufficient scaffolding.

This research concludes that the 11 themes that constitute the findings of the study show how the professional identity of the teachers changed; and that it was their overall sense of being in a bigger (national, community and spiritual) context that enabled them to continue with a sense of (a somewhat fragmented) self. Were it not for their sense of community and their religion, as well as their conviction that they serve a new nation, they could have had an even more broken identity.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THEMES

As discussed in the previous chapter, the patterns that were constituted by the various themes of the analysis showed that teachers’ professional identity had elements of positive enhancement – those elements able to improve teachers’ identity. At the same time, though, they had also lost part of their sense of who they were. The pattern that emerged from the data (in the final themes) showed that the "self" of the teacher, as described by Mead (1934), and key in a symbolic interactionist view of identity, was affected both positively and negatively.

The self of the "I" (the first person and acting subject) and the "me" (first person as object of impacting factors) were in a contested space. From this view the agent (or acting subject) was identified in seven themes and the "me" in four themes that emerged from the data. At a first glance, it would seem as if the teachers had sufficient agency, but it is worth noting that the two, “I” and “me”, cannot be separated, much as the tension between Giddens’s (1990) notions of agency and structure cannot be separated. As discussed in Chapter 2 Paragraph 2.5.3.2, the "I"
and the "me" in SI together constitute the identity of an individual. From this view the implication is that the landscapes of teachers are both internal and external, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1995). Teachers' landscapes are their internal "classroom environment" where they can, ostensibly, be themselves as acting subjects. The external landscape involves that which takes place beyond the classroom, including policies and rules set by the employer. Alternately this may be referred to as "habitus" and "field" in the discourse of Bourdieu (1977). According to one of Bourdieu's collaborators, the notion of habitus refers to:

The way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them (Wacquant, 2005: 316, referring to Bourdieu).

I insert a brief reference to this idea here in Chapter 5 because it was only upon the analysis of the data that it became evident that both structuration theory (Giddens, 1991) and the notion of habitus could help me to interpret the pattern that I constructed from the themes. The idea of habitus is not an individual endeavour or state of being, but rather a social process that results in lasting and transferrable patterns from one setting to another, because it is not fixed but can shift from one context to another. Habitus "is not fixed or permanent, and can be changed under unexpected situations or over a long historical period" (Navarro, 2006:16). This author further explains that "habitus" is impacted upon by "the kind of fields or power people possess" (Navarro, 2006:16).

Bourdieu (1977) endeavoured to describe and clarify how people's practices and their contexts are related. The contexts Bourdieu (1977) is referring to are institutions, values and rules where practices take place. Bourdieu named this context the "field" or a "series of contexts which constitute an objective hierarchy and which produce and authorise certain discourses and activities" (Webb, 2002: 21-22). The field, he argues, refers to the institutions, the rules and the interaction that take place between the two. This type of interaction is evident in the data. The teachers
were, at the time of the research, part of the unfolding of South African history. They were citizens in an almost epic transition and swept with the ideals that were at the forefront of life in the new South Africa. These ideals were meant to redress the "old" South Africa to the extent that policy makers did perhaps not realise that, all the teachers knew, was what they had encountered in this "old" country and its educational landscape.

And so, as every field has its own rule, so did education. Like the field of economy, politics, religion and law, which all have their own rules and types of power, and maintain a certain degree of independence and self-rule from the others; education has its rules too – specifically public education. Consequently, in the two features of field that Bourdieu identifies, the people who envisage entering one of the fields will have a specific nature and character enforced on them. There will also be an area of struggle wherein agents and institutions strive to preserve or topple the existing distribution of social and material capital (Wacquant, 2008:268). In education, perhaps, this was not entirely the case. The ideology of the struggle was first and foremost to regain power and education was seen as an avenue for that. Thus, although imposed on them and expecting much from them, the policies were implemented to change the world for the better for people who had been oppressed for so long. Habitus and field are both historical in their essence. Among the teachers in this study, there was a head-on collision between their historical position and the expectations of the public education authorities, and thus the national government too.

The notion of habitus captures aspects of their teaching profession that form their professional history, including the time they were novice teachers. It also includes their recent history. It is evident from the themes derived from the data of this study, that in the establishment of a "post 1994" identity as citizens and educational practitioners, teachers have been the objects of multiple social interventions that must have had some influence on what they perceive themselves to be. That they experienced confusion and loss of identity is understandable.
A similar view was expressed early in the reform process by researchers, such as Mattson and Harley (2003), who argued that teachers’ formal and prior standing shape their understanding, comprehension and implementation of a particular policy. Thus, if educational reforms are not congruent and do not complement their personal and professional identities, teachers may find that these reforms conflict with their needs, which inevitably leads to loss of identity.

Some of the themes in the data of this thesis show that teachers’ identities had been fractured by too much change and too many "new discourses" of change. One teacher indicated in an interview that teachers had “fallen between the cracks of change”. When teachers were concerned about their role and function in society, their religion and their values became more prominent in their on-going construction of identity. To examine this assertion and others more carefully, this section will discuss each of the themes that emerged from the data individually.

5.2.1 The classroom demotivates teachers

Teachers’ place of practice is the school, and specifically the classroom, and anything in there can affect them adversely. This theme exemplifies the struggle in the classroom, where the teaching life had, for some of the teachers, become demotivating and unrewarding. The teaching environment (or the internal landscape of teachers) had a powerful influence on their performance and work and their shifting sense of self. Teachers conceptualised their experiences in their classroom as largely negative. The negativity, I would argue as I read the data, was due to the challenges created by curriculum reform, which required work that could hardly be done in an overcrowded classroom; work overload as a result of the seven roles of teachers; unclear curriculum leadership practice; lack of support from colleagues; school management problems; and too much administration work instead of teaching.

Schmidt (2000) found that when teachers are left to interpret and implement changes on their own, confusion can follow. The data show that this was the case in this study. The teachers’ many negative emotions left them open to vulnerability, much
as it left teachers in other studies that I have cited (Kelchtermans, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Darby, 2008). Hargreaves (1998) argues that teachers experience positive emotions when there is improvement in the achievement of learners’ outcomes in their classroom. With regard to teachers’ perceptions this means that anything that is contradictory or incongruent with their perception will elicit negative emotions that may result in them being demotivated.

In this study I found that teachers were struggling to adapt to the new demands of the classroom. According to Van Veen et al. (2005:917), “the way and extent to which teachers perceive, adapt, and realize reforms in their classroom will be influenced by the extent to which teachers challenge and construct their existing identities”. If teachers identity is mostly affected by the classroom context (Raynolds, 1996), then it follows that the reforms should have considered teachers’ professional identities, but this is not what I found in this study.

According to Schmidt and Datnow (2005:951) “teachers typically invest themselves heavily in their work, making the classroom the site for emotions regarding changes that challenge or celebrate their existing practices”. The influence and effect of changes may become more acute, often leading to doubt, uncertainty, and even guilt. I found that teachers were demotivated by the reforms that ignored them as individual professional practitioners. The negativity that I described is similar to what van Veen et al. (2005:917) found in one of their studies of an enthusiastic Dutch-language teacher who ended up angry, anxious, guilty, and ashamed of himself due to his inability to assess learners' portfolios because of time constraints and other subjects he was teaching. This assertion is also supported by Zymbelas (2005), Hargreaves (2005), Kelchtermans (2005) and Reio (2005) who write about uncertainty, unsatisfying and ambiguous conditions that may lead to negative emotion of frustration, anxiety and guilt. Van Veen et al. found that the teacher sacrificed quality of teaching and was criticised for his lack of performance. He started enthusiastic and ended unhappy.
Van Veen et al. (2005:917) argue that research suggests that teachers’ sense of identity with regard to subject, relationships and role is affected – both positively and negatively – by classroom experiences, collegial relationships, organisational structures and external situational pressures. Despite this research, the key role that teachers’ sense of professional and personal identity plays has been almost completely ignored in reform strategies and educational innovation policy in South Africa. This research thesis claims that teachers’ professional identities evolve in their environments during the early years of teaching and that they adapt with experience, but that they were not adequately prepared for their encounter with the new curricula coming into their classrooms since 1994.

Furthermore, teachers found the emphasis on learners and learning hard to internalise, as many saw teaching as an act in and of itself; as an action to be accomplished. This study found a notable impact on the teachers as a result of the first round of policy change, with the almost radical emphasis on the learner as object and with less focus on pedagogy than was workable for the teacher. They had less desire to participate in the school; instead they opted for traditional teaching methods as their default, fail-safe pedagogy. They felt that they were not given enough time and space to express their teaching skills and expertise, due to the continual changes in the curriculum. They also felt that their pedagogic role was not sufficiently acknowledged. This is confirmed in Lasky (2005) in the study of four secondary teachers in Ontario Canada. They found that teachers became vulnerable when dealing with learners when so much was suddenly required of them. If teachers perceived anything as harmful to their wellbeing, or if they felt fearful and highly anxious, they would express a negative emotion and show inefficacious vulnerability (Lasky, 2005). According to Lasky (ibid), teachers will never take risks in such situation to avoid exposing themselves to negative perception by learners. Lasky (2005) also argues that teachers need to take "real" risks in order to forge an effective teacher identity. For example, they need to stand up for what they believe. Unfortunately, as indicated above, the findings indicated that, what was going on in their classrooms, inhibited them from taking therisks needed to help them to forge their professional identities.
Clandinin and Connelly (1995:13–14) argue that “…teaching is a secret enterprise and depends for its success on the maintenance of a safe place for those secret acts of teaching to occur”. Teachers felt they no longer had a “safe space” because there was too much in the new policy that was new. This research postulates that, in terms of Bourdieu’s ideas, one can say that teachers found themselves at the receiving end of policy makers who did not take their "habitus" and "fields" (Wacquant, 2008) into consideration, but were looking to an end-product (a range of learning outcomes) instead of the process of pedagogy.

This is also contrary to Dworet’s (1996:67) view of teachers’ identity. This author views identity as the idea a teacher has of herself or himself over time and at any given moment. Jansen (2003) and Mattson and Harley (2003) problematise this issue further by saying that, during curriculum change, teachers are expected to accelerate the adaptation of their identities, that is their everyday practice, to that required by the policy with limited resources and support structures. It is as if the teachers were to change their identity by way of policy implementation to become the ideal teachers required by the policy. In this research it is clear that the opposite happened.

In addition, the classroom environment required too much administration. Too many assessments were required of the learners and teachers. They had little or no support from parents. This administration of assessment and "paper work", as it is referred to, was seen as unrewarding, hindering their progress. In addition, teachers lacked sufficient time to focus on learners – especially those with special learning needs. In their study on teachers, Clandanin and Connelly (1995) found that the classroom lacks an element whereby teachers can tell their story in a transformative way. The story was already pre-scripted by the policy in the instance of this research.

5.2.2 The profession as an expression of knowledge and their faith system

Despite all the uncertainty, the teachers in this research found some solace in religion. Their professional practice and professional identity were maintained to
some extent by their religious and spiritual belief systems. Teachers’ interpretation of
who they were, what they do, and how they teach within the school, found some
expression in their religion and belief systems. They either attributed actions to God
or ancestors – even the impediments of the classroom and the policy was so
attributed. This view is also expressed by Schmidt and Datnow (2005:950): “Values
and emotions, therefore, affect this sense-making process, and highlight how
teachers are often biased towards policy interpretations that fit (or do not fit) with
their prior beliefs and values”.

The teachers in this study wanted everything within their environment such as
teaching, learning and the whole context to be congruent and harmonious with their
belief systems or worldviews. This study found that teachers used their belief
systems to sustain themselves and to serve the learners because they attributed
their love of children to their belief systems. Gandelli (1991) confirms that there are
different elements that affect teachers’ identity, and that religion is one of them. He
suggests that the construction of teachers’ identity is a personal and internal
process. What Gandelli implies here is that teachers want their reality to be taken
into consideration even during educational transformations or reforms. This is also
the view of Van Veen et al. (2005), who emphasise the importance of taking
teachers’ emotions into consideration when reforming education.

Lasky (2005:901) defines professional development as “how teachers define
themselves to themselves and to others”. This definition indicates the importance of
beliefs held by teachers. It implies that teachers may define themselves according to
religious, political and social affiliation, and would thus like to be accepted as such
anywhere they go. It means teachers would like to be defined as Christian teachers
or African traditional believers, and everything they do would have to be related to
their religion. This is exactly the case with the teachers in question who expressed
their faith systems through their profession. Teachers in this study used religion to
guide any action they took, for example, teacher Musa whose lens was Christianity,
and Buti who combined Christianity with African traditional religion. Palmer (1998)
supports this idea by arguing that one’s identity is formed by the diverse forces that
make up one’s life. These forces impact on how we perceive ourselves, others and the world. Identity is thus psychologically and socially constructed throughout our lives as we interact with people and society at large.

Beijaard et al. (2004), allude to the notion that it is important to pay attention to the personal part of teachers’ professional identity when transforming education to avoid conflict with what they personally desire and experience as good. The conflict can lead to resistance in teachers when the personal and the professional identities are incongruent and detached from each other (Beijaard et al., 2004), and from their work. The teachers in this research did not resist the new changes and policy reforms, but almost became passive and even alienated from them. What kept them going was the view they had of themselves “as people with a spiritual worldview”, which compensated for their loss in the material world, where things changed too much. Much as they celebrated the promises of the new South Africa, they did not celebrate the “new” teacher. Rather a deity or the ancestors helped them to survive.

5.2.3 The policy on the norms and standards and the seven roles of teachers are viewed as unreliable and even oppressive

The tool through which the teachers felt the sense of oppression most was the Role of Educators of 1996. Through this document teachers were assigned and allocated seven new roles, which were incongruent with their past roles. These roles served as policy and were to be implemented by teachers whatever their career path. The Schools Acts of 1996, Curriculum 2005, the National Curriculum Statement, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011) and other policies, changed the operations and routine of teachers and replaced them with new roles and competences (Mattson & Harley, 2003). Failure to adhere to these seven roles, as described in Chapter 2, could lead to permanent dismissal from teaching.

The expectation of these roles had an effect on how the teachers saw themselves. According to Darby (2008), when teachers faced changes in their teaching practices and the reconstruction of their professional self-understanding – meaning how they perceived themselves as professionals in their professional roles – they experienced
fear and intimidation. In Darby's study it was found that teachers felt that their professional instructional approaches and professional self-understanding were challenged by the reforms. Their self-esteem decreased until they received help from outside. This was also the case with what the teachers in this study described and what I found in the analysis of their utterances. Teachers felt overwhelmed and exposed by the seven roles. Teachers were assigned new roles and identities without taking into consideration their history and legacy. Before these roles were imposed, Jansen (2003) argues, teachers were known to be bureaucratic and subservient. Teachers were obedient servants who stringently carried out the well-defined instructional tasks as per official syllabi and a moderated examination (Jansen, 2003). All these roles were now to be replaced by seven roles and new tasks, as described in Chapter 2 Subsection 2.4.4.

It is also evident from the data of this research that teachers perceived these roles as unilaterally imposed on them. They considered the roles as unreliable and oppressive. This is understandable, given that a new system in the curriculum was introduced and teachers had to sever themselves from what they knew and could do, adopting the new discourse of the "seven roles" and in the end, mimicking the discourse without changing their practice much. Van Veen and Lasky (2005) assert that how teachers understand their work circumstances, especially in times of educational changes, can have an impact on how they perceive teaching and can influence the transformation of their professional identity. The introduction of such roles did not take into account what scholars such as Coldron and Smith (1999), following Giddens (1990), warned about: the tension between agency (the personal dimension in teaching) and structure (the socially given). The "I" and the "me" of teachers' identities were in strong conflict. The roles were seen as making "me" into something that "I" had no say over almost as if the teachers were being redefined, being forced into wearing the cloak of this new teacher education and teacher practice policy. What was found in this study supports what Lasky (2005) asserts that:
A person’s sense of agency and his or her ability to act cannot be separated from the effects that mediational systems have on shaping him or her. Agency is thus, to be conceived of as ‘individual grasp’ rather than ‘group as individual.

In other words teachers perceived that their agency was replaced by structural control. The allocation of these roles reflects what Miller (1999) argues, namely that professional identity may consist of many sub-identities that may conflict or align with each other, and it is better to recognise in the definition of identity that plurality of sub-identities exists. To give expression to this, Miller used the metaphor of “ourselves as a chorus of voices, not just as tenor or soprano soloist” (Miller, 1999:8). Instead of saying that teachers have different roles, it may have been better for the policy to state that teachers have different functions that integrate into the overall role of one who educates and cares.

Consequently, the loss of agency resulted in teachers resorting to passive resistance. Most teachers showed no interest in these roles, especially the one that required them to play a pastoral role, something that they normally would do without hesitation in their community. People willingly closed themselves off emotionally in such situations. As Lasky (2005:901) observed, “they may in fact withdraw, or close themselves off in a defensive or protective stance”. Similarly, South African teachers in this study closed themselves off to defend or protect themselves, consequently inhibiting learning and trust building. The teachers in this study closed themselves off when they felt vulnerable and experienced a feeling of powerlessness or defencelessness, and when the level of fear or anxiety was high. Lasky (2005) argues that this reaction may be due to a lack of direct control of factors that affect the immediate context of the teacher, or when they feel that they are coerced to do things in a way that is inconsistent with their beliefs and values – in this case, over the seven roles of educators. Teachers in this study felt powerless because of the seven roles of educators and, as a result, did not feel safe to take risks within their classroom or their school.
In a study conducted in China, similar issues were found when new approaches and classroom roles were introduced. Teachers were expected to “move out of the comfort zone of their professional practice and to embrace the uncertainties of reform”, which teachers found to be time consuming and demanding in the first year of the reform as they first had to adapt to the new approaches (Lee and Yin, 2001). In this study teachers complained about the premature introduction of the new approaches and the difficulty of applying them to their teaching. A similar response was found in China where teachers felt that serious issues should have been addressed before the reforms could be implemented (Lee & Yin, 2011). Teachers experienced difficulty moving away from what they were used to, towards new teaching approaches that viewed learners as equal partners. They felt a loss of control of their teaching ability and had the feeling of inefficacy, expressed as the negative emotion of anxiety (Darby, 2008).

Furthermore, the other aspect that overwhelmed and caused anxiety in teachers was the assigned competencies that teachers needed to have with regard to assessment (see Section 2.4.1). Melucci (1996) confirms this finding by asserting that the acquisition of new competencies is part and parcel of professional development, but coupled with the newly defined roles of teachers and the new discourses of curriculum change, it left them at a loss. Kelchtermans (2005) has a similar view when emphasising that it is teachers in the classroom who determine if good teaching takes place and, to achieve this, it requires their professionalism and commitment.

The notion of “multiple professional identities” is in itself not that problematic, since the teachers sensed that the ground was moving under them too fast and in too many different directions. However, leaving them unable to redefine, reconstruct and negotiate their sense of self was particularly problematic. Melucci (1996) argues that, in a context of uncertainty and multiple educational change and transformation, teachers’ professional identities will not be straightforward, because teachers will not understand what is required of them by their employer, especially if the reforms impact adversely on their self and identity.
For South Africans, the time around the new millennium was still a time of adaptation to a democratic country and the conception of a new nation and a new education system. Melucci’s ideas make sense in this regard: Clashes will occur between the defined identity of teachers as projected by the past education system, political beliefs, personal factors and needs in contrast with the new identity (Melucci, 1996). I found that teachers showed uncertainty and thus misinterpreted what was expected of them, especially with regard to the pastoral role. If educational reform had come as it did in Finland (Niemi et al., 2011), where there was a strong national identity and strong values regarding education, then the teachers in this study may have been less perturbed by all the revisions in the system. But educational reform came with a whole new idea of what South African society was, and at a personal, micro-level that was almost too hard to bear.

So it is understandable that, objectively, teachers demonstrated ignorance and misinterpretation of the roles – most especially the pastoral role. They interpreted it as requiring them to “preach religion” to learners, and thus they vehemently rejected it, claiming that they were not trained, equipped nor given enough support to play such a role. They did not seem to understand that it merely meant care as Noddings (1984) defines it. They saw it as demanding of them to be “caregivers, nurses, policemen and day mothers”. Yet, despite their objection, they did already act as pastoral caregivers. Some teachers acted as family planners to curb teenage pregnancy, for example. Moore et al., (2002) may have a point when they say that education policies have been used to determine, manipulate, and indirectly enforce teacher professional identity, creating teachers that the nation envisages – but only on paper.

5.2.4 Rules of social conduct inhibit their work

Teachers are naturally social beings who must socialise with others. Stout (2001) and Kalb et al. (2004) emphasise that perception of self, relationship with others, and with bigger groups are all aspects of identity construction. In the data from this inquiry it is evident that the teachers were prohibited from interacting with each other
and were encouraged to work alone. Rules were put in place to prevent teachers from interacting with each other, especially with new staff members in the school. According to the interviewed teachers, the management of the school feared that they would negatively influence the new staff members. From a distance, the staff relationships at the school appeared good. However, after interpretation of the data it became clear that the staff members, especially the teachers, were regulated by unjust stringent rules of social conduct that inhibited their work.

The image of the teachers as incarcerated offenders behind high burglar-proofed fences and doors will always remain with the researcher. The teachers remained behind burglar proofed entrances that made them look like prisoners. Teachers also felt that their school symbolised a prison with many "do not's" and an excessively regulated school culture. They perceived their school as a prison. The stringent rules of staff relationships and contact were regulated, as in a prison, where inmates have rules that regulate their contact. Teachers construct their sense of self and their identity as they interact with others and their environment, as described in the theoretical framework of this study. Inhibition of their social interaction may affect the development of their professional identity as they need interaction with their colleagues to develop academically, especially the new teachers who must interact with the experienced teachers to learn how to adapt to the new environment (Blumer, 1969).

The educational ethnographer, Wolcott (1994), shows how teachers adapt to their environment to suit the organisation. The school in this research was limiting teachers’ movement and interactions. They were required to get permission from the administrator to talk to the principal, who consults through steel burglar bars. They could not use the kitchen or the elegantly decorated and draped staffroom except for staff meetings or visitors. The teachers were not allowed to visit each other in their classrooms nor to sit and have a social conversation during breaks because that was perceived as laziness and a waste of learners’ valuable time. Even though this may not come directly from the implementation of a new policy, it is an important aspect of the way teachers view themselves. So their context militated against their
professional development, as other researchers have also found (Sandstorm, et al., 2006; Reio, 2005).

Also, this management style can be tied to the policy that requires safety for all school stakeholders. This is contrary to what Jenkins’ (1996) emphasises – that identity is an integral part of social life and that each individual has an identity, which is personal to him, but is shared with people s/he interacts with and through her/his affiliation to social groups. I found the school environment to be hostile instead of conducive to the development of a professional identity among the teachers. This is contrary to Castells (1997; 2001), who argues that identity is a process of construction of meaning by social actors derived from their shared experience and not an individualisticendeavour that can be carried out in isolation.

The researcher’s argument then is that the school is governed by a hegemony that inhibits proper expression of social and professional identity caused both by the policy and the style of the current management. Jenkins (1996) sees identity as being continuously negotiated with the people around us and, if a school controls the exchange of ideas between staff, it causes many problems. Just one of these problems is that the construction of a shared professional identity is severely inhibited. This is complemented by the findings of several studies conducted by Kelchtermans (2005) of the narratives of the career experiences of teachers. Kelchtermans found that teachers felt they were not in full control of their tasks: they felt powerless, fearful, threatened and maltreated by principals and parents and were unable to defend themselves. Borrowing a concept from Blase (1988:127) he referred to these job experiences as “vulnerability”.

5.2.5 Dominant discourse of despondency pervades their interaction

Kelchtermans (2005:996), in his analysis of the work of van Veen et al. (2005) found that: “The case shows that, although the teacher subscribes to the agenda of the reform …, the working conditions under which the reform has to be implemented elicit more negative emotions and reluctance than one would expect on the basis of teachers’… assent”. It is no wonder then that there is a pervasive discourse of
hopelessness among the teachers. Not only must teachers struggle with new policy and expectations, they cannot even discuss it with one another. When one has contemplated and worked through the bizarreness of this "Foucauldian opticon" view of school management/control, one can understand that the teachers’ discourse would be filled with references to despondency. Their despondence came from an overwhelming sense of helplessness and lack of agency – there was little they could do with regard to the timing of these changes and the lack of educational material resources. Teachers complained at every opportunity about the negative attitude of their employer (the state) and their management team. One of them suggested that teaching was not for the faint hearted because it "may kill" them. They said some very harsh things at times, such as their manager was insensitive to their needs and treated them like "animals".

The sense of a loss of agency is noticeable in much of the data. Woodward (2000:8) says that “the concept of identity encompasses some notion of human agency; an idea that we can have some control in constructing our own identities”. At the same time, she acknowledges that there are structural constraints that continue to prevent some people from adopting the identities they would like to have. She refers to changes in employment, among others, as structural constraints that prevent us from adopting certain identities (Woodward, 2000). Change of employer, by way of educational reform, could also be seen as cause for the loss of agency as mentioned above. This research argues that the structural constraints that prevented the teachers from adopting their envisaged identities were treatment by, and expectations of, their employer. This lack of support from, and appreciation by, their employer discouraged teachers and led to despondency.

Mattson and Harley (2003) argue that the formal and prior standing (political, professional and emotional) that teachers have, shape their ability to comprehend and implement a particular policy. If educational reforms are not congruent with professional identity, teachers may find them in conflict with what they need, thus leading to confusion. Teachers expect policy to complement their personal and professional identity. This research argues that any policy that is destructive to
teachers’ self-images and identities will have a negative effect, and will consequently result in confusion and misunderstanding of who they are (Mattson & Harley, 2003). According to Darby (2008) teachers are significant in ensuring that the reforms take place by implementing them in their classroom, which means that the reforms must not be incongruent with their needs. Any reform that is incongruent with the teachers’ needs and identities will result in the rejection of such reform, because it will not be properly implemented at the classroom level.

Van Veen and Sleegers (2006) and Lee and Yin (2011) affirm that teachers expect events in the school and classroom context to be congruent with their professional orientation, and to support them. If these expectations are met, teachers experience positive emotions that will consequently encourage them to accept reforms. In South Africa most studies found that teachers did not feel the congruency between their sense of identity and the expectations brought about by the reforms. Like Chinese and Canadian studies, the South African teachers experienced the reforms differently but most uttered negative sentiments of despondency and loss, although there were a few new teachers that did not have problems with the reforms. In other words, the degree of impact and influenced varied amongst the teachers, thus teachers responded in three different ways: “the losing-heart accommodators; the drifting followers; and the cynical performers” (Lee & Yin, 2011:36). Janas (1998, cited in Lee and Yin, 2011:39-40) uses alternative phrases of resistance such as “aggressive resistance” which is characterised by overt refusal without any disguise; "passive-aggressive resistance" where teachers appear willing to change but excuse themselves from putting changes into practice; and "passive resistance" where teachers present wholehearted acceptance but never follow through".

5.2.6 Teachers use multiple images and metaphors to capture their identity-influx

Different images and metaphors were used by teachers to describe themselves. Zembylas (2005) sees identity as being constantly context-embedded in power relationships, ideology, politics and cultural aspects. Similarly, Stout (2001) asserts
that the different self-constructs of identity may coexist within the same individual, becoming real at different times or in different contexts. This was clear in the type of analogical references teachers made about themselves, showing just how transient, and time and context bound their identities were, and how that specific time (2005) was experienced by them. Contexts can be permeable to other contexts; diverse contexts may overlap and equally influence one another (Soudien, 2001). Soudien (2001) argues that these contexts are active and not passive and that there are discourses that reflect this, such as the "Official Discourse" that the teachers identified during a wave of research in South Africa in the early 2000s.

During the training on how to deal with their pastoral role, which they rejected, the teachers nevertheless reverted to metaphors that indicated their sense of care. For instance, some teachers identified themselves variously as parents, fathers, mothers, mentors, guides, social workers, role models and leaders when they showed appreciation of themselves and their work. When things were not going their way they described themselves negatively and refused to be treated like prisoners, animals, nurses, policemen, day care teachers, priests and street sweepers. At times most teachers referred to themselves as "prisoners" because of the jail-like fences at the school that divided them from their managers. The images and metaphors used by teachers depended on the context of "us". As Castells (2001:115) argues, the social and cultural context influences the formation and the shifting of identity.

In a social context relationships are primary, and the forming and reforming of identity can be said to be a relational phenomenon (Beijaard et al., 2004). It is negotiated between people and often ambiguous as the example of the teachers’ use of metaphors has shown. It is dependent on culturally available meaning and the open-ended power-laden enactment of this meaning in everyday situations (Sachs, 1999; Kondo, 1990; Melucci, 1996). For instance, there are times when teachers construed their identity as that of a "slave to the master" – the master being the Department of Education of the new democracy. As Castells (1997:2001) argues, identity is a process of construction of meaning by social actors and, I would add, who are always on some stage with a specific backdrop in a specific part of the
enacted drama. The usage of metaphors and images were also used in other studies like the study conducted by Lasky (2005) one teacher even used the metaphor of herself as a "dinosaur".

5.2.7 Political affiliation and unionism inhibits practice

In the study conducted by Lasky (2005) to examine the dynamic interplay between teacher professional identity, agency and context to see how teachers experience vulnerability in their endeavour to achieve their primary purpose in teaching learners, it was found that one of the key aspects that shaped teachers' identities was politics. On the other hand, Kelchtermans (2005) argues that professional and meaningful interactions of teachers with their professional environment consist of an important political aspect. It came to his attention that as this “experienced vulnerability grew, teachers developed several protective coping strategies that resulted in conservative micro-political actions aimed at preserving the status quo" (Kelchtermans, 2005:997). This was the case with teachers in the school in this study, teachers in this school were affiliated to two different unions. One of the unions is affiliated to the ruling dominant party. Thus, this research found that political affiliation and unionism was, to some extent, an indicator of acceptance and of success. This view is shared by Jansen (2003) who states that teachers' identities could be defined as the way teachers perceive themselves in their work professionally, emotionally and also politically. The data of this study concurs with this view. Teachers' association and interaction were aligned with their union affiliation.

The research also found that resources were allocated according to political affiliation and unionism, and that there was stratification in what was made available to whom. There was thus a professional class structure. Teachers who belonged to the union that the school managers were affiliated to enjoyed privileges. Affiliation meant either acceptance or alienation. Bourdieu looked at the characteristics that differentiated people in one social class from another and referred to it as "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1977 cited in Marariu, 2010). Instead of the unions being vehicles for a conducive working environment, this research found that they were used as a...
tool of oppression and exclusion. They were also used to impose punitive measures on other members of staff and even parents.

In other words, as Harriet Bradley argues, identity is rooted in membership of a social group. She examines four aspects of inequality, which are class, gender, race and ethnicity, and sees them as the most important form of inequality and sources of identity. She also believes that social factors tend to bring certain identities to prominence and, at the same time, reduce the importance of others. She believes that identities are grounded in inequalities, social divisions and differences, and these are time, place and individually bound. She identifies three levels of identity and, amongst them, the politicised identity which comes to the fore when individuals continually think of themselves in terms of an identity (Bradley, 1997). Such identities are formed through political action through campaigners highlighting the importance of identity and using it as a basis for organising collective action (Bradley, 1996).

The union and political affiliation influence decision making and practice in the school. There is evident unfairness in dealing with issues. Soudien (2001: 312) argues that the "Official Discourse" is “the product of intense contestation [that] arises out of the struggle for political hegemony [and which] reflects the 'ideologies, views and perspectives of whichever political group is in power'".

5.2.8 Collegiality and relationship with learners are a driving force

Contrary to the negative experiences that teachers had, this theme was identified from data that reflect positive aspects of the "life-world" of teachers that contribute to their identity. In the discussion of the previous themes, the sense conveyed was of a sombre outlook on "who" teachers were in their profession. Most of the participants mentioned that they were discouraged with what was going on in the teaching fraternity. Their discourse reflected how this could arguably affect their sense of identity. Teachers highlighted unwavering commitment to their learners in much of what they said. They explained that learners were their source of strength and motivation to carry on in an increasingly hostile teaching environment. This resonates with the research conducted by Lasky (2005) wherein teachers were
prepared to open themselves to any sort of risk for the sake of their learners. As mentioned in Section 2.4.5, teachers opened themselves willingly to the possibility of embarrassment, to loss of identity, or emotional pain for the benefit of the learners. The teachers exposed themselves to risk irrespective of the consequences and negative stress or whether or not they lost face; they felt safe enough in their environment to take the risk of feeling powerless, betrayed, or defenceless in situations of high anxiety or fear for the benefit of the learners (Lasky, 2005).

The teachers in this study were committed to the learners irrespective of the demand. They asserted that they remained in teaching for the sake of the learners. Teachers like Musa and Tom sometimes took the role of parents to learners. Musa, who was studying social work at the time of this study, used her social work skills to counsel learners. Tom, on the other hand, acted as their life coach and a father. As discussed in Section 5.2.6, he perceived himself as a "shepherd" to the learners, their "guider" during the day. Volkmann and Anderson (1998) say that professional identity is a compound and dynamic equilibrium whereby professional self-image is balanced with an assortment of roles teachers feel that they have to play. In other words, their view of learners and learning served as their source of strength. This notion is also emphasised by Tickle (2000) who sees professional identity as what teachers find important in their professional work.

Some teachers like Musa, Ann and Tom showed strong compassion for learners. According to Musa, learners who feel loved and safe are capable of improving their chances of academic success and will trust the teacher. She believes that learners will also be emotionally and intellectually involved in their work if such a sense of trust can be maintained. When teachers understand and commit to their learners they will create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning based on trust (Murray, 2002).

5.2.9 Serving the country as a loyal citizen

It is not surprising that, given the history of the country, there was a strong sense of patriotism in the teachers’ discourse. They came across as people who were
patriotic, serving their country as reliable citizens. In this view of their civic role they also expressed ideas about leadership, including spiritual and political leadership. Teachers believed that it was their responsibility to help produce good citizens who would lead exemplary lives in the community. They referred to their obligation to honour their community by making sure that no ill-prepared learner leaves their school, because that would be an embarrassment to and failure of their teaching. Although the researcher was tempted to pursue the issue further, she did not want to disrupt the way the data were collected, or interfere with the research process. The teachers had shown that the tensions that were inherent in them as subjects in an activity system, such as a school, may be contradictory to the tensions they experienced as employees of an education system.

Teachers showed that they were, at the same time, members of a community (the school) and of a society (via the education officialdom). Woodward (2000) also sees identities as being constructed by one’s societal connections as well as one’s community connections and interaction with others in these two spheres, as originally described by Tönnies in the 19th century (Tönnies, 1957 cited in Sergiovanni, 1994). Thus identity construction shows how one sees the world and is seen by the world. In seeing their place in the world the teachers in this research had different ways of interacting. All participants’ were involved in their communities either as care givers, religious leaders or political leaders. Musa wanted to leave the teaching profession to help with HIV issues in the community. She was passionate about helping HIV positive people and helped as a volunteer in one of the hospices in her area. Her service to HIV positive people is paramount in her life. The way she saw herself is just one example of how identity is formed when the need arises. Beijaard et al. (2004) make the point that we do not have an identity, but our identities develop as we go through life. Palmer (1998), also adds by saying that one’s identity is formed by diverse forces that make up one’s life. This implies that these forces or aspects shape the way we perceive and experience life.
5.2.10 Teachers expressed the dire need for professional development

There was evidence in the data that the teachers had sufficient self-knowledge to recognise that they needed professional development opportunities. The one topic that came up often was the discourse of the new policies, specifically the terminology of OBE. One example is of special interest: One teacher avoided answering questions regarding OBE every time this came up in a discussion. This is the teacher who had reservations about some of the views echoed by his fellow colleagues. Teachers specifically mentioned that they needed more training with regard to assessment because it confused them. This finding was also prominent in the research by Dasoo (2010).

Teachers in this study, as in the studies conducted by other researchers like Lasky (2005), Zembylas (2005) and Darby (2008), felt that they had lost control of the situation and had reached a dead end. Teachers felt that they had lost control of most of the things that had to do with "proper teaching" and thus needed help.

Teachers' self-understanding was lost in the wave of reforms as they indicated in the data. They indicated that they were confused and lost with regard to the new teaching strategies and approaches. Teachers indicated that they could not cope with the demand of the new policy because it did not make sense to them. The confusion was attributed to the teachers having had only one week of training with regard to OBE as a whole. Some teachers felt that their conceptualisation of what teaching was about had been eroded by the new roles so they needed to revive their “self” and to find their way through the difficulty they faced. Kelchtermans (2005) reached a similar conclusion. He states that: “Policy measures and imposed educational reforms that were not congruent with the teachers’ deeply held beliefs about good teaching, but from which teachers felt they could not escape, clearly contributed to the experience of vulnerability and emotional disturbances” (Kelchtermans, 2005:997).

Teachers also complained about the lack of proper training and professional guidance showed by the Department of Education training facilitators during the
actual training and after training. One teacher (Musa) actually stated that they were trained by unqualified facilitators who did not know what they were doing. They argued that they are expected to come up with learning programmes and lesson plans whereas there are no facilities and resources. They felt that these were increasing their work load and they could not cope with the demands without compromising themselves and quality. They felt that one to two weeks of training was not enough to carry them through their classroom let alone careers. Teachers also complained that the status quo compromised their integrity and identity as teachers. Thus they felt that further training and development in these areas was needed. This concurs with what other researchers studying teacher identity say: that continuous teacher learning will enhance the development of identity. Reio (2005:988) borrowing from Lohman (2000) argues that “successful adaptation to change requires a workplace environment that embraces both formal and informal learning”. He further argues that teachers can only manage reform demands and teaching expertise by engaging in teacher learning opportunities (Reio, 2005). Schmidt and Datnow (2005) argue for the need for learning opportunities and training that are related and relevant to the needs of the teachers, and that these should indicate how they align with or deviate from past and current reforms.

5.2.11 Teachers are resilient because of their community values

Teachers used their community values to cope with, and be resilient, in their work. Gandelli (1999:4) says that “the elements of identity that seemed to affect teachers' pedagogy vary”. The teacher identity categories that Gandelli identifies include: gender, (previous) occupation, religious background, family history, athletic background, and "ethics identity". This research found that "ethics identity" was a way of explaining how the teachers presented themselves in this inquiry. Much of what they did, and how they saw themselves, reflected their values (Dasoo, 2010).

Tickle (2000) argues that, professional identity does not only refer to the influences of the conception and expectations of other people and images in society about what a teacher should know and do, but also to what teachers themselves find important
in their professional work and lives based on both their experiences in practice and their personal backgrounds. This is the case with those teachers in this study who observed their community values, such as "Ubuntu" (I am, because you are) as their basic value and identity. Teachers saw Ubuntu as part of their national/societal and community identity. It is notable, however, that the teachers in Dasoo’s study de-emphasised this value after two years.

Teachers remained in the teaching profession because the driving force behind their resilience was their community values. This vow of being part of the community extended to leadership. This study was conducted in a township where most people are illiterate, so teachers believed that they had to remain to ensure that their people become literate in the next generation. Some of them remained resilient, because they believed that they should plough back that which was afforded to them by their community. Most teachers who were studied and interviewed came from poor backgrounds and were sometimes assisted financially by their neighbours and community organisations. This is consistent with what Lovat, Toomey, Clement, Crotty and Nielsel (2009:88) assert: “The school is the integral part of the community and strives to develop partnership with the community as a place where services support and opportunities lead to student learning, stronger family links and healthier communities.” In this case, teachers were an integral part of the school community, and for this reason used their expertise and values to remain in the teaching fraternity. Figure 5.1 and 5.2 respectively; present the themes that capture the “I” and the “me” of the teachers’ identities.
5.3 Thesis Contribution to Research

They expressed the dire need for professional development. Rules of social conduct inhibit their work. Political affiliation and unionism inhibits practice. Teachers use multiple images and metaphors to capture their identity in flux. Classroom demotivates teachers. The profession as expression of knowledge and their faith system. Dominant discourse of dispondency.

They are resilient because of their community values. Serving the country as loyal and patriotic citizen. Colligiality and relationship with learners are driving force.

The policy on the norms and standards assign 7 roles of teachers which are viewed as unreliable and even oppressive.

They expressed the dire need for professional development. Rules of social conduct inhibit their work. Political affiliation and unionism inhibits practice. Teachers use multiple images and metaphors to capture their identity in flux. Classroom demotivates teachers. The profession as expression of knowledge and their faith system. Dominant discourse of dispondency.

5.3 Thesis Contribution to Research
This is a contained study that can contribute towards redefining and reconstructing teachers' professional identity to restore their dignity during extensive periods of reform or transformation. The findings have some implications for policy and practice.

### 5.3.1 Making informed decisions

The findings of this study may help policy makers to make informed decisions by taking teachers' needs into consideration and paying more than lip-service to the notion of professional identity, which is so integral to professionalism. In the literature review, I cited scholars who argued that to ignore teachers' background, beliefs, experiences and needs (which form part of their identity) when making education reforms, can be detrimental to education practice. This thesis argues that identity is negotiated, not fixed and is the result of *culturally available* meaning.

Failure to take aspects that make up teachers' identities into account can lead to resentment of the policy as clearly seen in the findings. My argument is that teachers are adults and want their needs and experiences to be taken into consideration when any kind of planning is done. Using planning programmes relevant to teachers' needs will benefit the policy planners instead of a one-size-fits-all programme. A teachers' identity "toolkit" includes a policy in which they have been participants or, at the very least, consulted.

### 5.3.2 Curriculum changes

Based on what the teachers expressed about the rapid changes in the curriculum, policy makers should be aware that teachers need to be properly orientated to changes taking place before the implementation of any curriculum. From most studies cited in this inquiry it became evident that rapid changes cause confusion and result in resentment by teachers. Thus, policy makers should employ more progressive models to ensure that teachers grasp the essence of the new curriculum. The highlighted issues, such as burnout, overcrowding and increased work load, would then be attended to in a more amenable way. To some extent this
may have been the case in the planning of the third wave of curriculum renewal and the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Also, policy makers must realise that teachers have to be properly skilled to make such changes. Furthermore, curriculum planners should take the "way that teachers see themselves" into consideration. In addition, curriculum policy makers must make resources available before they implement any changes.

5.3.3 Teacher development programmes

The South African school community needs its teachers to be exemplified in policy as persons in varying contexts where reformation of practice is much more complex than the introduction of new policies. The nurturing of evolving identities needs interventions from education departments that project an ethos of care as much as they project an ethos of standardisation and outcomes achievement. This research is relevant to the practice and lives of teachers today, especially those in under-resourced schools.

The findings of this research should, when disseminated strategically, contribute to more contextualised and relevant teacher development programmes in the continuous professional development plans of the national education department, non-governmental organizations and higher education Institutions that are gradually becoming more involved in school–university partnerships. Teacher education policy in South Africa relies on the nurturing of a new generation of teachers who will be practitioners who can fulfil the different roles outlined in the Norms and Standards of Teacher Education (Department of Education, 2000b) and recently replaced by the The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2011). I propose that the policy for teacher development can be influenced by sufficient contextual research that portrays teachers in these roles.

The study has given the research, policy, and practice community a glimpse of what happened in the first reform period – how teachers became somewhat alienated
from their practice and their environment. It would seem as if the most recent reforms may not have such an impact on the teachers' sense of self. This may be because they have become resilient and because many have been educated in a new dispensation. National programmes such as the Strengthening of Foundation Phase Teacher Education (Henning, 2013), supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the European Commission, have injected the field of teacher education, teacher development and also teacher professional identity with a renewed sense of the importance of good confident teachers. I would argue that it is important to remember what can happen to teachers if they are lost in a storm of renewal.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several limitations to this study, namely:

- The study was conducted during the first two waves of education reforms in South Africa which started in 1996, but which gained impetus in 2001. It focused mainly on the influence of Curriculum 2005 and the National Curriculum Statement. This was the stage when teachers were still trying to find a footing in the political reform that had just taken place in South Africa from apartheid to the democratic state. As discussed, the abrupt changes in education meant sudden change in their method of teaching as evidenced above. More additional reforms were implemented from 2011 to 2012, which will require further inquiry into how these changes affected teachers.

- This study, like other qualitative research, was subjected to limitations of sample size and subjectivity. As a researcher, I have a background in teacher training and policy formulation. I believe that this background might have clouded the manner in which I dealt with teacher identity, as my perceptions of what a model teacher is and of teacher identity may have influenced my interpretation of reality as presented by teachers. I endeavoured to avoid the influence of the pre-conceived ideas about
teachers and identity to affect data collection and interpretation thereof. My status as a novice researcher impacted on my data collection techniques. Most of the time I was unsure as to whether I was doing the right thing or not. During interviews I felt that I might be leading teachers to the answer or even losing track of the conversation, and misdirecting the teachers. Meaning was later clarified by follow-up interviews. Furthermore, it was the first time I had embarked on participant-observation research, so I felt tense and nervous. It was very difficult to decide on essential issues and thus I ended up collecting too much data. In consultation with my supervisor I was convinced that I was on the right track with minimal errors. However, the caveat is that in the finer detail of record keeping, and the precise chain of evidence of the analysis process, I compensated. The reliability of the study is thus, I claim, intact.

- This study was part of a bigger project that was concluded in 2008. The study was conducted for a number of years and in the process there were multiple changes in education of which I did not take note, due to my effort to remain focused on the object of study. It was, however, required of me to return to the research site to collect more data.

- Furthermore, the study ignored the demographics of South Africa because it was only conducted in one township school and only with Black teachers. The findings of this study are not generalisable to all the demographic groups of South Africa, which is a limitation because the contextual issues of the various races and groups are compromised. It is, however, worth noting that in the bigger project some of the findings in different areas like former White suburban schools are more or less similar to these ones.

- I did not spend the same time with all participants because one of them took ill in the process and her condition forced her to take early retirement. I was sensitive to her serious condition, so further interviews were done telephonically for less than thirty minutes at a time.
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study indicate that much research on professional identity presents it as an unclear concept, ambiguous and based on implicit understanding (Beijaard et al., 2004). Therefore, it means that more research should be conducted to help in the understanding of how teachers construct their professional identity, especially during education reforms. The research has to extend the understanding of professional identity focusing on, for example, aspects that characterise teacher professional identity such as their roles, others, personality and context. Research should show how agency and structure coalesce or how they continue to be in contest. Research will also have to show how teacher "habitus" and "field" cannot be superficially skimmed over when making policy. It will have to find participatory ways to include teachers’ voices in the formulating of new policy. This is not an easy assignment and one would want such work to be part of an inclusive project that involves teachers’ voices from all walks of the profession.

Furthermore, this study recommends research on school management teams and how they deal with the implementation of new policy in concert with teachers. The other issue that I would suggest for further research to pursue is a full history of post-apartheid policy change and its effect on teachers’ well-being and their identity.

5.6 CONCLUSION: CHANGE AND WELL-BEING

The aim of this study was to understand the professional identity of teachers during times of change. The theoretical framework that informed this study was symbolic interactionism, which set the tone for understanding how teachers conceived of change and perceived themselves in the process. In an endeavour to address the aim, I asked the question: How do teachers forge their identity in the context of policy change in South Africa? I focused on tools and symbols that defined them. Towards the end of the study I realised that identity is a complex phenomenon and difficult to understand because it is made up of a number of aspects ranging from experience, personal background, beliefs, socio-economic status, politics and others. The
research concludes that there is no single definition of identity since it is contextual and based on time and place.

More than anything I realise that in a world of fast-changing policy, the person of the teacher may subserve the goals of an education system. This study has confirmed what other researchers have found about teachers and professional identity during the times of educational changes. Teachers want their identity to be considered when reforms are introduced and implemented. It also confirms that ignorance of the prior standing of teachers on the part of those who formulate and implement policy, leads to confusion and despondency. Thus, I conclude by emphasising the significance of considering who teachers are during reforms and to take cognisance of their emotional well-being during such times. Reforms may look technical on paper, but in practice they are about people’s sense of who they are as professionals. I believe that my study is one contribution to understanding this significance.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent form

08 November 2004

THE PRINCIPAL
Primary School
Vosloorus, 1475

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

Netherlands Research Programme on Alternative Development (SANPAD) - is a unique collaborative research programme which has been generously funded by the Dutch government since 1997. Its main objective is to stimulate and promote collaborative quality research intended and useful for development purposes, with special emphasis on projects aimed at poverty reduction. Rand Afrikaanse University Faculty of Education in conjunction with SANPAD have thus jointly embarked on a research project on “Teacher identity and the culture of schooling”.

The inquiry aims to capture teacher identities as lived experiences in selected schools in Gauteng and the North West Province and to craft ethnographies of schooling in these schools, thereby authoring a thick description of the context in which teacher identity develop. The ultimate purpose is to design a pedagogical tool that can be used to map schools as living users of cultural, social and symbolic capital and to design required teacher development interventions according to these heuristic maps. The duration of the research is three years.
A pilot study of three months will be conducted in which two classes in each twelve schools will be observed and also interview two teachers from each school. After the pilot study data have been processed we will finalise the site selection and also the teacher participants. Since your school is within a specified area of the research project and closer to my place of residence, I therefore ask for permission to conduct my research at your school. The permission will not only benefit your school but will enhance schooling in our area and will enable me to make positive contributions to my community.

For more information please find attach document

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours truly,

Madalane Valencia Tshinompheni (Mrs)
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I.......................................................hereby agree to be a participant in your study. I understand that all the information will be kept confidential. I agree to University of Johannesburg (Education department) using this information for research purposes only. I understand that I may withdraw this consent form at any stage during this research.

SIGNED...........................................

DATE.............................................
Appendix C: Gauteng Department of Education: Consent form

Date: 28 February 2006
Name of Researcher: Henning Elizabeth
Address of Researcher: University of Johannesburg
Private Bag X12
Melville, 2109
Telephone Number: (011) 7826207
Fax Number: (011) 4692048
Research Topic: Teacher identity and the culture of schooling
Number and type of schools: 6 Primary, 1 secondary & 3 LSEN schools
District/s/HO: Johannesburg South, West, North, Tshwane North & East

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.

5. The researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, clerks and persons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.

6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Senior Manager (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher(s) may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.

8. Items 5 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.

10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Senior Manager: Strategic Policy Development, Management & Research Coordination with one final draft of the final approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said Manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.

13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.

14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Senior Manager concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards,

[Signature]

ALBERT DRIESE
ACTING DIVISIONAL MANAGER: QFSTED

The contents of this letter have been read and understood by the researcher.

Signature of Researcher: [Signature]

Date: 12-04-05
Appendix D: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The main question to be researched is:

a. What constitutes the identities of teachers following changes in the education policy of South Africa post-1994?

Subsidiary research questions are:

b. How do teachers forge their professional identity in the context of policy changing South Africa?

c. How does the formulation of identity interface with the ethnographic characteristics of the schools in which the teachers work?"

QUESTIONS:

- Please tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose teaching as a career?
- When did you train for your teaching profession?
- When did you start teaching?
- Where did you train?
- What is the important thing you can remember about your teacher training?
- Please tell me how you experience teaching?
- What is your understanding of teacher identity?
- How do you experience the seven roles of teachers in relation to your teachers’ professional identity?
- How do you experience the changed education policy?
- How does the continuous policy changes affect and impact your teacher training and teaching experience.
- Where do you see yourself in five years from now as a teacher?
- What do you feel is good or bad about teaching from the time you started teaching until today?
• How do you balance work and family?
• If you were to change the education system, what will you change? There questions will be asked randomly.