

Issues and challenges facing school libraries:
A case study of selected primary schools in Gauteng Province, South
Africa

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of
Education

Rhodes University

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January 2012

Abstract

Fewer than 8% of schools in South Africa have functioning libraries. There is no national policy for school libraries which compels School Governing Bodies and principals to have a library in their schools. This qualitative study, based on grounded theory, investigated ten primary schools in Gauteng that had libraries, or were in the process of setting up a library with the intention of providing a rich description of the issues and challenges facing these schools. The schools were chosen on the basis of location (Soweto and Johannesburg), and the school fees that were paid in a continuum from low/no fee paying schools to the fee paying ex Model-C schools. The resourcing of the school library, the operation of the school library and the role of the library were examined.

The findings highlight the lack of a national policy, of school library posts, the theft of computers as a result of the lack of security, as well as the lack of understanding by teachers of the role the library in teaching and learning. Furthermore, there appears to be a disjuncture between the trends evident in the international literature on school libraries and what is actually happening in the primary school libraries in my study.

Most significantly low/no fee paying schools with libraries were the exception and those that did have libraries were as a result of the enthusiasm and efforts of one or two individuals with the backing of the principal. Ex-Model C schools had the advantage in terms of the provision and staffing of school libraries as they had the funds to support them and, in some cases, a school librarian, provided that the principal supported the idea of a school library. In all the schools, the belief in the importance of the library regarding reading and literacy was the main motivating factor in establishing or maintaining the school library. A growing public awareness of the value of school libraries was an encouraging trend that emerged from my study.

Acknowledgements

- To my supervisors, Dr Di Wilmot and Professor Pat Irwin for their encouragement, support and guidance.
- To Judy Cornwell for her encouragement and for proof reading and editing the final draft and checking my references.
- To all the principals, teachers in charge of libraries and all the librarians I interviewed for being so willing to give up their time and share their insights with me.
- To the official in the Gauteng Education department for her support and encouragement.
- To Sally James for her support and friendship as we made this journey together.
- To my husband Craig for his steadfast support and for holding the fort at home.
- To my mother Ena Campbell and my children Mandy Kerr and Annie Paton-Ash for believing in me.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving and inspirational father, Donald George Sanderson Campbell (1926 – 2011).

Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
CHAPTER ONE - OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Background to the study	1
1.3. Research goals	2
1.4. Research orientation and methodology	2
1.5. Description of the schools used in the study	3
1.6. Limitations of this study	4
1.7. The structure of this study	4
CHAPTER TWO – OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA	
2.1. Introduction	5
2.2. Quality education and school libraries	5
2.3. Events and developments in school libraries	6
2.4. The state of school libraries in South Africa	10
2.5. The impact of apartheid on school libraries	12
2.6. The link between literacy and school libraries	17
2.7. Governance of school libraries	22
2.7.1. Lack of a national school policy	22
2.7.2. Closure of the School Libraries Unit in the National Department of Education	23
2.7.3. Differing mandates between government agencies responsible for school libraries	23
2.7.4. Lack of will by policy makers	24
2.7.5. Ad hoc nature of government interventions	25
2.8. Broadening awareness of school libraries	29
2.9. Advocacy	29
2.10. Synthesis and conclusion	30

CHAPTER THREE – LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction	31
3.2. Literature review in a grounded theory methodology	31
3.3. The changing role of the library	33
3.3.1. Historical role of school libraries	33
3.3.2. The library as the centre of the school	34
3.3.3. School library spaces	35
3.3.4. Library collections	36
3.3.5. Technology	37
3.3.6. Alternatives to school libraries	38
3.4. The changing role of the librarian	39
3.4.1. Historical background of school librarianship	39
3.4.2. Expanding the school librarian’s role	40
3.4.3. Reading and the school librarian	41
3.4.4. Information and the school librarian	42
3.4.5. Technology and the school librarian	44
3.4.6. The need for advocacy	46
3.4.7. Age of school librarians	46
3.4.8. Lack of capacity	47
3.5. The role of the school principal	47
3.6. The link between learning and learner outcomes and libraries	48
3.7. The development of international policy and guidelines for school libraries	51
3.8. Conclusion	53

CHAPTER FOUR - METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction	55
4.2. Orientation	55
4.3. Research method	60
4.3.1. Initial or open coding and categorization of data	60
4.3.2. Concurrent data generation and analysis	61
4.3.3. Writing memos	62
4.3.4. Theoretical sampling	62
4.3.5. Constant comparative analysis	64
4.3.6. Theoretical sensitivity	65
4.3.7. Axial coding	65
4.3.8. Identifying a core category	66

4.3.9. Advanced coding and theoretical integration and generating theory	67
4.4. Data collection	69
4.4.1. Interviews	70
4.4.2. Document analysis	74
4.4.3. Observations	76
4.4.4. Field notes	77
4.4.5. Literature as data	77
4.5. Data analysis	78
4.6. Ethical issues	78
4.7. Reliability and validity	79
4.8. Conclusion	80

CHAPTER FIVE – DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: RESOURCING THE LIBRARY

5.1. Introduction	81
5.2. Material resources	82
5.2.1. Resources are limited to books or textbooks	83
5.2.2. Donated resources	84
5.2.3. Old resources	85
5.2.4. Limited number of books and unsuitable books	86
5.2.5. Securing items such as computers and televisions is a problem	87
5.2.6. Traditional elements of a library	88
5.2.7. The use of technology	89
5.3. Library budgets	92
5.4.1. Staffing the school library	93
5.4.2. Funding for librarians	94
5.4.3. Training opportunities for library staff	96
5.5. Synthesis and conclusion	97

CHAPTER SIX – DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: OPERATING THE LIBRARY

6.1. Introduction	99
6.2. Operating the library	99
6.2.1. Accessibility	99
6.2.2. Size of the library space	102
6.2.3. Capacity of the library space	104
6.2.4. Classroom libraries	105
6.2.5. The Dewey Decimal System	107

6.3. Synthesis and conclusion	108
CHAPTER SEVEN – DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY	
7.1. Introduction	109
7.2. The role of the library	109
7.2.1. Developing reading	109
7.2.2. Access to information	113
7.3. Teacher resources	117
7.4. The role of the local library	117
7.5. Teachers’ view of the library	120
7.6. Principal’s support of the library	123
7.7. Initiatives taken by individuals and schools	125
7.8. Advocacy	127
7.9. Synthesis and conclusion	128
CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION	
8.1. Introduction	130
8.2. Synthesis	130
8.3. Lessons learned	132
8.4. Conclusion	135
REFERENCES	136
APPENDICES	
Appendix A – Interview guide for principals and persons in charge of the library	147
Appendix B – Interview guide for public librarians	150
Appendix C – Interview guide for the GDE official	151

Acronyms

AASL	American Association of School Librarians
ANA	Annual National Assessments
ANC	African National Congress
ASISI	Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EE	Equal Education
EFA	Education for All
ELITS	Directorate of Education Library and Information Services
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of South Africa
ISTEP	Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIS	Library and Information Services
LO	Life Orientation
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
NCLIS	National Council for Library and Information Services (South Africa)
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NLNS	National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NPEP	National Policy for an Equitable Provision of and Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OELMA	Ohio Educational Library Media Association
PIRLS	Progress in International Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
READ	Read Educational Trust
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SKILL	Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries
SLYSIG	School Library and Youth Services Interest Group

TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA	University of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape

List of Tables

Table 2.1. Events and developments in school libraries in South Africa	7
Table 2.2. Percentage of public schools with stocked libraries in each province	11
Table 2.3. Percentage of Grade 6 learners literate at the standard level of Grade 6	13
Table 5.1. Overview of library resources in all the schools visited	83
Table 5.2. Book resources	86
Table 5.3. Person in charge of the library	94
Table 6.1. Access to the library	100
Table 6.2. The physical library space	102
Table 6.3. Size of the library space	105
Table 6.4. Classroom libraries	106
Table 7.1. Views of Principals and Deputies	109
Table 7.2. Views of Teachers in Charge (TIC) or librarian	110

Chapter One

Overview of the study

1.1 Introduction

This research set out to investigate the issues and challenges facing primary school libraries in selected South African schools. In this chapter I outline these problems and provide an overview of the research, identifying its goals and orientation.

For the purposes of this study the term ‘school library’ encompasses media centre, school library media centre, school library and information services, resource centre, and learning centre. The term ‘school librarian’ includes teacher librarian, library and information specialist, resource manager, and knowledge manager.

1.2 Background to the study

Since the transition to democracy in 1994 the South African government has been trying to address the quality of education provided to children in South African schools. Despite the ever increasing portion of the national budget spent on education the performance of our children in local and international tests for literacy and mathematics remain amongst the lowest in the world. Research by the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) showed that our Grade 8 learners fared poorly in Mathematics (South Africa. Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2008). The performance in literacy was no better, as revealed by the results of an international comparative research study done by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) and the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS). These studies revealed that the literacy rates amongst our senior primary children compared unfavourably not only with the rest of the world (South Africa. DBE, 2008) but also with neighbouring African countries poorer and less developed than ourselves (Equal Education (EE), 2010a).

Fewer than 8% of South African public schools have functional libraries (Equal Education, 2010, p. 21). This is despite the links made by research regarding student achievement and

the presence of school libraries in South Africa and elsewhere. The findings of more than 60 studies undertaken in the United States since 1990 demonstrate the positive impact that school libraries have on learner achievement, especially when library programmes are run by qualified staff and a computer network connects the library to the rest of the school. Other factors contributing to learner achievement identified in these studies include conditions in which there is a high level of collaboration between the school librarian and the teachers, where reading is encouraged and where information literacy is integrated into the curriculum (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008; Lonsdale, 2003). From my experience both as a teacher and a school librarian over an extended period of time, I know that school libraries can play a significant role in promoting and enhancing a quality education.

1.3 Research Goals

The aim of my research is to understand the issues and challenges associated with libraries in primary schools in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. Ten schools representative of the range of fees paid in South African public schools were used in this study. More specifically my research goals were as follows:

1. To describe and analyse the present concerns associated with primary school libraries.
2. To describe and analyse how these schools deal with these problems.
3. To identify what lessons can be learnt from the way these problems are dealt with by the schools.

1.4 Research Orientation and Methodology

This research is a qualitative study based on grounded theory methodology. This methodology gave me the flexibility to explore and follow any unexpected findings as the study progressed. As each school viewed the issues and challenges differently and dealt with them differently, my research was concerned with understanding the situation from the unique point of view of those involved in it. In other words, my research sought to investigate the subjective world of human experience, an aim characteristic of the interpretive paradigm (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 21).

Ten primary schools that either had a library or something equivalent to a library were used in this study. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with librarians or

teachers in charge of the library, and with principals or deputy principals. I also interviewed librarians in two public libraries and a well placed official at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), who provided additional insights into the issues and challenges faced by school libraries.

I visited the ten schools selected for my study and observed how their libraries were resourced and laid out. In addition, I was a non-participant observer at the *Showcase of School Libraries* (June 2011) in which ‘persons in charge of the library’ (teachers or librarians) told their stories of how they had developed their school libraries in Gauteng. I attended an international debate (June 2011) on *School Libraries in South Africa* and the conference *School Libraries – where do we go?* in Midrand (2010), where I made further observations. I used check lists, field notes and memos to record my observations. Guided by grounded theory, documents and literature pertinent to the study were used throughout the data gathering and analysis process in order to provide the insights needed for deepening my understanding of the situation.

1.5 Description of the schools used in the study

The schools, all primary schools, were chosen on the basis of their location and fee structures. Five schools are located in two different areas of Soweto and five schools are located in the northern and western suburbs of Johannesburg.

The schools in Soweto (schools A – E) represented the low/no fee paying schools in the continuum of fees within the state structure. These schools had classrooms and offices for administration but no other purpose-built facilities such as libraries or sports fields. However, schools A and D had recently built a single hard surface court, suitable for netball or basket ball and funded by donations. The libraries were in converted classrooms. Two of the schools (schools D and E) were located in the one of the oldest and poorest areas in Soweto. The roads to these schools were narrow and potholed and the surrounding houses were old and in need of repair. Schools A, B and C were in an area that is served by public libraries and a state hospital. These schools had a well maintained central courtyard.

The schools in Johannesburg (schools F – J) were representative of medium to high fee-paying schools. These schools were all ex-Model C schools with purpose-built facilities such

as halls, sports fields and libraries. The exception was school I, which, like the Soweto schools, had converted a classroom into a library, but was in the process of designing a new library for the school. The two schools (G and J) which represented the medium fee paying schools (R4,000.00 – R10,000.00 per annum) required maintenance on their buildings which looked old and in need of a coat of paint. The higher fee-paying schools (schools F, I and H with fees over R10,000.00 per annum) had additional facilities such as pre-primary schools with suitably equipped playgrounds. All of these schools had security personnel at the gates.

1.6 Limitations of this study

This study does not claim to tell the complete story of libraries in schools in South Africa; rather it attempts to provide a rich description of ten primary school libraries in Gauteng at a particular time. Furthermore, it should be noted that all the schools in this study were located in urban areas. As the scope of the study is restricted to ten urban primary schools it is important to acknowledge that the findings may not apply to school libraries in other areas (including rural areas) or to secondary schools.

1.7 The structure of the study

Chapter Two is an overview of school libraries in South Africa.

Chapter Three describes and analyses trends and developments in school libraries evident in international and local literature relevant to the study.

Chapter Four describes the research orientation and grounded theory methodology. It explains how grounded theory methodology informed the decisions that were made during the research process. Research ethics are also addressed.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the data analysis and findings. Here I identify and explain the three categories of predicaments faced by primary school libraries in Gauteng. These chapters also include an interpretation of the findings.

Chapter Eight synthesises the key findings of the study and the lessons that can be learned from them. It concludes with critical reflection on the research methodology used in the study.

Chapter Two

Overview of school libraries in South Africa

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe recent and current trends and developments in public school libraries. I do this within the broader context of South Africa in general, but more specifically with reference to the goal of the Department of Basic Education to provide quality education for all. I identify and discuss emergent issues and challenges.

2.2 Quality education and school libraries

According to the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution of 1996, everyone has a right to a basic education and to information (Youth Survival Guide, 2008, p. 132). Since 1994 the Department of Education (DoE), now the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) have been mandated to address the inequalities of the past. The reduction of poverty has been a central focus for the present government (South Africa. DBE. 2010b, p. 4), with a “better educational start in life” seen as the key to solving current problems of “high unemployment coupled with a widely recognized skills shortfall”.

The right to education has been achieved by making basic education compulsory, and the introduction of no-fee schools has gone a long way in achieving the goal of access to education for all. The DBE notes that “currently, the schooling system is characterised by high enrolment rates in compulsory basic education that comprises Grades 1 to 9 by children aged 7 to 15” (South Africa. DBE. 2011b, p. 1). From this one may infer that the poor are no longer excluded. In spite of the high enrolment figures the DBE recognises that this “does not necessarily translate into quality education” (South Africa. DBE, 2010d, p. 72). More recently, the DBE acknowledged that quality of education was an urgent issue needing to be addressed. This is borne out by South African pupils’ “persistently low performance in academic achievement” compared to national curriculum standards and international assessment (South Africa. DBE. 2011b, p. 3). The DBE’s *Action Plan to 2014: Towards*

Realisation of the Schooling 2025 prioritises “improving the quality of education and reducing the financial burden of education costs for parents, to improve access to quality education and to give effect to the right to education” (South Africa. DBE, 2011b, p. 1).

Parallel to the development of the DBE’s strategic plan to address the issue of quality education, the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) was mandated to address the inequalities of the past. These include the uneven distribution and quality of library and information services and access to library and information services for all South African citizens. Drawing on the findings of international research (described in Chapter 3), the DAC observes that there is “convincing evidence of the vital contribution of school LIS (Library and Information Services) to quality education and student achievement” (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 38). This raises questions about the current status of school libraries in South Africa: What are the issues and challenges schools face and how are these being addressed?

2.3 Events and developments in school libraries

There has been a great deal of publicity and discussion about the state of school libraries in South African public schools. An analysis of newspaper and magazine articles (print and internet sources), blogs, research reports, marches for school libraries, debates, questions in parliament, as well as government responses, illuminates the contestations and problems facing public school libraries in South Africa at present.

Table 2.1 is a chronological summary of significant events and developments in school libraries in South Africa. The summary was made by analysing documents relevant to school libraries for the period 1994 to the present. Table 2.1 shows the different issues associated with school libraries evident in the documents. These include the status of school libraries in South Africa; the impact of apartheid on school libraries; the link between literacy and school libraries; governance; the broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries, and advocacy (evident through growing grassroots/popular support for public school libraries). These issues are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

Table 2.1 – Events and developments in school libraries in South Africa

Date	Development	Issue
Pre 1994	Lack of library facilities in public schools in black schools in particular (Dick, 2002).	Impact of Apartheid on school libraries
1996	The <i>South African Schools Act</i> marks the start of our new education system but makes no reference to school libraries (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 92).	Governance
1997	The first of 5 draft policies on school libraries was circulated by the Department of Education (DoE). (Equal Education (EE, 2010a, p. 7).	Governance
	The government's <i>School Register of Needs</i> estimated that eight million out of twelve million learners did not have access to libraries (EE, 2010a, p. 18).	State of public school libraries
1998	The <i>National Norms and Standards for School Funding Act</i> is passed which would not interfere unreasonably with parents' discretion as to how to spend their own resources on their children's education (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 42).	Governance
1999	The <i>Human Sciences Research Council</i> (HSRC) audit found that many school libraries were often used as classrooms or were shut for most of the day as the person in charge was a full time teacher. (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 43).	Governance
	The <i>School Library and Youth Services Interest Group</i> (SLYSIG) of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) is established recognising the "common ground between public and school libraries" (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 96).	Broadening awareness of the role of public school libraries
2002	The DoE's School Libraries Unit was closed (EE. 2010a, p. 18).	Governance
2002	The <i>Review of Curriculum 2005</i> found that the new curriculum was doing well in former white schools because they were better resourced (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 100).	Broadening awareness of public school libraries
	The Directorate of <i>Education Library and Information Technology Services</i> (ELITS) drew up its own school library policy in KwaZulu-Natal (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p.93).	Governance
2004	<i>White Paper on e-Education: transforming learning and teaching through information and communication technologies</i> commented that school libraries were collections of books that were inadequate to support resource based learning (South Africa. DoE, 2004).	Governance
2005	SLYSIG drew up information literacy guidelines rooted in the <i>Revised National Curriculum Statement</i> (RNCS) for Grades R to 12 in order to influence educational policy (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 96).	Broadening awareness of public school libraries
2007	The <i>Education Laws Amendment Act 31</i> of 2007 listed the availability of a library as a minimum uniform norm and standard for school infrastructure (South Africa. DAC, 2009).	Governance
	The <i>National Education Infrastructure Management System report</i> (NEIMS) indicated that only 7.23 % of public schools have a functioning library and 13.47% have a library room that is not stocked. (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 41; EE, 2010a, p. 7).	State of public school libraries
2007	The <i>National Survey into Reading and Book Reading Behaviour</i> of adult South Africans showed that half of South African households had no books and that there was "little articulation between homes, schools, and communities as sites of reading" (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 79).	Literacy and school libraries
2008	<i>The Review of National Policies for Education: South Africa</i> by the <i>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>	Literacy and school libraries

	(OECD) linked the poor reading achievement results of our primary school pupils in the 2006 <i>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</i> (PIRLS) to the lack of school libraries along with restricted access to books in the home and good quality preschools.	
2008	The <i>National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure</i> assumed that a school library is part of a learning space that every school must have (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 43).	Governance
December 5, 2008	The Library and Information Services (LIS) <i>Transformation Charter</i> national summit was held in Pretoria.	Governance
July 2009	The 6 th draft of the LIS <i>Transformation Charter</i> was published by the DAC and the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS).	Governance
July 2009	Equal Education (EE) initiated <i>The Campaign for School Libraries</i> .	Popular support for school libraries
September 2009	The <i>CREATE Education Roadmap</i> facilitated by the Development Bank of South Africa and adopted by the Minister of Education highlighted key issues in education and this included the lack of resources such as libraries, science laboratories and computers (Bloch, 2009).	Broadening awareness of school libraries
September 22, 2009	3,000 students marched to the Cape Town City Hall and 65,000 people signed a petition calling for a national policy on school libraries	Popular support for school libraries
September 25, 2009	Member of Parliament, Dr. J.C. Kloppeers-Lourens (DA) asked the Minister of Basic Education about the current state of affairs of school libraries and what steps were been taken to address the problem (South Africa. National Assembly, 2009).	Broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries
October, 2009	The <i>Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement</i> of October 2009 presented to Minister Motshekga of the DBE makes reference to the importance of books but does not make any recommendations to this other than the provision of textbooks (South Africa, DBE, 2009).	Governance
	The Minister of Basic Education stated that the department had recently finalised the sixth draft policy on school libraries, <i>National Guidelines for school library services</i> (South Africa. National Assembly. 2009).	Governance
January 2010	EE published <i>We Can't Afford Not To</i> outlining the situation with regard to school libraries and costing the provision of libraries in South African public schools. The Bookery is established by EE in Cape Town to address the shortage of libraries in the short term.	Popular support for school libraries
April 2010	The Development Bank of South Africa hosted a discussion between representatives of corporate South Africa, Dept of Basic Education's national and provincial representatives and Equal Education.	Broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries
April 19, 2010	Member of Parliament, Mr J.R.B. Lorimer (DA) asked if all existing libraries in primary and secondary provincial schools were "functional; and if not, (a) why not and (b) when will they become functional: if so what constitutes a functional library?" (South Africa. National Assembly, 2010, April 19).	Broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries
June 11, 2010	DBE adopted a policy on school infrastructure, <i>National Policy for an Equitable Provision of and Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment</i> (NPEP), which includes school libraries.	Governance
July 30, 2010	5,000 people fasted to highlight the seriousness of the school library situation as well as highlighting the need to lower the price of books.	Popular support for school libraries
August 2010	10,000 learners wrote postcards to government leaders as part of the EE campaign and were supported by 100 global	Popular support for school libraries

	education leaders who wrote to President Zuma.	
August 17, 2010	Minister Motshekga of DBE wrote to EE and assured them that there is 'approval for library posts.' In its <i>Action Plan 2014</i> the DBE commits itself to a 'library in every school.' (EE, 2011 June).	Governance
September 03, 2010	Member of Parliament, Dr J.C. Kloppers-Lourens (DA) asked whether steps had been taken to resource school libraries fully; if not, why not; if so, what are the plans and proposed timelines for her department to provide every school in the country with a properly equipped library and a trained school librarian? (South Africa. National Assembly. 2010, September 03).	Broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries
February 16, 2011	Presentation of the <i>LIS Transformation Charter</i> by Prof. M. Nkondo on behalf of the NCLIS to the select committee on Education and Recreation after public consultations had been completed by the DAC (South Africa. DAC, 2011).	Governance
March 21, 2011	20,000 learners, teachers, parents, community members and activists marched on Parliament to demand the delivery of <i>National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure</i> by April 1, 2011, the implementation date promised by the NPEP.	Popular support for school libraries
March 31, 2011	A large march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in support of EE's campaign.	Popular support for school libraries
April 2011	EE sent hundreds of follow-up letters to the DBE venting their frustration (EE, 2011, June).	Popular support for school libraries
April 14 & 15, 2011	Council of Education Ministers voted against the adoption of <i>the National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure</i> .	Governance
April 18, 2011	EE met with the <i>Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative</i> (ASISI) which is part of the DBE who presented their plan for dealing with mud schools and infrastructure backlogs, including libraries.	Popular support for school libraries and Governance
May 12, 2011	1,300 mothers of EE members sent an open letter to Minister Motshekga in her capacity as president of the ANC Women's League.	Popular support for school libraries
June 2011	Countrywide assessment tests administered to over 9 million pupils in public schools in February 2011 found that literacy and numeracy rates of Grade 3s and Grade 6s was between 43% (Western Cape) and 19% (Mpumalanga) with Gauteng at 30% (Mtshali & Smillie, 2011, p. 1).	Literacy rates amongst primary school pupils
June 20, 2011	Debate at Wits School of Education on <i>School Libraries in South Africa: International Debate</i> where local academics, government officials and international speakers outlined the issues faced by school libraries in South Africa. A second debate was held in Cape Town later in the month.	Broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries
June 21, 2011	The Gauteng Education Department's <i>Showcasing School Libraries</i> highlighted schools with functional libraries.	Broadening awareness of the state of public school libraries

The relevance and significance of the different issues identified in the documents reviewed and summarised in Table 2.1, above, in relation to the international literature and the findings of this study, are discussed in Chapter Three and Chapters Five, Six and Seven, respectively. The next section discusses the emergent issues in more detail.

2.4 The state of school libraries in South Africa

Equal Education (2010a, p. 18) referred to the School Register of Needs which in 1997 sounded a warning about the state of public school libraries when it estimated that eight out of twelve million learners did not have access to libraries (see Table 2.1). The DAC (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 43) cited a survey done by the Human Research Council in 1999 called, The South African School Library Survey, which reported that only 32% of schools in South Africa had an on-site library. Many of these libraries were shut as there was no dedicated librarian and the teacher in charge was busy teaching. The survey noted that 50% of Independent Schools had well-equipped libraries staffed by professionals (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 93). In 2004 a provincial survey in KwaZulu Natal confirmed the scale of the problem when it was found that 19% of the responding 5156 schools had a central library while 31% had a storeroom or box library (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 93). The rest of the schools either had no library or did not respond to the question.

Zinn's study (2006, p. 29) showed that in schools ranging in size from 750 – 1500 learners, no school library held more than 2000 books. The school or classroom library however, was "cited most often as the source for reading material" for the reading programme, yet the school library was "quite inadequate for a successful school reading programme". This finding needs to be viewed in light of the link between school libraries and literacy discussed in Section 2.6.

By 2007 the situation had deteriorated further nationwide (see Table 2.2) as the *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)* reported that only 7.23% of South African public schools had functional libraries (Equal Education, 2010a, p. 21). These libraries were mainly in former Model C schools. To put this into perspective, of the 24,979 public schools in South Africa an "estimated 79.3% did not have any form of library infrastructure, meaning that only 20.7% had a room available for library purposes. Broken down further, 13.47% had a library space without resources, while only 7.23% had a functioning library" (EE, 2010a, p. 22).

In May 2011 the *NEIMS* report did not show any significant improvements in the state of school libraries. While 21% of 24,793 schools had libraries, only 7% (5,252 schools) had stocked libraries and 79% (19, 541 schools) had no library at all (South Africa. DBE. 2011a,

p. 23).

These numbers are not evenly spread amongst the provinces as can be seen from Table 2.2. The two provinces, Gauteng and Western Cape, with the most school libraries were also the two provinces with the “higher number of fee-charging former Model C schools” (EE, 2010a, p. 22).

Table 2.2 - Percentage of public schools with stocked libraries in each province

Province	2007 (EE, 2010, p. 22)	2011 (South Africa. DBE, 2011a p. 23)
Eastern Cape	2.9	3
Free State	8.9	9
Gauteng	18.4	19
KwaZulu-Natal	6.1	6
Limpopo	2.4	2
Mpumalanga	6.2	7
Northern Cape	11.8	12
North West	6.4	6
Western Cape	25.3	26

In her written answer to a question in parliament, Question 1188, (see Table 2.1 – 2010, April 19) concerning what constitutes a ‘functional library’ the Minister of Basic Education (South Africa. National Assembly, 2010, p. 2) listed elements such as enriching reading experiences and the development of learners’ skills as independent learners; provision of resources for teachers and learners; support of teaching and learning; extending the curriculum; skilled staff with dedicated time in the library; up-to-date, attractive and suitable resources in a range of media; adequate funding to ensure ongoing maintenance and development; pleasant and stimulating environments; regularly monitored to assess their use as well as being guided by a whole school library and information development plan.

In reality South African public school libraries cannot be deemed functional, considering the many challenges they face (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 40). These include the virtual non-existence of space, funding for reading, learning resources and staff. The absence of a national policy was a problem as well as the lack of capacity of the provincial school library support services. A further problem related to the misconceptions about the links between resource-based learning and the role of the library and the fact that the internet was seen as an alternative to the library which was perceived to house outdated collections of books. In reality however, The *White Paper on e-Education* reported that many schools lacked basic

ICT infrastructure (South Africa. DoE, 2004) and a study done by Stilwell (2009, p. 3) showed that if schools had computers they were not used “to generate knowledge or to integrate ICT across the curriculum,” but were used mainly for administrative purposes. The extent to which this is the case is explored in Chapter Five (Section 5.2.7).

Other challenges (South Africa. DAC. 2009, pp. 14-16) faced by library and information services generally were the low status of the library profession and the fact that too few librarians are being developed at a tertiary level to meet present and future needs (see also Section 3.4.8). There also appeared to be a lack of recognition of the role of the library and librarians as agents of change and development.

Bot (2005, p. 6) noted as a “consequence of historical backlogs and inequalities, exacerbated by the rapid expansion in schooling, there are considerable shortages in infrastructure and a large number of schools are poorly equipped to provide an adequate standard of education”.

It is clear from the state of public school libraries, where only a small percentage of schools have functioning libraries, that books and information are not available and accessible to all South African children. As a result school libraries cannot be referred to as transformation spaces in our educational landscape as there are simply not enough functioning libraries to make an impact.

2.5 The impact of Apartheid on school libraries

The Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Education (since 2009 the Department of Basic Education) have been trying to redress the inequalities of the past, when the white child was favoured in terms of educational resources. Dick (2002, p. 19) observes that in 1953 the Bantu Education Act “entrenched an inferior education for black South Africans under the apartheid Native Affairs Department,” which led to the “purge or closure of many existing black school libraries”. Stadler (1991) notes that this is attributable to the apartheid ethos, in terms of which “black people were destined to be ‘un-thinking cogs’ in the labour machine, in no need of libraries” (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 91). According to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape, five times the amount of money was spent on a white child compared to a black child during the apartheid era (O’Connell as cited by Pressly, 2011, p. 19). This translated into serious inequalities in school infrastructure.

It must be acknowledged that much has been done in recent years to improve school infrastructure: e.g. in the period from 1996 - 2010 the number of schools without water decreased from 9,000 to 1,700 and the number of schools without electricity decreased from 15,000 to 2,800 (South Africa. DBE. 2010a, p. 32). But despite efforts by the government to improve conditions, the legacy of apartheid has not been easy to erase, particularly in poor rural areas (Lotz-Sisitka & Janse van Rensberg, 2000, p. 30). Lotz-Sisitka and Janse van Rensberg cite Gordon (1999), who found that 57% of learners in South Africa attended rural schools which were “characterised by gross inequalities and affected by numerous issues associated with the previous government’s apartheid policies”.

Bloch stated that conditions and outcomes were worse for the mostly black learners attending rural and township schools, where 80% of schools were dysfunctional. It was in these schools that the majority of learners failed to achieve the outcomes and levels of achievement that were considered standard for each grade (2009). A similar view is evident in Van der Berg’s research into poverty and education, which showed that historically white and Indian schools still outperformed the black and coloured schools at the primary school level, showing that “the school system was not yet systematically able to overcome inherited socio-economic disadvantage, and poor schools least so” (2006, p. 2). Table 2.3, showing literacy rates amongst Grade 6 pupils in the Western Cape (EE, 2010b, p. 3; EE, 2010c, p. 2), illustrates this point:

Table 2.3 - Percentage (%) of Grade 6 learners literate at the standard level of Grade 6

	2003	2005	2007	2009
CED (former ‘white’ schools)	82.9	86.9	No disaggregated results	Disaggregated results withheld from the public
HOR (former ‘coloured’ schools)	26.6	35.5		
DET (former ‘black’ schools)	3.7	4.7		
Aggregated result for all	35	42.1	44.8	48.6

It is a concern that after 15 years of transition to democracy in South Africa, the Minister of Education (South Africa. National Assembly, 2009) still referred to the “historical neglect of such services particularly for schools serving the poorest communities”. In 2010, in answer to Question 1188 (See Table 2.1) concerning the status of primary and secondary school libraries, the Minister of Education once again linked the absence of functional libraries in

schools to the “past inequitable resource provisioning” (South Africa. National Assembly, 2010). The extent to which this is an issue is explored in Chapter Five.

It must be noted that education receives an increasingly large portion of the state’s budget each year:

- In the 2005/2006 to the 2008/2009 budget year the average amount of money spent on education was 17.7% representing the largest item of government expenditure (South Africa. DBE. 2010d, p. 12; Appel, 2009, p. 1).
- In the 2010/2011 budget education was awarded 20% of budgeted expenditure (Vollgraaff, 2011, p. 7).

The fact that the amount of money allocated to education by the national government as a percentage of budget has been growing demonstrates the will on the part of government to provide a quality education for all. Despite this increased expenditure the inequalities due to past policy have not been redressed (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 90). O’Connell notes that spending across all age groups is now equal but represented 30% of the previous spending on a white child; it was not possible to grow the economy to the extent that “the spending previously spent on a white child could be applied across the board” (Pressly, 2011, p. 19). The authors of the *Transformation Charter* (see Table 2.1 – July 2009), commenting on Mpumalanga’s budget for 2009/2010, noted that the spending of R34 per learner was not enough to meet international standards of ten library items per scholar as set by the *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto of 2006*. It would require R100 per learner to meet these targets (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 47), and EE has acknowledged that given the situation in South Africa three books per learner is more realistic (2010a, p. 31).

The present government and provincial education departments need to take responsibility for their inability to redress the inequalities in school libraries in the system. Towards the late 1990s the government attempted to cut costs, and books and stationery were “amongst the first to go” (Lotz-Sisitka & Janse van Rensberg, 2000, p. 30). School libraries in South Africa have suffered a “serious decline since 1994” when library expenditure fell under Media Collections (Lotz-Sisitka & Janse van Rensberg, 2000, p. 42). The authors give examples of this:

- In the 1997/98 budget the Mpumalanga Education Department spent nothing and

Gauteng spent R906.00 of their Media Collections budget.

- In Mpumalanga many good school libraries were closed due to “rationalisation and redeployment”.

This is supported by the findings of the *Transformation Charter* (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 42) where a member of staff in the Eastern Cape Education department’s school library support services reported that between 1994 and 2004 “no attention was paid” to school libraries; there were no school library posts and only the ex-model C schools had libraries.

The authors of the *Transformation Charter* pointed out the irony of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding Act of 1998 (See Table 2.1 - 1998). It had not helped government’s redress strategy as the funding provisions in the Act favoured the libraries or library spaces in those schools “patronised by middle-class and wealthy parents”. In Gauteng the 200 functioning school libraries were all found to be in ‘wealthy’ areas with the school librarians being paid by the schools’ governing bodies (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 42). In reality, as Hart & Zinn stated (2007, p. 90), school libraries “continue to be an indicator of class advantage”. The extent to which this is the case is investigated in Chapter 5 and Section 8.3.

In 2008 the OCED (p. 87) reported that our school libraries are in “poor shape”, despite a lucrative (R9.6 million) commercial market in supplementary non-book materials such as wall charts mostly in the cities. The *Transformation Charter* (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 55) highlighted another problem area with regard to expenditure: the differing approaches of the provincial governments, independent schools and ex-Model C schools (the last two being the only schools with budgets for school libraries). The trend was seen by the authors as ad hoc and unsustainable, with serious implications for public school libraries as there were no dedicated school librarian posts as well as “no strategic interventions for the uptake of ICT in school libraries and unwieldy tendering processes that delay provision”.

Zinn (2006, p. 21) observes that “by 2000, as specialist posts were abolished at schools, the training of school librarians trickled to zero”. The fact that there is no budget for school librarian posts (Thomson, 2010, p. 1) has implications for the service provided by the school library, as the responsibility tends to fall on members of staff who are full time teachers in the poorer no fee or low fee schools, as is shown in Section 5.2.9. This problem is highlighted in

a recent COSATU research paper that states: “without dedicated librarians books are not enough. Even though there might be books in a school these are locked up in store rooms or are not used because educators do not know how to use them” (EE, 2010a, p. 14). The *Transformation Charter* (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 47) also recorded anecdotal evidence of unopened boxes of books in schools and claimed that “there has to be someone in the school to manage the resources and to champion their productive use”. This issue is investigated in Chapter Six (6.2.4).

The written reply to a question raised in parliament (Table 2.1 – September 03, 2010), from the Minister of Basic Education about the steps the government is taking to provide for trained school librarians was vague and disappointing; “the provision of teacher librarians will have to be made within the context of broad post provisioning according to priority needs in the system” (South Africa. National Assembly, 2010 September). The significance of this is explored in my investigation. Even more disappointing is the fact that there appear to be no long-term plans for school library posts: the *Action Plan 2014: Towards the realisation of schooling 2025* (see Table 2.1 – August 17, 2010) makes no provision for school librarian posts and librarian training, which is “crucial to providing functioning libraries” (EE. 2010d, p. 14).

Several provincial library support services had provided schools with library materials as a result of public schools having no budget to spend on school library services (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 46). This was done on an ad hoc basis with amounts varying from nothing in several provinces to R5 million in the Eastern Cape for 2007, and R40 million in KZN between 2005 and 2007 (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 46).

Stilwell (2009, p. 2) citing Zinn, 2006, pointed out yet another problem in equipping school libraries. This relates to changes to the funding formulae for school library materials, which meant that the funds were “no longer ring-fenced”. The term used by government, ‘learning and teaching support materials’ (LTSM) includes “textbooks, books, charts, models, computer hardware and software, televisions, video recorders, videotapes, home economics equipment, science laboratory equipment and musical instruments” (South Africa. DBE. 2010c, p. 4). The wording is too vague and the actual percentage of money that should be allocated to library materials is not specified. Gauteng is the only province that ensured that 10% of the budget was reserved for this purpose (see Section 5.2.4) (South Africa. DAC.

2009, p. 47).

As stated in the *Education for All* report on South Africa, “while significant progress has been made towards the realisation of the right to basic education, a greater effort is required to make further education more accessible. Moreover, much more is required to improve the quality of education provided” (South Africa. DBE. 2010d, p. 10). The result is that by 2011 the issue of access to a school library for all children has still not been adequately addressed.

2.6 The link between literacy and school libraries

The concept of literacy has changed and developed over the past 50 years and now includes competencies in the basics (reading, writing and calculation) as well as in information and technology (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2006). Although the definition of literacy has changed it is significant to note that literacy has always included reading.

South Africa kept up with international trends with regard to information literacy with Curriculum 2005 (1996) and later, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), (South Africa. DoE, 2002), which placed information skills very firmly as a critical outcome of learning. The 2002 RNCS describes the ‘desired learner’ as one who has these skills amongst others and lists seven critical outcomes and five developmental outcomes in the South Africa Qualifications Act (1995), some of these emphasising literacy and information literacy skills in particular. This meets some of the requirements of what it means to be literate in the 21st Century. In this regard learners are expected to be able to:

- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes.
- Use technology effectively and critically.

This outcome was “library friendly” in “both its ethos and its pedagogies” (Hart, 2006, p. 77) as the need for information literacy education was “widely accepted to be a specific mission of school librarianship” (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 89). But the *Transformation Charter* (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 40) observes that there is a “lack of appreciation of the links” between what is acknowledged as a ‘resource-based curriculum’ and school libraries.

Hart (2006, p. 77) notes the impact of the increase in project work as a result of these

outcomes on public libraries. Due to a lack of resources in their own schools learners have had to use public libraries in the afternoons, and Hart's quantitative study in 2002 (p. 78) documented "the unmanageably large numbers and long queues of children at the photocopiers". The impact of the lack of school libraries on public libraries is explored in Section 7.2.4.

Literacy is seen as both a right in itself and a means of achieving other rights: as "literacy is a key outcome of education, it is difficult to separate the right to literacy from the right to education or the benefits of literacy from those of education" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 135). In 2002, UNESCO declared 2003-2012 the *United Nations Literacy Decade* and passed *Resolution 56/116* placing literacy at the heart of lifelong learning, in terms of which literacy was seen as "crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 155). Their report on Sub-Saharan Africa (p. 1) notes that literacy is still a right denied to many in the region, which, at less than 60%, has one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the world. South Africa's adult literacy rates stand at 78% (South Africa. DBE, 2010d, p. 74).

Pretorius (2005, p. 790) showed that quantitative studies by the University of South Africa, between 1998 and 2001, of the reading abilities of undergraduate students demonstrated a relationship between reading ability and academic performance. The students who failed had "problems constructing meaning during reading. This limits their understanding of print-based material, and hence their difficulty in constructing new knowledge in the learning context" (Pretorius, 2005, p. 807). This was supported by a study of South African teachers' reading competences by Bertram (2006), which found that a third of teachers enrolled in a distance education programme in a SA university were reading ordinary academic text at frustration level, and that there was a strong correlation between reading competences and academic achievement.

In 2000 the review of Curriculum 2005 found that the new curriculum was faring well in formerly white schools because they were better resourced (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 100). Hart concurred and stated that there were good examples of information literacy programmes centred in good school libraries and resource centres where learners created knowledge using

various sources of print material. These examples are to be found almost always in independent schools or those schools that have been historically advantaged, such as the former Model C schools (2007, p. 3). This means that schools that serve poor communities in South Africa cannot afford a library or a qualified librarian and as a result find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to implementing the very curriculum that was designed to redress past inequalities in education.

By 2009, Outcomes Based Education, which was introduced to support Curriculum 2005, was perceived as problematic, and another review of the curriculum was undertaken (South Africa. DBE. 2011b, p .4). One of the recommendations by a Ministerial Committee related to the quality of textbooks and the need for other learning and teaching material (LTSM) to be centralised at national level.

Systemic evaluations by the DoE of Grade 3 and 6 learners in the fields of literacy and numeracy painted a bleak picture of learner achievement in reading and mathematics. In 2001, Grade 3 learners achieved an average score of 39% for reading comprehension and 30% for numeracy, whilst Grade 6 learners in 2004 achieved 38% in language and 27% in mathematics (South Africa. DBE, 2008).

The situation has not improved as the literacy and numeracy results in 2007 were worse, with highs of 48% and 49% in Western Cape and lows of 29% and 24% in Limpopo (South Africa. DBE, 2010). The downward trend continued, as reflected in the large scale February 2011 assessment tests, Annual National Assessments (ANA), which found that literacy and numeracy rates of Grade 3s and Grade 6s were between 43% in the Western Cape and 19% in Mpumalanga (Mtshali & Smillie, 2011, p. 1), with the best provincial figure being 46% for Grade 3 literacy in the Western Cape (South Africa. DBE. 2011c, p. 6). These results were “well below what can be considered acceptable” (South Africa. DBE. 2011c, p. 6) and reflected the continuing failure of the vast majority of South African primary schools to provide their learners with the fundamental literacy skills in the earliest grades.

The DBE also acknowledged that the poor performance of the schooling system as a whole was “brought to the fore each year in unsatisfactory Grade 12 examination results which reflect a serious under-representation of, in particular, African and coloured learners,

especially in subjects such as mathematics and physical science which are linked to critical career opportunities” (South Africa. DBE. 2010a, Part B, p. 4).

South Africa has participated in four comparative studies which measure school quality:

- In the second study, done by the *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality* (SACMEQ II) between 1994-2004, of the achievements of mathematics and literacy amongst Grade 6 learners in east and southern Africa, South Africa came 9th out of 14 countries. 49.9% of our learners were not able to understand the meaning of basic written information (Equal Education, 2010a, p. 5).
- South Africa’s Grade 8 learners achieved the lowest average test scores in 1999 (out of 41 countries) and 2003 (out of 50 countries) in the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), (South Africa. DBE, 2008).
- In 2006 in the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) our Grade 4 and 5 learners achieved the lowest scores out of 45 countries tested by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (South Africa. DBE, 2008).
- The third study by the *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality* (SACMEQ III) was not particularly encouraging as it showed that although by 2007 our Grade 6 learners had shown some improvement in reading and mathematics, the change was minimal (Makuwa, 2010, p. 4; South Africa. DBE, 2010d, p. 47). Less affluent countries such as Botswana, Swaziland, Kenya and Tanzania performed better than South Africa (South Africa, DBE, 2010, p. 47).

These studies showed that South Africa did not compare favourably to the rest of the world as well as other neighbouring African countries poorer and less developed than us. Taylor summed this up when he concluded from these studies that “South Africa is not getting value for money from its public school system” (2007, p. 2).

There is a relationship between the lack of public school libraries and the poor results in reading that have been recorded in three of the studies above. As McKenzie (2005, p. 1) insists, a thriving library programme was “central to the success of a school’s reading and learning programmes”. Schools where learner outcomes were poor were nearly all schools that were to be found in deprived areas, and it must be noted that these are the very schools

that lack “the most basic resources to teach literacy and numeracy, or... have very few resources to make any difference in the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom” (South Africa. DBE. 2010d, p. 64). This was evident in Pretorius’s study (2010, p. 73) which showed that making books accessible to learners was a “basic requirement for reading development yet one that is typically absent in poor schools”.

OECD (2008, p. 187) makes the link between poor literacy rates amongst our underprivileged children in primary schools, mostly in the rural areas, and the lack of school or local libraries in these areas “despite 40% of teaching time being allocated to literacy during the Foundation Phase (grades R -3), and 25% to Language Learning Areas (including literacy) during the Intermediate Phase (grades 4- 6)”.

EE (2010a, p. 45) states that the majority of our learners are not learning to read because of the “simple inaccessibility of books”. This view is supported by Taylor (2002, p. 14), who makes a strong case for reading and books. He argues that “progression in school learning is essentially about learning to read and write at successively higher levels of cognitive complexity while the different school subjects represent distinct areas of specialised knowledge and language. It follows that the quality of learning at each level crucially depends on the presence and productive use of good textbooks and other reading and writing materials”. Pretorius (2005, p. 793) noted in her qualitative study of the first-year psychology students at Unisa who struggled to read, that they all came from township primary and secondary schools in Gauteng. She explained that “none of the students had much exposure to book reading outside of their school textbooks, none had been taught any reading or comprehension strategies at school, none of them went to libraries or read books for leisure, and none of them came from families in which the reading of books magazines or newspapers played any significant role on a daily basis”. A later study (Pretorius, 2010, p. 73) suggested that when poor schools are helped by making books available together with the constant motivation of learners to read, reading levels improve.

The DBE is aware of the link between reading and books, as can be seen by this statement in the *Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement*: “providing a print rich environment, especially for children who come from homes that lack books and reading material, is critical to the development of the ability to read well” (South Africa. DBE, 2009, p. 52).

The significance of this issue is explored in Section 5.2 and Section 7.2.1.

2.7 Governance of school libraries

Many aspects of governance have an impact on public school libraries. These include lack of policy, closing of the School Libraries Unit, unclear mandates between different government agencies with influence over school libraries, the lack of will by policy makers, as well as the ad hoc nature of interventions by government to provide solutions to the crisis in public school libraries.

2.7.1 Lack of a national school policy

Several draft school library policies have been circulated since 1997 by the DoE but none has been adopted (Table 2.1). Hart (2006, p. 76) cites Karlsson, who in 2003 referred to the process as “a slow and discontinuous process”. The Transformation Charter (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 43) saw the lack of national policy with unambiguous guidelines as stalling the progress of school libraries and reported that although some provinces (KZN, Free State and Mpumalanga) have developed their own policies there are limitations with these initiatives, especially with regard to the “provision of school librarian posts”.

In 2009, the Department of Education (South Africa. National Assembly, 2009) finalised guidelines called *National Guidelines for School Library Services*, as part of a broader strategy to provide practical guidance to provinces, districts and schools on how to ensure access to library services for all schools. In reply to Question 1188 by a member of parliament (See Table 2.1 – April 19, 2010) the Minister of Basic Education wrote that this would be achieved by:

1. Roles and responsibilities on the four levels of government – national, provincial, district and school.
2. Development model options included – mobile libraries, cluster libraries, classroom libraries, centralised school libraries and school community libraries.
3. Also “physical infrastructure, staffing and training, administration and management, resource collection, programmes and activities, e.g. an information literacy and reading promotion programme, marketing and advocacy strategies and finally

monitoring and evaluation plans to assist schools in ensuring that their goals regarding library and information services are achieved” (South Africa. National Assembly, 2010).

This was a disappointing response to the issue of a national school library policy. At the debate held in Johannesburg, *School libraries in South Africa: international debate* (2011), Zinn contended that these guidelines represented a downgraded or slimmed down version of a national policy document and suggested that guidelines would not pressurise schools into creating libraries.

2.7.2 Closure of the School Libraries Unit in the National Department of Education

The School Libraries Unit was closed in 2002 (see Table 2.1). Stakeholders are calling for the re-establishment of the national school library unit within the Department of Basic Education and for this unit to draw up implementation plans for policy (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 44). The implications for policy development and enforcement are worrying, as Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 98) argue, because “without a national coordinating office, there is little or no direction and provinces cannot insist that schools ‘ring-fence’ their budget”.

2.7.3 Differing mandates between government agencies responsible for school libraries

The *Transformation Charter* (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 48) makes reference to the problem that collaboration between departments was being hindered by the fact that school libraries and public libraries fell under different national and provincial government departments (DBE and DAC respectively), but at the same time both departments shared a role in education. Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 94) note that a few school library support services have had to relocate from different departments such as the DAC and were often “hamstrung” by being placed in “inappropriate departments within education, for example sport”.

It took 19 months for the *Transformation Charter* (Table 2.1 – February 16, 2011) to be presented to the Select Committee on Education (South Africa. DAC, 2011), as public consultations, interviews with scholars and practitioners and the consultation of available academic literature were only completed in February 2011. This was a long time considering the urgency of the issues that the DAC’s *Transformation Charter* and the DBE sought to address. Significantly, at the presentation there was a call for reform and changes to the way libraries and educational institutions conduct their business. The lack of a national school

library policy on norms and standards as discussed earlier was identified as the core challenge (South Africa. DAC, 2011). Other challenges were the overlapping mandates across government sectors of the DoE, now DBE, and the DAC as well as the different tiers of government concerned with libraries (South Africa. DAC. 2011; South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 13).

Yet the development of standards and policy for school libraries falls under the Department of Basic Education. Stilwell (2009, p. 1) maintains that the actual provision of school library facilities is “a competence shared by the National Education Department, the provincial authorities and the school governing body”. The 1996 Constitution determined the responsibilities of our different tiers of government, with national departments being responsible for laying down policy and the provinces mandated to implement policy and administer schooling (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 93). All the provinces had a school library service in their education departments, whose influence in reality was “constrained by their rather low status within their parent education departments and the small size of their staffs” (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 45). The exception was KwaZulu-Natal, the only province whose department had directorate status. Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 93) have identified a further problem, the situation of school library advisors who were “placed in decentralised district offices, [and] report on a day-to-day basis to the district office’s manager, who might have little understanding of the educational role of school libraries”. All the provinces were battling to cope with the large number of schools “under their wings” (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 45).

2.7.4 Lack of will by policy makers

Stilwell (2009, p. 3) notes that until recently there were no champions for the library and information sector’s role in education. According to Zinn (2006, p. 23), since 2001 there has been a “void at national education level, with nobody taking the lead for the school library fraternity. Zinn (2006) cites Karlsson, who referred to this oversight as the department’s “blind spot”. The point was illustrated in the Western Cape, when the provincial education department offered solutions to the poor literacy levels amongst Grade 3 learners which did not include a school library (Zinn, 2006, p. 23). Hoskins (2006, p. 63) cites Boekhorst and Britz’s study (2004), which looked at information literacy at school level. The authors concluded that the role that school libraries have to play in enhancing information literacy

was “currently undervalued”.

In stark contrast to the two examples above, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education acknowledged the importance of the school library when affirming in 2003 that the school library was the “heart of the school and can play a vital role in helping the education system to achieve its goals” (Hoskins, 2006, p. 61).

Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 101) argue that the DoE’s lack of response to the librarians’ submissions by the SLYSIG in 2005 (see Table 2.1) on the RNCS and the failure to institute a national school library policy represents a ‘lack of will’ to “recognise the role of school libraries in the curriculum”. Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 94) point to another “stumbling block”, the reluctance of school governing bodies in charge of schools at a local level to “recognise the need for school libraries”. Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 101) contend that there appears to be a “fundamental lack of understanding among educators and policy-makers of the role of a school library”, and that this is true of educators across the board. Teachers, curriculum advisors and educational managers are “not convinced that libraries are beneficial and spend entire ‘learning support materials’ budgets on textbooks and photocopy paper” (Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 101).

A review of the relevant literature (see Chapter 3) revealed that research shows that libraries have an impact on student achievement. In the light of this, and given the “evidence of the success of the new curriculum in well resourced schools”, the lack of will is “puzzling” (Chisholm, cited by Hart & Zinn, 2007, p. 98). It would appear that our policy makers in the education department were either not convinced or did not have the will to implement a national school library policy until Minister Pandor publicly made “the connection between the development of school libraries and improved literacy levels” in 2005 (Zinn, 2006, p. 23). But Pandor is no longer the Minister of Basic Education.

2.7.5 Ad hoc nature of government interventions

Taylor (2002) makes reference to the systemic reform of education systems based on the need to align and mediate accountability. He points to large scale systemic reform in the United States and the United Kingdom in particular, where the largest and most successful initiative was launched by the British government in 1997. Known as the *National Literacy and*

Numeracy Strategy (NLNS), targets were set by the Minister of improving the average numeracy scores from 54% to 75% and literacy scores from 57% to 80% for all 11 year olds by 2002. By 2000 literacy had improved to 75% and numeracy to 72%. The success of the programme was attributed to the fact that there was a national plan setting targets, actions, responsibilities and deadlines; a great deal of money was spent especially on poorer schools and on books; the expectation that every child would be exposed to maths daily and a literacy hour daily; teacher training and ongoing professional training of administrators, principals and teachers to enable “every primary school teacher to understand and be able to use best practice in teaching literacy and numeracy”, as well as regular external monitoring and evaluation (Taylor, 2002, p. 7).

The DBE has played a role in trying to improve literacy by developing a culture of reading through several initiatives which do not include providing a school library. In comparison to the NLNS, the department’s literacy policy seems to be piecemeal and without real accountability. These initiatives include: developing and finalising a National Reading Strategy which was sent to all schools; developing a Teacher’s Toolkit in all 11 languages; sending packs of books to a number of poor schools, suitable for Grades 1- 3, in a campaign known as 100 Storybooks Project, and deploying mobile library buses in all provinces (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 77). Bloch (2010, p. 6) refers to other initiatives by the DBE to expand library resources to schools and learners. These included the *Drop All and Read* campaign which has provided 30 000 learners and parents with books in all languages. In 2006 the *Quids-Up* programme provided 4402 poor schools with classroom library collections. The *Foundations for Learning Programme* recommended that schools set aside time to read every day, and the partnership with the Sunday Times aimed to put 500 000 books in 2600 schools through a storybook campaign. The DBE produced the mass literacy programme, *Kha ri Gude*, which was recognised internationally as one of its achievements to date (South Africa. DBE. 2011b, p. 19). In 2011 standardised national workbooks for Grades 1 to 6 were introduced to “improve classroom practices” (South Africa. DBE. 2011c, p. 5).

The draft school library policies proposed several school library models, the implication being that providing every school with a library was not possible (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 44). Options included classroom collections, mobile libraries, container libraries or clustering schools around one library facility or dual use school /public libraries. The DBE saw that the strengthening of partnerships with organisations that provide library and

information services was key to their library and information services strategy, with its role being the provision of guiding principles for these partnerships. Bloch (2010, p. 9) reported that among the partnerships already in place were the *Vodacom Foundation*, which provided 50 mobile library units to primary schools in Northern Cape, Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. In 2009, ten mobile library units were provided to the *Quids-Up* schools of the Eastern Cape. The *South African Primary Education Support Initiative* provided 21 mobile libraries and 12 more were expected by mid 2010; *TSB Publishers* undertook to plan, build and equip ten libraries per year over the next ten years starting in 2011; *A Book for Every Child Foundation* agreed to establish 15 libraries in each province, using available space in the schools. This is an encouraging start to solving the problems of literacy in South Africa, but is a long way from addressing the need for a systemic approach of the sort evidenced in the United Kingdom.

Of concern is the fact that school libraries are not seen as the first solution, as was demonstrated by the response to the Equal Education's campaign to provide functioning libraries to all schools. Ms Hope Mokgathe, DoE spokesperson, stated in *The Teacher* supplement of the *Mail & Guardian* that: "A stand-alone library for every school would be unattainable, given the historical neglect of this... the department has focused on trying to ensure access to resources in a practical and implementable way. This involves creating and improving classroom library collections, mobile libraries, resources for schools in community libraries and stand-alone libraries that serve a cluster of schools" (Mangona, 2009, December).

In answer to a question in parliament (Table 2.1 – September 25, 2009) about the state of school libraries and what government was doing about it, the Minister of Basic Education (South Africa. National Assembly, 2009) reported that 2000 stand-alone libraries had been built since 2000, and library services to schools included the provision of: classroom library collections, 21 mobile libraries serving just fewer than 500 schools with no access to libraries, the provision of library books to schools with inappropriate or inadequate library collections and the supplementing of school collections in community libraries.

As far as infrastructure is concerned, the DBE appears to be in a state of perpetual planning, as evidenced by the manner in which the issue of school libraries is being dealt with. The policy *National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure* of 2008 stated that a school

library was part of a learning space every school must have (South Africa. DAC. 2009, p. 43). In June 2010 (see Table 2.1) the DBE adopted a policy on school infrastructure which included school libraries, the *National Policy for an Equitable Provision of and Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment* (NPEP).

Meanwhile Goal 20 of the *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realisation of schooling 2025* as published on 2 August 2010 provided for libraries or media centres to be built in schools with the commitment by government “to promote mini-libraries within classrooms which can assist in giving learners access to materials until the school has a fully-equipped library” (South Africa. DBE. 2010a, p. 28). Goal 20 (p. 28) also indicated that new standards indicated “what kind of library or media centre a school should have, depending on whether it is a primary or secondary school, and depending on the total enrolment of the school”. On 14 April 2011 the Council of Education Ministers voted against the adoption of the *National Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure*. A few days later, 18 April 2011, a new plan, *The Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative* (ASISI) was presented as the DBE’s plan to deal with mud schools and infrastructure backlogs.

Again the DBE’s approach to infrastructure planning seems makeshift and there has been no systemic approach to tackling the infrastructure issues. It must be acknowledged however that Part B of *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realisation of schooling 2025* represented an admission by the DBE (South Africa. DBE. 2010a, p. 2) of the need for long-term planning to “discourage ad hoc and fragmented planning, to encourage everyone to think of the long-term implications of decisions taken, or not taken, now, and to provide inspiration in our current work by means of a clear picture of where we want to take South Africa’s schools”. An encouraging sign was that the *Delivery Agreement* (South Africa. DBE. 2010b, p. 4) represented a “major overhaul of government’s planning systems,” and was linked to *Action Plan to 2014* which focused on 12 outcomes to achieve quality education, with each outcome having a limited number of measurable outputs linked to a set of activities aimed at achieving targets and contributing to the outcomes. The Delivery Agreement has introduced a measure of accountability by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of various delivery partners (South Africa. DBE. 2010b, p. 3).

In its comment on *Action Plan 2014: Towards the realisation of schooling 2025*, EE supported this new initiative and welcomed the plan as a “progressive attempt to coordinate

efforts at addressing the crises that affect our education system” (EE, 2010d, p. 17). EE also welcomed the emphasis on proper monitoring and evaluation but added a condition that should be heeded by government, namely the setting of clear targets with regard to the provision of learning materials and school infrastructure. At issue is the fact that although clear targets have been set for the improvement of average language and mathematics scores of learners between now and 2025, there are no “clear targets for improving access to the learning materials” such as libraries, computers and better school infrastructure (EE. 2010d, pp. 8-9).

2.8 Broadening awareness of school libraries

The *Review of Curriculum 2005* in 2002 made a connection between student achievement and resources, and this was highlighted in the *CREATE Education Roadmap* in 2009. Among other initiatives depicted in Table 2.1 is the discussion hosted by the Development Bank of South Africa (2010), *School Libraries – where do we go?* The various representatives of the DBE, EE and corporate South Africa have highlighted the state of public school libraries and brought the issue to the attention of the wider audience in South Africa. Questions in parliament in 2009 and 2010 (Table 2.1) have also spotlighted the issue as have the two international debates on school libraries in South Africa held in Johannesburg and Cape Town in 2011. As the DBE (South Africa. DBE. 2010b, p. 14) acknowledged; “access by learners to materials beyond their core set of textbooks and workbooks, in particular access to a school library and information through the internet” is much more in the open as a result of the “considerable attention recently in the public debates”.

2.9 Advocacy

Equal Education (EE) is a movement described by Dugger of the *New York Times* (2009, p. 1) as a “quintessentially South African answer to transform schools into engines of opportunity”. Founded in 2008, EE involves learners, parents, teachers and community members working towards “quality and equality in South African education through analysis and activism” (EE, 2010a, p. 7). EE has successfully campaigned for the repair of broken windows in a school, and against late coming in Khayelitsha schools in the Western Cape (Toffoli, 2011, p. 1). EE has also championed the cause of school libraries by launching a Campaign for School Libraries (1 School, 1 Library, 1 Librarian) in 2009. The struggle for school libraries represents the group’s “first attempt to tackle a national issue” (Dugger,

2009, p. 2).

From the timeline (in Table 2.1) it can be seen that the efforts by EE to heighten awareness of the plight of school libraries has led to a peaceful and active campaign over the past three years, working towards “ensuring that the government provides every school with a library; a trained, full-time librarian or library administrator; adequate shelving; computer facilities; 3 books per learner; as well as annual funding to service each library by ring-fencing 10% of the Learning Teaching Support Materials(LTSM) allocation” (EE, 2010a, p. 8). This research (p. 14) shows that school libraries have a social advantage, as 50% of learners identified school libraries as quiet and stable environments in which to do homework and study for exams. They also offered access to books in communities where homes did not have books.

For EE the key demand was the need for the DBE to provide a national policy on school libraries and then to develop an implementation plan stating that the legal framework already exists in Section 5A of the *South African School Act* which “empowers the Minister of Basic Education to prescribe minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure, including that there ‘must’ be ‘a library’” along with full-time librarians (EE, 2010a, p. 9).

2.10 Synthesis and Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the national context in which my study is located. I analysed documents in order to understand key events and developments in school libraries before and after the transition to democracy in 1994. Emergent issues were identified and discussed. The key emergent concern is that of governance. In Chapter Three I focus on a review of international and local literature on school libraries relevant to this study.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I review literature pertinent to the study in order to understand how the role of the school library and the school librarian have changed over time, the relationship between the principal and the school library, the link between achievement and school libraries, and the development of an international policy and guidelines for school libraries. The discussion starts with consideration of the place of a literature review within grounded theory methodology.

3.2 Literature review in grounded theory methodology

The reviewing of literature in a study based on grounded theory is controversial (see also Section 4.4.5), and Hesse-Biber's point (2007, p. 325) in this context is entirely valid: "the extent to which prior knowledge finds its way into a research project remains confusing to students".

The founders of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967), argue that a literature review should be delayed until after the research and analysis has been completed in order to prevent the researcher from seeing the data through the eyes of others who have written on the same or a similar subject. Glaser and Strauss maintain (1967, p. 37) that "an effective strategy is at first literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to ensure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas. Similarities and convergences with the literature can be established after the analytic core of categories has emerged". This view proved to be at odds with the requirements for a research proposal required for submission to the Higher Degrees Committee at Rhodes, and is clearly a problem faced by researchers using grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006, p. 166; Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 22).

Subsequent writings by the founders of grounded theory show a divergence in their thinking about the role of literature in the research study. Glaser (1998) has not softened his stance and

is cited by Mills and Birks (2011, p. 23) as stating that “[g]rounded theory’s very strong dicta are (a) do not do a literature review in the substantive area and related areas where the research is to be done, and (b) when the grounded theory is nearly completed during sorting and writing up, then the literature search in the substantive area can be accomplished and woven into the theory as more data.” Glaser also recommends that the researcher read outside the area of study.

In 1990 the other founder of grounded theory, Strauss, working with Corbin, acknowledged that “we all bring to the inquiry a considerable background in professional and disciplinary literature” (p. 48). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 35) contend that literature could:

- Point to a relatively unexplored area – as indeed proved the case with my investigation. I had not anticipated the importance of the lack of security and its affect on the resources available to the children, nor had I anticipated the impact of a paucity of school library resources on the local library.
- Indicate the need for a study if there were contradictions or ambiguities present. This was the case with my study: what was happening in South African school libraries as discussed in the context section of this research report appeared to be contrary to international trends as revealed in the literature.
- Point to the fact that a new approach might be needed to solve an old problem, if “something about the problem area and the phenomena associated with it remains elusive, and that something, if discovered, might be used to reconstruct understanding of this phenomenon”. I hoped to uncover new and different ways in which public primary schools in Gauteng were dealing with issues and challenges associated with school libraries.
- Point to a finding that was “dissonant” in respect of the researcher’s experience, thereby giving the researcher a reason to investigate further.
- Stimulate interest and curiosity about a subject.

Lempert’s view (2007, p. 261) that reading the literature gave the researcher knowledge about the area under study “in sufficient depth to understand the parameters of the discourse and to enter into the current theoretical conversation” made sense in the context of this study: reading the literature undoubtedly sensitised me to current issues and debates regarding school libraries.

As a result of my reading the literature on grounded theory, it became clear to me that preconceptions stemming from my reading could come into play when I was doing my study (Holton, 2007, p. 269). But Dey (2007, p. 176) put this into perspective by observing that it was pointless to attempt to avoid preconceptions: we should not “confuse an open mind with an empty head. Even ideas drawn from the immediate field can provide a useful guide to analysis, providing we keep an open mind about their cogency and relevance to the data”.

The literature on school libraries and librarians revealed a number of trends and developments both internationally and locally that enabled me to sensitise myself to the issues and challenges faced by school libraries in South Africa today. These are listed below.

3.3 The changing role of the library

The literature – mostly focusing on school libraries in the United States and Australia – describes how the role of the school library has changed over time. The library has shifted from being a place where resources are located, sourced and used by learners, to a place in which the learner is the focus. Some authors go so far as to situate the school library right at the centre of teaching and learning in a school. This change in focus has resulted in the re-organisation of library spaces, furniture and collections.

3.3.1 Historical role of school libraries

I conducted research into the history of school libraries. I needed to understand their changing role in order to see how and where the school libraries I was investigating fitted into a historical continuum. In the past a school library was a place where children had access to books for reading and where learners worked, usually in silence, using books and journals as resources. The librarian was custodian of the collection and his or her job was to manage the collection and help learners gain physical access to items in the collection. In this context information was viewed “as a thing or a product to be given out, the right answer and the right source, rather than as an impetus for learning and changing constructs” (Kuhlthau, 2004, p. 3).

As technology became more accessible to schools with sufficient funding, the school library became a resource centre as well, and some libraries began to house AV material such as

videos, charts and posters, computers, DVDs and CD ROMs. School librarians became the custodians of these new resources in addition to the traditional print material.

The last 25 years have seen changes in society that have had a major impact on education generally and on school libraries in particular. As we have moved into the digital and information age of the 21st Century, new technology introduced in the library has also given users access to a wealth of information on the Internet. It has become vital for learners to become life-long learners, who can not only find, but also sort and critically use large amounts of information from electronic sources, not all of which are necessarily reliable, useful or up-to-date. Erikson and Markuson (2007, p. 13) and Bolan (2009) argue that the school library's role is to be the school information hub, where students can find, use and produce information from a variety of sources, including computers and the internet.

3.3.2 The library as the centre of the school

A gradual shift in the role of the library – from a place where resources are located and used by learners, to a place in which the learner is the focus – is recorded in the international literature, particularly in Australia and the United States. In the foreword to *Designing a school library media centre*, Todd argues that school libraries are no longer “depositories of information but transformational spaces” where students use information and turn it into personal knowledge (Erikson & Markuson, 2007, p. ix). Erikson and Markuson (2007, p. 1) further contend that libraries are places where information is not only accessed and stored but challenged and created. Valenza (2010, p. 4) suggests that the library is “not just a place to get stuff, it is a place to make stuff, collaborate on and share stuff. Not a grocery store but a kitchen”.

This change in emphasis has been supported by a new vision of school libraries in policy and advocacy documents (see also Section 3.7) in the United States, Australia and the International Federation of Library Association and Institutions/ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (IFLA/UNESCO). The American Association of School Librarians offers a ‘vision for teaching and learning’ in their *Standards for the 21st Century learner* (2009), in terms of which students would “use resources and tools to

- inquire, think critically and gain knowledge
- draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new

situations, and create new knowledge

- share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society
- pursue personal and aesthetic growth”.

In *School libraries: Today and tomorrow* (IFLA/UNESCO, 2002, p.5) the authors argue that the school library is essential not only to the curriculum but to the wider reading and information needs of children. Libraries raise the sights of children, widen their horizons, show them a vision of the world and the future, provide access to the ideas and thoughts of others, and are “central to the intellectual, spiritual, cultural and political life of every society”. The Australian School Library Association’s Advocacy Kit (2006) supports this view and contends that school libraries ‘level the playing field’ by making information “affordable, available and accessible to all” (p. 9). The extent to which this is the case with regard to South African public primary school libraries is part of the subject of this research.

Taking the concept of the learner being at the centre of the library even further is the idea of the library as a ‘Learning Commons’. Loertscher and Diggs (2009) cite a proposal made by Koechlin, Zwaan and Loertscher in August 2008 that represents a shift in thinking about school libraries. The change to a ‘Learning Commons’ concept means that the library becomes central to teaching and learning, offering services and space to all involved in the learning process. In this paradigm the library is a place where large-scale collaboration occurred between the teaching staff, the librarian and the learners in order “to learn, experiment with, assess and then widely adopt improved instructional programs”. My research sought to determine if this was being achieved in South Africa, given the issues surrounding school libraries in the government sector as portrayed in the earlier chapter on the context of this research.

3.3.3 School library spaces

The transformation of the library into the school information hub where students can find, use and produce information from a variety of sources has resulted in the re-organisation of library spaces, furniture and collections.

Space in the library needs to be multifunctional and include places for small and big groups,

enough space to accommodate more than one class at a time, spaces where digital media can be used and created, spaces where instruction or teaching occurs, spaces where multimedia projects are produced, spaces where the librarian can work in collaboration with teachers, and spaces which allow for socialisation, study, staff work and office areas (Erikson & Markuson, 2007, p. 24).

To this list Bolan (2009, p. 11) adds cafes, comfortable seating and spaces for community meetings, and makes the point that spaces in a library suitable for teens should include places for studying, meetings, after-school activities, homework assistance and socialising. The notion of a social role for the library is supported by a case study of a Learning Commons at the Chelmsford High School Library (Loertscher & Diggs, 2009). It was found that the Learning Commons had become a place where socialisation took place, and where staff and students had the opportunity to ask questions, think about answers and create new meanings.

Bolan (2009, p. 11) contends that the library needs to be a place where learners feel welcome: the centre of the school, a dynamic and inviting place that offers a space for learners to be with others in an informal setting outside of the classroom and the home environment. In his preface to *Designing a school library media centre for the future*, Erikson (2007, p. xi) supports this idea, arguing that a well-designed, attractive school library affects the way learners use the library, how they behave in the library and what learning takes place. The extent to which this is the case with primary school libraries in Gauteng still needs to be determined. Library spaces and the ways in which they are organised and function in the primary schools of Gauteng comprises one of the aspects under investigation in this study (see Chapter 6).

3.3.4 Library collections

According to Bolan (2009, p. 105) library collections need to be diverse in terms of subject matter in order to cater for the needs of all learners and attract existing and new users. In the case of books, this would mean non-fiction of differing levels to cater for very able learners as well as those who struggle to read; fiction in hardback and paperback covering all the genres traditionally found in school libraries, as well as books in formats attractive to learners, especially non-readers, such as graphic novels and comic books. Non-book materials in the collection would include magazines, computers, audiovisual items such as

audio books, DVDs, music, online resources, games in board and electronic formats (Bolan, 2009, p. 41). Erikson and Markuson (2007) and Bolan (2009) emphasise that the collection must be lively-looking and attractive. The extent to which the libraries under investigation have diverse and attractive collections is described in Chapter Five (Section 5.2).

3.3.5 Technology

Technology is rapidly changing libraries in general and this must be kept in mind when one is considering school libraries. We have reached a stage in the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) at which, according to the literature, revolutionary change can be expected to transform both the library and the profession of librarianship.

Erikson and Markuson (2007, p. 1) point out that much of the information available to learners is now accessible outside of the library as a result of advances in technology. They argue (p. 13) that the library is a place where students learn to use technology as a tool to explore the world of knowledge. This has implications for the school library as well as the school librarian, for both must be ready for a wide range of new and ever-changing technologies. According to Valenza (2010, pp. 3-4), the collection should include e-books, audio books, open source software, streaming media, flash drives, digital cameras, laptops, and RSS feeds. The physical space of the library must change to accommodate media production (podcasting, video production) and storytelling (producing and presenting).

School librarians need to heed media reports that question the future of the book, with e-books already outselling books in some fields. As the ratio of digital over print resources, which Limb reported as rising as early as 2004 (Kwanya, Stilwell & Underwood, 2009, p. 70), continues to increase, the information-seeking behaviour of library users will change to embrace this.

Kwanya, Stilwell and Underwood (2009, p. 70) refer to the debate surrounding the future development of the library, which some refer to as *Library 2.0*. In 2008 Farkas (cited in Kwanya et al., 2009, p. 71) defined this type of library as one which listened, understood and adapted to user needs through self-assessment and changing services, systems and tools, while looking to technological developments for applications, opportunities and inspiration. Kwanya et al. (2009, pp. 72-73) report that the majority of library and information scholars

have accepted four principles of Library 2.0 librarianship:

1. The library had no walls; it was everywhere as it offered a website where the physical library services were digitally reproduced.
2. The library had no barriers, as users' rights to access information held by libraries rose.
3. The library invited participation from staff and technology partners as well as users.
4. The library challenged conventional procurement procedures, now looking to "the expertise and expectations of their users and other stakeholders to identify, acquire and install suitable systems effectively to deliver their services".

My investigation into the use of technology in Section 5.2.7 and material resources in Section 5.2.5 would help me understand where in the evolutionary continuum primary school libraries stand. Are they still operating in the old paradigm, or have they changed to embrace ICT, thereby reflecting international trends?

3.3.6 Alternatives to school libraries

Alternative solutions to the shortages of both school and public libraries (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2006), such as joint use or school/community libraries, are proposed in the literature. Aitchison (2006) outlines an initiative to provide rural community libraries by the Family Literacy Project; Hart (2009) reports on six dual-use rural school community libraries; Witbooi (2006) and Le Roux and Hendrikz (2006) have researched joint-use library facilities, and Parry (2009) shows that a community library in a village in Uganda was a cost-effective solution to supporting literary development amongst school children and adults. Witbooi (2006, p. 42) argues that the time has come to consider a more "community-orientated model approach to information work," as the distinctions between the various libraries have become blurred with the constant transformation occurring in the post-apartheid era. My study seeks to determine what alternative solutions are being explored by the primary school libraries in Gauteng (see Chapter Seven).

3.4 The changing role of the librarian

While the unique role played by the librarian in a school has always been acknowledged, that role has changed. According to the international literature, the librarian's role is increasingly geared towards the teaching of information skills as opposed to library skills. More recently, a changing and growing involvement in the business of schooling began to place the school librarian at the heart of teaching and learning in the school. This study also focuses on the role of the librarian or the person in charge of the library, in order to understand where he/she stands in this context.

3.4.1 Historical background of school librarianship

Kuhlthau (2004, p. 9) quotes Katz, who in 1987 referred to the librarian's role as the professional whose job it was to locate sources. In this bibliographic paradigm the role of the librarian focused more on the collection than on its users. The librarian's role was to come up with the answer or the sources of the answer if and when the student asked for help. Kuhlthau's research into the information-seeking behaviour of high school students in 1983 has revealed that they lacked the constructs that would make them seek the librarian's assistance in the process of acquiring information. The librarian was seen as a 'last resort source locator' after all else had failed (2004, p. 108).

By the mid-1900s, librarians were teaching bibliographic or library skills, following a sequence of lessons starting in junior school that were repeated all the way, with increasing complexity, into the senior school (Thomas, 2004, p. 22). The literature records the subsequent shift away from bibliographic or library skills instruction to the teaching of information literacy. Thomas (2004, p. 2) suggests that in the 1970s and 1980s the information 'explosion' resulted in a shift from the bibliographic paradigm, as the idea developed and took hold that librarians needed to help learners "learn rather than help them to find resources to learn". Librarians and scholars started exploring the relationship between information and learning. The result was that the role of school librarians started shifting towards educational goals as the role of the librarian shifted towards the teaching of information skills as opposed to library skills.

As school libraries moved into the information age, the role of the school librarian developed

into that of a specialist in the teaching of 'information literacy', where information literacy could be defined as the ability to access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources (Brown & Sheppard, 1999, p. 60). The Australian School Library Association (2001), Braxton (2008) and the Ohio Study (Todd, R. J. et al., 2004) agree that all school librarians have a role to play as information learning specialists, and that this role is unique to them. The Ohio study (2004) recommends that school librarians provide instruction on information literacy skills for inquiry learning, and that all libraries be staffed by qualified library specialists who work with teachers in learning programmes.

3.4.2 Expanding the school librarian's role

The role of the librarian has also expanded to include new functions. A literature review by Watts on the role of the school librarian in Australia (Henri & Bonanno, 1999) identifies several such roles, supported by policy documents and international literature. These roles include integrating information literacy into the curriculum through collaborative efforts with teachers (IFLA/UNESCO, 2002; The Ohio study, 2004). The Australian School Library Association (Brown & Sheppard, 1999) even argues that the school librarian is the curriculum leader, pre-eminently equipped to adapt to change in the school environment and climb the executive ladder. School librarians also have a high level of knowledge of current themes and trends in education, present a united front as members of a profession, and are able to master new technology.

The school librarian also has a role as organiser and manager (IFLA *School Libraries: Today and Tomorrow*, 2002), selecting resources for pleasure as well as learning and encouraging the habit of reading (Braxton, 2008). The IFLA adds to these the responsibility of providing a suitable learning environment (2002). According to Brown and Sheppard, the school librarian should have the following attributes in his or her role as the mirror image of teacher leaders: strong interpersonal and team skills, an understanding of staff development and training, values and beliefs that 'reflect a care for children,' and a commitment to constantly upgrading their skills with the aim of being life-long learners (1999, p. 83). McKenzie (2005, p. 7) refers to the expectation of the Kentucky Education Department that the librarian assumes a leadership role in the provision of professional development.

More recently reference is made to the school librarian's role of knowledge management.

Reynolds (2005) argues that the profession has moved from the old paradigm towards a leadership role, with the school librarian playing a strategic role in the knowledge environment. The school librarian now works with students, teachers, academic departments as well as the IT department, enjoys the unique position of having an overview of the teaching and learning that is happening in the school, and plays a leading, as well as a supporting role, in all the learning processes in the school. In my experience of interacting with other school librarians in well-resourced schools in South Africa I have found examples of this happening. It remains to be seen if this is the situation in the school libraries under investigation.

3.4.3 Reading and the school librarian

The importance of reading and the school librarian's role in this aspect of a student's education comes under scrutiny in the literature. According to Braxton (2008, p. 22) the school librarian used to be regarded as the literature expert whose job was to put the 'right book in the right hand'. But in the light of the findings of a study done on 15-year-olds in more than 40 countries by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2003 and 2006, the role of school librarians needs to be reviewed (Braxton 2008). The 2003 study found that the most important predictor of academic success is the amount of time that students spend reading. This indicator was more accurate than economic or social status. The study concluded that the key to success lay in teaching students how to read and then having them read as much as possible.

The question must be asked: 'Who is responsible for the teaching of reading for meaning in senior schools?' Greenleaf et al. (2002), cited in Kornfed (2003), say that it is 'no one's job to teach reading' and that struggling readers did not need phonics and decoding instruction. Rather they need the opportunity and instructional support to read many and various kinds of materials in order to build their experience, fluency and range as readers. The ability to read remains a basic aspect of literacy and cannot be ignored by any information professional, particularly the school librarian. Tovani (2000, 2004) and Blachowicz and Ogle (2008) maintain that students need to understand increasingly abstract material from a variety of sources in a wide range of content areas, and insist that our priorities as educators must include the teaching of 'reading to learn.' This is also true of any learner using the internet or other technologies, as all of these require learners to read and understand text in a variety of

formats such as pictures, printed text, videos etc.

The IFLA (School Libraries: Today and Tomorrow, 2002) take the view that one of the keys to excellent libraries is a school librarian who selects and promotes resources for learning and pleasure and encouraged reading for life. Krashen (2004. p. 1) advocates a policy of free voluntary reading where learners read for pleasure, thereby laying a foundation for higher levels of reading proficiency and helping with reading comprehension, reading academic texts, writing, vocabulary, spelling, grammar and achieving advanced second language proficiency. The challenge for the school librarian is to provide the type of books, the time to read and the environment to encourage a love of reading, so that the ultimate goal of 'reading to learn' becomes a reality.

Research supports the importance of a print-rich environment to the reading process. This has implications for schools. Blachowicz and Ogle (2008, p.40) cite research done by Snow, Hemphill and Barnes who did a study in 1991 of the percentage of children who achieved success with varying levels of home and classroom support with regard to literacy. Those children who came from homes where reading and writing were valued, with lots of print material in the home, did far better at school when compared to children who came from disadvantaged home backgrounds. The same applied to children who went to schools where there was a high level of support for literacy in a print-rich environment, and where learners were given the time and encouragement to read. The findings of the report to the Carnegie Corporation by Biancarosa and Snow in 2006 are sobering, as they report that roughly 7000 students drop out of high school every day in the United States, one of most common reasons being that they did not have the literacy skills to keep up with the curriculum.

3.4.4 Information and school librarians

The changing educational landscape which places the library at the centre of the school also creates a need for school librarians to adjust the way they do their jobs, as they become more involved in teaching and learning in the school.

In 1996 the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) recognised the changing educational landscape: the teacher was a facilitator or coach and students became active learners who created their own knowledge after interacting with information from a variety of sources in a process known as resource-based learning. Bonanno (1999) documents a

paradigm shift to self-directed learning, in terms of which the learning process becomes the responsibility of the learner. Henri (1999) argues that in the information-literate school community, a priority must be the effective use of teaching and learning methods that equip learners with knowledge construction skills. Hart (2000) observes that the profession needs to learn more about information literacy as a constructivist process, and in order to be accepted as collaborators or partners in the learning process, librarians will have to talk the language of learning. The significance of this contention in relation to my study is discussed in Chapter Seven (Section 7. 5).

The way children learn and our understanding of it identify the school librarian as one of the key players in the process. Kuhlthau's (2004, p. 25) seminal work, based on empirical evidence of how students learn from a variety of sources of information, introduces the concept of a process model known as the 'Information Search Process' (ISP), where the aim is to teach library skills in terms of strategies for thinking and problem solving. Her ISP model borrows from and is underpinned by the constructivist theory of learning based on the writings of:

- John Dewey, to provide a historical and philosophical perspective;
- George Kelly's theory of personal constructs, to provide a psychological perspective; and
- Jerome Bruner's research to provide an integrated perspective.

The model sees learning as a dynamic process driven by the learners' feelings interacting with their thoughts and actions, as they actively construct their own understanding.

These changes make a strong case for teaching information literacy skills, research skills and thinking skills in schools. Kuhlthau's research and the development of her Information Search Process (ISP) model has resulted in a change in the strategies used by some school librarians. These strategies focus on using, interpreting and learning from information, place the learner at the centre of the process, and acknowledge the important part that the user's perspective plays in the information-seeking process. The critical outcome of this approach to seeking and learning from information is *thinking*. The role of the school librarian is to enable learners to relate new information to what they already know, thus building up their understanding. This is done by incorporating thinking skills into library instruction and encouraging learners to use information as "evidence to be examined for shaping a topic rather than finding a quick answer to a question" (Kuhlthau, 2004, p. 11). There is a need for the librarian to intervene to enable access to the sources and to guide students in the process

of using information.

Kuhlthau found that success in terms of the library and information studies has a lot to do with teachers and their teaching style. This finding has been backed up by research done in South Africa by Kistan in 1992 and Fredericks in 1995, who contend that even well-resourced libraries do not play an important part in the education of the child if the main teaching style is based on ‘chalk and talk’ methodology (Hart, 2000a, p. 2). Chapter Seven (7.2.2) of my study will attempt to identify where, in the spectrum of possible professional strategies discussed in the literature, the librarians who are the focus of this study are operating.

In the South African context, Hart and Zinn (2000) argue that although information literacy skills are recognised as important in the critical outcomes, the role of the librarian in teaching these skills is not. Zinn (2002, p. 7) refers to the problems of defining exactly what information literacy skills mean in the South African context, as the 1999 *Report of South African School Library Survey* used ‘book education’, ‘information skills’ and ‘information studies’ interchangeably. Hart and Zinn (2007, p. 102) maintain that empirical research evidence is necessary to convince educationalists of the educational role of libraries. We do not know enough about what is happening in schools regarding who is doing the work of the librarian and how this is being done. My research seeks to illuminate what is happening at present on the ground in school libraries (see Section 7.2.2).

3.4.5 Technology and the school librarian

A further threat to the profession comes from the perception amongst policy makers that the skills of information literacy can be facilitated by developing information and communication technologies (ICT) facilities in schools. Research in Mpumalanga in 2006 unveiled two previously advantaged schools which replaced their libraries with computer rooms, only to find that these facilities did not replace library collections and that a diverse mix of resources as typically found in libraries was a more “economical and inclusive solution” (Hart, 2007, p. 14). This is an issue that is not confined to South Africa. In the United States, Cushing Academy closed the library and created a learning centre that embraced ICT technology instead (Abel, 2009). Zinn (2002, p. 10) also refers to the tension between print and electronic media where changing budget allocations or budget cuts to the school library are

being put in place to subsidise computers in the school.

Caviglia and Ferraris (2008, p. 178) claim that in schools the internet has become an alternative to books as a source of information. They point to some negative effects such as plagiarism, shallowness and disregard for other sources (2008, p. 176) and suggest that using the internet represented a complex process which relies on the users' familiarity and competency with the World Wide Web; their cognitive style, motivation, perseverance, background knowledge; their ability to identify their own information needs; their ability to construct meaning from text and critically to assess the trustworthiness of the site, as well as to adapt their search strategy to the results of the search process.

These concerns are supported by research by Beetham, McGill and Littlejohn (2009, p. 3) from Glasgow Caledonian University, which notes the challenges faced by students today:

- Learners' information literacies are poor but learners are not aware of the problem.
- There is poor support for learners to develop strategies to make effective use of technologies; most of them use only basic functionality.
- Many learners lack general critical and research skills.
- Most learners are strongly led by tutors and course practices and are not independent learners.
- There exists a potential clash of academic and internet knowledge cultures with issues of plagiarism, assessment and originality in student writing.
- There are few opportunities to integrate literacies in authentic tasks.

The school library must be the place and the librarian the partner in the process of teaching learners these skills. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (Johnson, 2009, p. 11), an advocacy organisation in the United States whose goal it is to 'infuse' 21st century skills into education, describes the need for the following skills:

- Learning for life through critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration;
- Information, media and technology skills;
- Life and career skills.

It is in the collaborative teaching of 21st Century Skills that the school librarian has much to offer. This is supported by the American Association of School Librarians' 'vision for teaching and learning' in their *Standards for the 21st Century Learner* (2009), according to which students would "use resources and tools to

- inquire, think critically and gain knowledge;
- draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge;
- share knowledge and participate ethically and productively a members of our democratic society; and
- pursue personal and aesthetic growth".

This vision places the learner firmly at the centre of the library's purpose in a school. It is in the weighing up of the skills identified as essential for living and working in the 21st Century that the librarian or information professional comes into their own, provided they are up for the challenge.

3.4.6 The need for advocacy

The need for advocacy of the profession by school librarians themselves was acknowledged. Watts (1999, p. 30) observes that, unlike their colleagues in the wider field of librarianship, Australian school librarians "often find themselves justifying and defending their worth in schools to their own colleagues, and scrambling for serious attention from their administrators". Myburg (2005, p. 44) makes the point that, despite all the new resources and skills, a strong stereotypical image still existed of the librarian as one who "works in a library and stamps books; this librarian is a middle-aged spinster with spectacles and a bun... who is in a position of power and control, but only in her domain".

3.4.7 Age of school librarians

The capacity of the profession to fill school librarian posts is under question due to the aging of the profession. Kaye in Australia (2000) and Reynolds in a paper delivered to school librarians at the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) at Hilton in 2008 refer to this trend. Reynolds (South Africa. DAC, 2009, p. 48) warned that 43% of current professionals face retirement by 2013 in schools mostly affiliated with ISASA. This issue is

examined in Chapter Five (Section 5.4.2).

3.4.8 Lack of capacity

The absence of a national policy in South Africa on school libraries has implications for the capacity of the profession to fill school librarianship posts. Since 1994, the number of school librarian posts has declined in South Africa as the responsibility for the funding of these professionals was passed to governing bodies. This was compounded by the closure of the School Libraries unit in the DoE in 2002. The repercussions have seen a decline in the number of tertiary institutions that offer courses to train school librarians (see Section 5.2.9). The University of South Africa (UNISA) established a diploma in Information Services for Children and Youth in 2002, but has stopped offering this course due to the low number of enrolments. The only institutions offering a course in school librarianship are the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Equal Education (EE) argues that greater school librarian employment opportunities would be created when a national policy is put in place, because it would result in the establishment of new school libraries and this would stimulate greater demand for training (EE, 2010a, p. 33).

It must be noted that not all school librarians are comfortable with these changes. Watts (1999, p. 30) reports that some school librarians feel threatened by the new demands being made of them and concludes that no one can predict the future of school librarians. Myburgh (2005, p. 44) stresses that it is time for school librarians to take up the challenge to traditional librarians or information professionals to “move out of their comfort zone and change their mindset”, to respond to the challenges of the changing environment. Valenza (2010, p. 2) points out that the concept of modern school librarianship is not clearly defined as there is “no textbook for what effective practice looks like in continually morphing information and communication landscapes”.

3.5 The role of the school principal

The principal of the school is seen as having an important role to play in the development of a school library (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2006; Hartzell, 2002; Hay, Henri & Oberg, 1999). According to Hartzell (2002, p. 1), many principals have overlooked school libraries and school librarians as contributors to improving learner achievement “because they have not

been educated to the library's value.... Consequently, principals often leave library potential untapped". The statement by the head of Cushing Academy who closed his school's library to embrace a 'digital future' – "When I look at books, I see an outdated technology, like scrolls before books" – illustrates Hartzell's point (Abel, 2009). McKenzie (2010) contends that there are many leaders who are ill-equipped to understand the literacy and comprehension challenges that learners face in the United States, or the role that librarians might play in helping them to meet these challenges, and notes that in Los Angeles as many as 44 out of a total of 150 school librarians were issued with provisional pink slips, as heads of schools try to balance budgets by reducing the number of school librarians.

Hartzell (2002) argues that principals should support school libraries because it is in the best interests of learners. Schools perform better if the principal endorse collaboration between school librarians and teachers in the design and delivery of instruction, allow for the flexible scheduling of library access, hold regular meetings between themselves and the school librarian, and have the school librarian serve on key school committees (Lance, Rodney & Russell, 2007; Hartzell, 2002). Principals control the budget and this affects the collection size, currency, service hours and staffing, thereby playing an important role in the success of the school library (Hartzell, 2002).

Despite the growing body of literature that focuses on the importance of both the role of the library and the school librarian, Watts (1999, p. 29) contends that the basic flaw in the literature is its limited audience. She argues that the readers of this literature are mainly school librarians, and though this allows for professional development and growth whilst learning about best practice, it does not mean that the message reaches policy makers and decision makers. I agree with her suggestion that much of the literature is preaching to the converted. A wider audience, starting with important decision makers, such as the principal of the school, is imperative if the roles of both the library and the school librarian are to be upgraded, valued or in some cases even retained. This research sheds light on the extent to which school principals are supportive of school libraries in South Africa (see Section 7.6).

3.6 The link between learning and learner outcomes and libraries

The link between learning and learner outcomes and libraries is recognised, and significant research has been done to demonstrate this. It needs to be noted, however, that the evidence

shows links to many different aspects of learning that are quite disparate, as so many variables were tested in the research.

Empirical research studies in the United States covering the last 20 years have recorded the impact that school libraries and librarians have had on student achievement, as measured by standardised reading achievement scores or global assessments of learning. Hartzell, writing in 2002, states that many of these studies since 1990 are particularly powerful because the authors statistically controlled for demographic differences among the schools they studied.

The Indiana Study on *How students, teachers and principals benefit from strong school libraries* investigated perceptions of school librarians, principals and teachers on the impact of school libraries on test scores, and found that schools with well-staffed, well-stocked and well-funded school library programmes tended to perform better across grade levels on test scores measuring reading and language arts, mathematics and combined results (Lance, Rodney & Russell, 2007). The Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008 survey reports on findings by various authors. In North Carolina, Burgin and Bracy reported in 2003 that school library programmes had an impact at all grade levels on standardised reading and English tests, and that this tended to increase in school libraries with newer books, and when the libraries were open with staff for more hours during the week (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008, p. 14). Smith reported in 2006 that that school library programmes had an impact on learner achievement in reading and language arts, from 3% - 3.4% in primary school to between 7.9% - 19% at high school (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008, p. 15).

Several of the studies described in the Scholastic Library Publishing 2008 survey in the US focus on primary schools and come to various conclusions about the impact of libraries on learner achievement (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008): the Delaware study by Todd in 2000 looked at Grades 3 – 5 and concluded that if all was in place the school library helped learners in the learning process; Baumbach found in 2002 that where library programmes in Florida are staffed 60 hours per week there was a 9% improvement in test scores; Callison reported in 2004 that Grade 6 learners' test scores in the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) were well above average if the learners had been with a full-time quality school librarian who had been at the same school for at least 3 years; the Lance et al. study in Indiana (2007) found that at primary school level schools averaged better test results where teachers initiated and worked with school librarians; Rodney, Lance &

Hamilton-Pennell discovered in 2002 that Iowa reading test scores rose with the development of school library programmes and that the highest scoring students used more books and materials during library visits; in 2003 Rodney, Lance and Hamilton-Pennell found that flexible scheduled visits to the library by learners and teachers in Michigan resulted in learners achieving the highest scores in reading tests, and that these scores rose when the school had a certified school librarian specialist; Baxter and Smalley found in 2003 that in Grades 3, 5 and 8 higher reading scores were linked to Minnesota schools with a full-time school librarian. The second Colorado study, *How school librarians help kids achieve standards* (Lance et al., 2000), concluded that where staffing, expenditure, information resources and technology were in place in the school library, reading scores tended to run 18% higher in Grade 4 and 10-15% in Grade 7. Lance, Rodney and Hamilton-Pennell working in Pennsylvania in 2000 concluded that 61% of schools reported average or above-average reading scores if the school had adequate library staffing.

Not many of the studies in the United States focus on high schools only but those that do report the following: in 2000, learners in Alaska with full-time school librarians were twice as likely to score average or above average on the California Achievement tests. Lance et al. and Baumbach have reported that at schools where school libraries were staffed 60 hours per week there was a 22.2% improvement in test scores in Florida in 2002 (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008).

Research in the United Kingdom has also highlighted the importance of the school library in student achievement in the senior grades, but unlike the United States these studies do not make a direct link to test scores, rather focusing on the impact of the library on learning and information skills. In Scotland, Williams and Wavell in 2001 (Lonsdale, 2003, p. 21) researched the impact of the school library on a selection of secondary schools and found the school library affected a broad range of learning by contributing to the development of a variety of information skills in students, encouraging them to become more responsible as individuals as well as socially responsible, and enhancing the opportunities of those students who already had the skills of independent learning. Lonsdale (2003, p. 22) also cites research done by Kinnell in 1994 in senior schools in England, which reported that the school library played a significant role in enhancing information technology skills, in bridging the gap between primary and secondary schools, as well as in “developing cross-curricular skills, such as communication, numeracy, study, problem-solving, personal and social, and use of

information technology”.

Likewise, research by Todd (1995) in Australia highlights the importance of senior schools students’ mastery of the school library’s integrated skills instruction for improved test scores, better recall and concentration skills and improved reflective thinking skills (Lonsdale, 2003, p. 22).

Looking at school libraries and their influence on learner outcomes in the literature has highlighted how much research has been done elsewhere, in particular in the United States, in comparison to South Africa. Nevertheless, some research has been done in South Africa that highlights the importance of libraries to learner outcomes. A study, *Determinants of Grade 12 pass rates in the post-Apartheid South African schooling system*, found that the presence of a library and computers for teaching had a positive impact on the pass rates of Grade 12s. The statistics from this study showed that the “mean pass rate for schools without a library is 47%, compared with 66% for those with a library”, and that this pattern was “broadly consistent across apartheid classifications of schools” (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2008, p. 17). Zinn (2006, p. 23) refers to two studies done by the Western Cape Education Department that focused on school libraries. In the first, in 2005, access to information was seen as a significant factor associated with Grade 6 learner achievement. Recommendations to prioritise school libraries, train school librarians, have well stocked-libraries and pre-service training for educators in school library management, were expanded in the second study in 2006 to include ICT literacy as well. Although these findings and recommendations are supportive of the link between learner outcomes and school libraries, it is difficult to find more empirical evidence linking learner outcomes to libraries in South Africa as so few studies have been conducted.

3.7 The development of international policy and guidelines for school libraries

Policy documents establishing norms and standards were developed and adopted in the late 1900s and early 2000s by various professional organisations worldwide, including, for example, the IFLA/UNESCO’s *School library guidelines* (2002) and *School library manifesto* (2006), the *Australian School Library Association advocacy kit* (2006), and the United States’s *Standards for the 21st century learner* (American Association of School Librarians, 2009). These policy documents support the shifts in the role of the school library

and the school librarian described in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 and must be considered important in terms of establishing, as well as upholding, the changing roles.

It is interesting to note that despite this level of advocacy amongst professional bodies these countries do not have a national school library policy to support the changes mentioned in Sections 3.3 and 3.4. The United Kingdom is an example. In 2009 the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals unanimously approved the recommendations from their Policy Forum to endorse a campaign to “make school libraries run by properly qualified staff statutory and sign the Number 10 petition to that effect” (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2010). The response from the government body, the Department for Children, Schools and Families was to reject the call to make school libraries compulsory, stating that it was not government policy to interfere with head teachers’ freedoms to make decision about resources in their schools. It was noted that the power of principals to make decisions about school libraries was confirmed.

In the United States the SKILLs (Strengthening Kids’ Interest in Learning and Libraries) Act was introduced in the House and the Senate in 2007. The SKILLs Act aimed to amend the provisions of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act of 1965 by meeting the goal of ensuring that there is at least one highly qualified school librarian in each school in order to improve student literacy at all grade levels, amongst other aims (Govtrack, 2010). The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) approved a resolution in 2007 to advise Congress that schools should be equipped with adequate resources to provide up-to-date print and non-print materials in all school libraries. School librarians should also be added to the ‘highly qualified’ class of school professionals, and every school library should be staffed by a qualified, state-certified school librarian (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2008, p. 3). Despite lobbying by the NCLIS the SKILLs Act never became law. It would appear that the advocacy work of the professional bodies with regard to school libraries has been ignored by politicians and decision makers, as school libraries face severe budget cuts in states such as California, where 85 school librarians were set to be retrenched in 2011 (Barack, 2011, p. 1). School libraries throughout the United States could expect to receive no funding in 2011 for their *Improving Literacy through School Libraries* programme (Whelan, 2011, p. 1).

The Australian example also reveals problems and challenges with regard to school libraries.

Lonsdale (2003) refers in her review of literature to the Australian context, where there has been an apparent decline in numbers of school librarians in public school libraries, concomitant with the information explosion and ICT. The issue of school libraries and school librarians has been under scrutiny in Australia, where the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training has been asked by the Federal Minister of Education to inquire into and report on the role, adequacy and resourcing of school libraries and teacher librarians in all schools in Australia. Many of the issues that were raised in the LIS Transformation Charter in South Africa and were discussed in the earlier chapter on context were the focus of the Australian inquiry:

- Impact of recent policies and investments on school libraries and their activities
- The future potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy
- The factors influencing recruitment and development of school libraries
- The role of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians
- The impact and potential of digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians. (Australia. House of Representatives, 2010)

In contrast to the situation in the United Kingdom and the United States, South Africa is in the process of formulating a national policy for school libraries. The authors of the *Transformation Charter* report that a new policy has been drafted by the Children and Youth Literacy Directorate for the DBE. This has been a long and frustrating process for the South African school library profession, with – at the time of writing – policy watered down to guidelines, as outlined in Section 2.7.1.

KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Mpumalanga are the only provinces to have school library policies. These have limitations, partly because of the absence of national policy, and this is acknowledged by the provinces themselves (see Section 2.7.1).

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the international and local literature in order to understand key trends and developments in school libraries. Emergent trends have been identified which

relate to the changing role of the school library and librarian and the significant roles played by the principal and a national school policy. The link between learning and learner outcomes and the school library is also seen as a significant factor in favour of school libraries.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This research seeks to understand the issues and challenges – as identified by selected primary schools in Gauteng – associated both with running an existing school library and setting up a new school library in South Africa. The study also investigates how schools respond to these issues and challenges. This chapter describes and justifies the research orientation and the research methods that were employed in this study.

4.2 Orientation

My research involved a study of ten schools representative of the range of fee categories used by the *Amended national norms and standards for school funding* (DoE, 2007) in the public school system of Gauteng. It was a qualitative study within the interpretive paradigm. As the research focused not on one school but on a group of primary schools, it allowed for comparisons to be made between schools in respect of the issues and challenges they faced in setting up or running a library. To the extent that it focuses on a number of topics rather than on one school in particular (Fouché, 2005, p. 272), it conforms to the purpose of a qualitative study.

Individuals at these schools saw the issues and challenges differently and dealt with them differently. My research was concerned to look at the problems from their points of view; in other words, to understand the subjective world of human experience. This is characteristic of the interpretive paradigm (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 21), in terms of which there are “multiple realities which require multiple methods for understanding them” (Connole, 1993, p. 16). This allowed the researcher to focus on the meaning that participants make of a situation or phenomenon (Wilmot, 2005, p. 103) ,so as to arrive at “understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 2006, p. 88).

The research was a multi-site case study conforming to Mouton’s definition of a case study, which is “usually qualitative in nature and . . . aim(s) to provide an in-depth description of a

small number (fewer than 50) of cases” (2001, p. 149). It was also suited to “rich interpretation” and “thorough understanding” of the phenomenon or situation under investigation (Wilmot, 2005, p. 104).

My interest lay in a group of primary school libraries, chosen on the basis that comparisons could be made in order to develop generalisations about and explanations of the issues and challenges that they faced, and to identify lessons to be learnt from them. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 261) note the problems of selection in a case study with regard to finding a site which “provides the best location for the design”, as well as locating, identifying and approaching key participants. At the beginning of my study, with the help of a colleague with significant contacts in public schools, I identified schools where there was some activity with regard to libraries. Some had spaces that they were trying to convert into libraries; others had existing libraries, whilst yet others were in the process of setting up a library for the first time. A request to do research in schools in the province had to be made to the Gauteng Education Department, which duly granted permission.

Birks and Mills (2011, p .8) stress the importance of researchers being clear about their beliefs and feelings as well as their underlying assumptions about both their work and the world more generally, because all these affect their choice of research methodology. My role as a researcher was influenced by two factors: my role as a professional in the area of study, which meant that my reality differed from the realities of those working in primary schools; and the fact that I was a novice researcher. As a result of the former I made the following assumptions:

- The participants in my study would see the value of school libraries.
- They would cooperate with my study because they wanted to improve the current situation with regard to school libraries in South Africa.
- The schools and the individuals involved in the library would be willing to collaborate in the interests of developing or improving a school library in their own schools.
- There was an understanding of the importance of school libraries and a common goal to work towards this in Government departments.
- The development of literacy and ‘reading to learn’ was crucial to improving performance and educational outcomes in SA.
- The importance and value of teaching information literacy was understood and

supported by the heads of schools as well as by the teachers.

These assumptions were based on my experience in a state-of-the-art school library, working with teachers in planning teaching and learning programmes, teaching information literacy, promoting reading and the teaching of ‘reading in order to learn’, as well as ‘21st Century Skills’, with a focus on critical thinking skills.

In order to make my study transparent from the start I heeded the advice of Birks and Mills (2011, p. 21) to acknowledge both what I knew about my topic before going into the field and what I expected to find from my research. This helped to ensure that as the researcher I was “grounded throughout all stages of ... [my] research adventure”. A literature review had made me aware of the changing role of libraries and librarians, the important role of the head of the school, the importance of reading and information literacy for 21st century skills, the absence of a national school library policy in South Africa, the fact that few state schools have libraries, the lack of library posts in state schools, and the lingering influence of apartheid on public school libraries in South Africa.

Formulating beforehand what I expected to find in my research would help me guard against bringing these preconceptions to my gathering of data and data analysis. This is what I came up with:

- There would be some activity in the general area of school library provision but it would be centred in the old bibliographic paradigm. The same paradigm would apply to librarians or people in charge of the library space.
- Apartheid affected the resources available to state schools and school libraries in black schools in particular. The legacy of Apartheid was that there was often very little or nothing to build upon in schools, as resources were inadequate or the holdings consisted of old or outdated discards from donors that were not particularly appealing to students. Since 1994 large sums of money had been put into education by government to redress the inequalities of the past, and I expected to see some improvements in libraries in previously disadvantaged schools.
- Computers were seen as the answer to information needs in the school.
- The teachers and principal did not always understand what the library or librarian could offer to teaching and learning in the school.

The extent to which these preconceptions were realised is discussed in Chapter Eight.

I undertook to do my research using the methodology of grounded theory. As developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, grounded theory proposes a three-step process in terms of which the researcher enters the field without a hypothesis, describes what is being investigated, and finally constructs a tentative explanation as to why it is so (Bailey, 1987, p. 54; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 491). Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p. 608) defined grounded theory as :

A method of conducting qualitative research that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories through building inductive analysis from the data. Hence, the analytic categories are directly ‘grounded’ in the data. The method favours analysis over method description, fresh categories over preconceived ideas and extant theories, and systematically focused sequential data collection over large initial samples. This method is distinguished from others since it involves the researcher in data analysis while collecting data – we use this data to inform and shape further data collection. Thus the sharp distinction between the data collection and analysis phases of traditional research is intentionally blurred in grounded theory analysis.

In 1996 Glaser observed that the generation of theory from data was the result of an “inductive process in which everything is integrated and in which data pattern themselves rather than having the researcher pattern them” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 491).

As I delved into the literature on grounded theory I realised that I would need to undergo a kind of mind shift and revisit most of my preconceptions about the research process:

- Grounded theory is a research design that ‘evolves’ (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 9), a research process in which theory emerges from the data (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 491). The aim is to build theory through the construction of categories derived directly from the data. Instead of the researcher gathering all the data and then analysing it, grounded theory requires the simultaneous collection and analysis of data. In my planning I had to take into consideration the evolving nature of my research design. Once I had piloted the interview questions and selected sites for my initial round of data collection, I had to be prepared to change direction in terms of my questions if my initial analysis of data pointed me in a direction that I had not considered in my planning. This indeed proved to be the case, as I realised that I had to investigate two issues that I had not considered initially, namely the impact of theft on school libraries

and the impact of the lack of school library resources on public libraries. In my role as researcher I heeded Babbie's advice (2001) as cited by Fouché (2005, p. 271), to step back periodically and review the data, while maintaining an attitude of critical engagement and following research procedures, and this allowed me to be "scientific and creative at the same time".

- Particular methods are associated with grounded theory. These are initial coding and categorisation of data; concurrent data generation or collection and analysis; writing memos; theoretic sampling; constant comparative analysis using inductive and abductive logic; theoretical sensitivity; intermediate coding; selecting a core category; theoretical saturation; and theoretical integration (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Birks & Mills, 2011).
- The role of literature: in order to submit my proposal to the Higher Degrees Committee a review of pertinent literature was required. This added to my knowledge of current trends regarding school libraries internationally and the state of school libraries in South Africa. But by doing a literature review at the start of my study I have gone against the advice of seminal writers in the field of grounded theory (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 492; Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 22), who affirm "the importance of avoiding reading in the substantive area completely". Reading could be done but it should be outside of the area of study to prevent the researcher from imposing knowledge and theory on the data. There continues to be much debate on the role of literature in grounded theory, and I took comfort from Urquhart's observation (2007, p. 351) that a literature review is simply an "effective means of orientating" the researcher. Birks and Mills (2011, p. 61) argue that literature should be treated as data if it "earns its way into developing grounded theory", since it can be used to grow theoretical sensitivity, as data during analysis and as a source of theoretical codes (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 22). In summary I used literature both as a means of orientating myself and as data.
- Glaser (1996) advised that as the researcher I would need to expect and display tolerance towards feelings of confusion and stupidity when the theory did not immediately become obvious, as well as towards the data that was emerging (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 492). Little is known about the topic of my research (Gauteng primary school libraries), and I hoped that theory would be generated and developed through the application of the prescribed methods. I also had to be prepared for my research to

achieve the ultimate outcome of being a rich description of the issues and challenges that primary school libraries face rather than the source of theory about primary school libraries. That this has indeed proved to be the case will be seen in Chapters Five, Six and Seven ,which deal with data analysis and interpretation.

4.3 Research Method

I gathered evidence through semi-structured interviews with librarians or teachers in charge of the library and principals or deputy principals in ten schools, as well as with librarians in two public libraries located close to the schools I was investigating. I interviewed a well placed official at the GDE who gave me further insight into the issues and challenges faced by public school libraries. I observed how the libraries I visited were resourced and laid out. In addition I observed persons in charge of libraries in Gauteng telling their stories of how they developed their school libraries in the *Showcase of School Libraries* (2011, June) as well as an international debate, *School Libraries in South Africa* (2011, June). A conference at the Development Bank of South Africa in April 2010, ‘*School libraries – where do we go?*’ deepened my understanding of the situation. In order to firm up what I was seeing in the data I used documents, check lists and field notes, literature and memos. By “paying careful attention” to the contrast between the daily realities and the interpretation of those realities by those who are involved in school libraries (Suddaby, 2006, p. 633) I could “build a theory that is faithful to the evidence”, thereby meeting the objective of grounded theory (Neuman, 2006, p. 60).

Grounded theory is a flexible dynamic research design (Birks & Mills, 2011) that evolves but has a set of essential methods that determine how data is collected and analysed. These needed to be unpacked and understood as they had implications for the way the research was to be conducted. These methods are:

4.3.1 Initial or open coding and categorisation of data

I use the term ‘initial coding’ as adopted by Charmaz (2006) and Birks & Mills (2011). This is the first step of data analysis once the initial data collection has taken place, and is a result of the researcher breaking up the data, line by line, and identifying important ‘incidents’ which Clarke (2005), as cited in Birks & Mills (2011, p.93), describes as “recurring actions,

characteristics, experiences, phrases, explanations, images and/or sounds”. The researcher, using his/her knowledge and experience and extant theory, then has to identify the concepts that underlie the ‘incidents’ by asking questions of the data (de Vos, 2005, p. 340; Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 96). S/he labels these using codes, in order to “look for meanings, feelings, actions, events and so on” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 493).

Codes are most often written on the interview notes, field notes or other documents (de Vos, 2005, p. 342). Groups of codes representing a higher level concept form a category (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 93) pertaining to the same phenomenon. Categories are more abstract than the concepts grouped under them (de Vos, 2005, p. 341). I found de Vos’s (2005, p. 342) description of this process very useful in terms of how to go about developing categories:

“When the researcher begins to develop a category he does so first in terms of its properties, which can then be dimensionalised. Properties are the characteristics or attributes of a category, and dimensions represent locations of a property along a continuum.... An example is the category of ‘colour’. Its properties include shade, intensity, value and so forth. Each of these properties can be dimensionalised, i.e. they vary along continua. Thus colour can vary in intensity from bright to dull, in value from darker to lighter”.

According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007, p. 605) codes are “emergent as they develop as the researcher studies his or her data. The coding process may take the researcher to unforeseen areas and research questions. Grounded theory proponents follow such leads; they do not pursue previously designed research problems that lead to dead-ends”. In my research I took comfort from the words of Ezzy (2002) as cited by Cohen et al. (2007, p.493), who is of the opinion that “the early part of coding should be confusing with a mass of apparently unrelated material. However, as coding progresses and themes emerge, the analysis becomes more organised and structured” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 493).

4.3.2 Concurrent data generation or collection and analysis

This is fundamental to grounded theory research design: data from the initial purposive sample is analysed and coded before more data is collected or generated (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 10).

4.3.3 Writing memos

Memos are the written records of the researcher's thinking during the research process and are generated from the early stages of planning the research until the process is complete (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 10). Some authors seem to confine the use of memos to the data. Stern, for example, describes memo writing as a process whereby the analyst keeps track of what they think about the data (2007, p. 119). Lempert (2007, p. 245) stresses that memo writing is a "fundamental process of researcher/data engagement that results in 'grounded' theory... memos are not intended to describe the social worlds of the researcher's data, instead, they conceptualise the data in narrative form".

In my research I used memos to track my planning as well as my thinking about the data, so as to create an audit trail to ensure the trustworthiness of my research. In my planning I would record activities and the reasons for them, as well as any changes in direction as a result of circumstances that I could not predict. In my engagement with the data, in order to answer Glaser's (1978) question 'what is actually happening in the data', the use of memos allowed me to "articulate, explore and question" the data and provide a "series of snapshots that chronicle your study experience and the internal dialogue that is essential when conducting any research, particularly that with an interpretive component" (Birks & Mills, 2011, pp. 40-41).

In addition to memos, the use of diagrams and graphic illustrations helps the researcher to show relationships within the data (Lempert, 2007; Dey, 2007, Urquhart, 2007). Lempert (2007, p. 258; Birks & Mills, 2011) explains that diagrams "create a visual display of what researchers do and do not know. As such, they bring order to the data and further the total analyses.... Because they're less wordy than memos, diagrams can represent categories and their linkages more precisely and concisely". I found that the tabulating of data helped me to understand what was happening in my research.

4.3.4 Theoretical sampling

In 1967 Glazer and Strauss (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 611; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 492) defined theoretical sampling as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next

and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges”. For me this meant that emerging categories, which were the result of my data analysis, and my understanding of the developing theory, would direct who I interviewed next and the questions I asked of the participants, especially if it “becomes apparent that more information is needed to saturate categories under development” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 10). In my study, the public librarians in the area under investigation and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) official were interviewed. These interviews were not part of my initial planning. Morse (2007, p. 240) guided me to “deliberately seek participants who had had particular responses to experiences, or in whom particular concepts appear significant... adding to the existing data set about a particular concept or category; the participants may also be asked targeted questions, and the resulting data may be used to verify the theory in its entirety. The participants may also be asked to supplement information about linkages between two categories, hence contributing to the emerging theory”. Morse noted that even negative cases, where the participant differs from the majority or does not respond in the anticipated way, are part of the sampling process and must be integrated into the emerging theory.

According to Birks and Mills (2011, p. 99), Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced the concept of ‘theoretical saturation’ as the point “when to stop theoretically sampling for data pertinent to a category”, and that Strauss and Corbin (1990) define this as the situation when no new codes are being identified that relate to a particular category and that the category is “conceptually well developed to the point where any sub-categories and their properties/dimensions are clearly articulated and integrated”.

I heeded the advice of Birks and Mills (2011, p. 10) that the researcher record, through the use of memos, all decisions about possible sources to sample, thereby creating an important audit trail of the decision-making process for use later on in the research process. Theoretical sampling meant that I faced specific challenges in terms of planning, in that if I stayed true to grounded theory methods I would not know at the beginning of my study the nature and type of data I would need, how many participants or data sources I would use or when, or where and how I would generate or collect data after the initial purposeful sample (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 70).

4.3.5 Constant comparative analysis

Flick (1998, p. 234) cites Glaser (1969) in explaining how to interpret texts by using the ‘constant comparison’ method, in a 4-step process that starts with comparing incidents applicable in each category. This is followed by the integration of categories and their properties, the setting out and establishing of the limits or boundaries of theory, and finally the writing up of the theory. Flick advises the researcher to ensure that the codings of categories are constantly compared with codings and classifications that have already been made, as text “which has already been coded is not finished with after its classification but is continually integrated into the further process of comparison” (1998, p. 234).

Birks and Mills (2011, p. 11) maintain that this is a method of analysis in which the constant comparison “of incident to incident, incident to codes, codes to codes, codes to categories, and categories to categories” results in the inductive process of reasoning which makes meaning by building theory from data. Bryant & Charmaz (2007, p. 608) define inductive thought as a type of reasoning “that begins with the study of individual cases and extrapolates patterns from them to form a conceptual category”.

Abductive reasoning is included as a grounded theory process in the work of Charmaz (2006) and Reichertz (2007). Reichertz (p. 219) defines abduction as a type of data processing that “consists of assembling or discovering, on the basis of an interpretation of collected data, such combinations of features for which there is no appropriate explanation or rule in the store of knowledge that already exists. This causes surprise.... Something unintelligible is discovered in the data and, on the basis of the mental design of a new rule, the rule is discovered or invented and simultaneously, it becomes clear what the case is”. Abduction “moves a grounded theory away from being a qualitative descriptive account... toward being an abstract conceptual framework” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 94).

In my data analysis I expected at the very least to be engaged in inductive reasoning but hoped that I would be able to reach the “cognitive logic of discovery” associated with abduction (Reichertz, 2007, p. 220).

4.3.6 Theoretical sensitivity

The ability to conceptualise depends on the researcher's theoretical sensitivity (Holton, 2007, p. 274). Kelle (2007, p. 197) cites Glaser & Strauss, who in 1967 stated that the researcher "must have a perspective that will help him see relevant data and abstract significant categories from his scrutiny of the data". Glaser and Strauss defined theoretical sensitivity as a two-part concept: "Firstly, a researcher's level of theoretical sensitivity is deeply personal; it reflects their level of insight into both themselves and the area that they are researching. Secondly, a researcher's level of theoretical sensitivity reflects their intellectual history, the type of theory they have read, absorbed and now use in their everyday thought. Researchers are a sum of all they have experienced. The concept of theoretical sensitivity acknowledges this fact and accounts for it in the research process" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 11).

Birks and Mills's (2011, p. 59) characterisation of theoretical sensitivity offered some comfort to the novice researcher, in that they see it as something that increases as the research progresses. It reflects the sum of the researcher's personal, professional and experiential history, which can be enhanced through the use of various techniques, tools and strategies in the process of analysing the data. These include the use of questioning; making comparisons; exploring the meaning of a word; looking at language, emotions, negative cases and at words that indicate time; thinking in terms of metaphors and similes; and 'waving a red flag', which according to Corbin and Strauss (2008), as cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p. 62), means recognising when "biases, assumptions or beliefs are intruding into the analysis". Birks and Mills (2011, p. 61) also cite Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) as recommending the reading of literature as a means of raising theoretical sensitivity. Identifying my baseline assumptions before I began and during the research process was one of the techniques that I used to ensure that I could "work consciously developing [my] theoretical sensitivity" (Birks and Mills, 2011, p. 59).

4.3.7 Axial coding

This is the stage of data analysis in which coding connects the data in ways that are more abstract, as categories are built and connected. The 'grounding' of categories will result if the researcher follows the two basic rules of category building (Kelle, 2007, p. 193):

- Categories must emerge through data analysis and not be forced on the data;

- The researcher must “employ theoretical sensitivity, which means the ability to see relevant data and to reflect upon empirical data material with the help of theoretical terms”.

According to Kelle (2007, p. 201), individual categories are developed and form “the axis around which further coding and category building is done and may eventually become the core category of the emerging theory”. Categories are built by defining properties and their dimensions while considering the conditions they operate under, their context, action/interactional strategies and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, cited in de Vos, 2005, p. 343). Birks and Mills (2011, p. 96) claim to have simplified the coding paradigm developed by Strauss and Corbin in 1990. This simplified paradigm, as used in my research, outlines the broad components for researchers to “think about when analysing the data:

1. There are conditions – why, where, how and what happens?
2. There are inter/actions and emotions.
3. There are consequences – of inter/actions and emotions”.

When the researcher makes links between categories, through the constant comparison of data, he or she puts data back together (de Vos, 2005, p. 343; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 493; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, p. 603). At this point in the research process the writing of memos and the use of diagrams assists in the building of categories as well as the links between categories.

Birks and Mills (2011, p. 98) state that this is also the time when through the use of theoretical sampling, “gaps and holes will be identified, and more questions will be raised that require further data collection/generation and analysis in order to find a satisfactory answer”.

4.3.8 Identifying a core category

According to Holton (2007, p. 279) a core category begins to emerge as the researcher repeatedly compares the data, and this is an ‘indisputable requirement’ of grounded theory methodology. The implication for subsequent data collection and coding is that they would be limited to the core category and those categories relating to the core. The criteria for

establishing a core category are that:

1. It is central.
2. It relates to as many other categories and their properties as possible.
3. It accounts for a large portion of the variation in a pattern of behaviour (Holton, 2007, p. 280).

Birks and Mills (2011, p. 12) declare that a core category “encapsulates and explains the grounded theory as a whole. Further theoretical sampling and selective coding focused on actualising the core category in a highly abstract conceptual manner. This is achieved through full theoretical saturation of both the core category and its subsidiary categories, sub-categories and their properties”. In this study three core categories emerged. They are resourcing the library, operating the library and the role of the library, and they are discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, respectively.

4.3.9 Advanced coding and theoretical integration and generating theory

Theoretical integration occurs when the researcher integrates his or her “categories to form a grounded theory” (de Vos, 2005, p. 344). It is the difficult part of the research process (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 113) as “this stage of analysis involves processes that are intellectually and emotionally demanding”. As I planned my research I could not be sure if I would be able to achieve theoretical integration through advanced coding, but was reassured by the fact that if I had progressed thus far using all the grounded theory methods I would, at the very least, produce a ‘descriptive analysis’, which – according to Corbin and Strauss (2008) as cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p. 113) – would “have the potential to add further to what we know of the world and improve our understanding of” primary school libraries in Gauteng, the issues and challenges they face, and the lessons to be learnt from them.

Advanced coding techniques include:

1. **An identified core category** which has the power to explain the phenomenon under study, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008) as cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p. 115).
2. **Theoretical saturation** (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 115) of major categories where further data collection fails to add to categories that have been established. Dey (2007, p.185) asserts that this occurs when “the ideas run out.... Like a sponge which can hold no more water, the theory needs no more

elaboration or refinement”. Wiener (2007, p. 306) contends that this becomes a judgement on the part of the researcher that there is no need to collect further data. Wiener cites Corbin (1998), who cautioned that “in reality if one looked long and hard enough, one always would find additional properties or dimensions. There always is that potential for the ‘new’ to emerge. Saturation is more a matter of reaching the point in the research where collecting additional data seems counterproductive; the ‘new’ that is uncovered does not add that much more to the explanation at this time, or, as is sometimes the situation, the researcher runs out time, money or both”. Time was an issue in my research and I took comfort from Corbin’s statement.

3. An **accumulated bank of analytical memos** which is used to aid in the final formation of grounded theory, according to Birks and Mills (2011, p. 115), who cite Glaser (2005) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). Sorting and reviewing memos helps to identify relationships and unifying concepts not previously evident (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 116). Holton (2007, pp. 283-284) stresses that the “theoretical sorting of memos is the key to formulating the theory for presentation or writing”, and that without sorting, the theory will be “linear, thin and less than fully integrated”. Birks and Mills (2011, p. 117) also emphasise that grounded theory methods are not linear but recursive, which means that the researcher may have to return to the theoretical sampling and all coding activities in order to stay grounded. Charmaz (2006) offers practical advice on how memos should be dealt with at this stage. They should be sorted and compared, category with category, in order to produce a logical scheme that reflects the research experience (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 116).
4. **The use of storyline** as an aid in analysis, the final production of theory, and the writing up of the research is recommended (de Vos, 2005, p. 344; Dey, 2007, p. 183; Birks & Mills, 2011, pp. 117–118). Dey (2007, p. 183) explains: “Conveying to my readers the drama, uncertainties, and inconsistencies of events as they unfolded was a vital way of grounding my study”. Storyline becomes the explanation of the researcher’s theory in a process in which categories and their relationships (theoretical constructs) that form the foundational framework are given precedence. (Strauss, 1987, as cited by Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 119). Storyline must allow for variation by including negative cases, which add depth to the developing theory. Gaps and

inconsistencies are identified during the narrative process. These may prompt the researcher to return either to the data or to the field (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, as cited by Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 120). Storyline develops from the researcher's first interaction with the data and grows along with the processes of constant comparison and the development of categories. Birks and Mills (2011, p. 121) stress that it must occur in conjunction with the data as a process of "constantly re-grounding your developing theory". LaRossa (2005) as cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p. 123) suggests that the storyline must be "lucid, understandable...and compelling".

4.4 Data Collection

Data gathering started with a preliminary telephone call to the school concerned in order to arrange an interview with the principal, the person with the authority to grant me permission to do the research and who could provide answers and insight into my research (Gillham, 2000, p.63). This was followed by an interview with the librarian or the person in charge of the library space, and a visit to the library or library space in order to complete a checklist of the resources available. A follow up interview would be conducted if issues need to be clarified by either the principal or the librarian.

Wolcott (1994, p.10) identifies three main ways in which qualitative researchers gather data: experiencing (non-participant observations), enquiring (interviewing) and examining (studying materials or documents prepared by others). Interviews with the principals and librarians or teachers in charge of the library were useful as I needed to look closely at what they said and did in order to determine if they were doing what they were saying they were doing. Other sources of data such as field notes, memos and literature could also be used in my study as grounded theory embraces diversity in the use of data (Birks & Mills, 2011, p.66). Strübing observes that in grounded theory data is seen as the "representational material of a reality that is under construction. In the case of empirical research, this construction involves not only the actors in the field under scrutiny but also the researchers themselves.... Data, seen in this way, is not the unhewn material that a researcher starts out with, but rather the relation between the field, the research issues, and the researchers established in the course of the analytical process" (2007, p. 585).

Morse (2007) contends that three principles need to be kept in mind when the researcher begins collecting data:

1. Excellent research skills are essential for obtaining good data and this means, for instance, in conducting an interview the researcher knows when and how to move the process along to ensure this. This influences the quality of the interview as well as the number of people to be interviewed, as “the more targeted the content of the interviews, the better the data, the fewer interviews will be necessary, and the lower the number of participants recruited into the study” (p. 230).
2. It is necessary to locate “excellent” participants so to obtain pertinent data. They must have had experience in the phenomenon to be studied, and be willing both to give up time to participate and to share their understandings and insights.
3. Sampling techniques must be targeted and efficient as the analysis of too much data that is not relevant to the substantive area under study results in the researcher being swamped and unable to see the concepts that are emerging. Data needs to be carefully selected and must be “significant, pertinent, informative and exciting, and not mundane, obscure, irrelevant or only tangentially related to the topic” (p. 233).

Access to schools had to be carefully managed in conformity with ethical research practices. The participants’ permission to take part in the research needed to be sought. The purposes of the research were made clear to the interviewees as well as the condition of anonymity. This was accompanied by a letter from the GDE which gave permission for the research to be conducted in schools, as well as a letter from my supervisor.

4.4.1 Interviews

The issues and challenges faced by the school library and librarian were researched primarily through the semi-structured interview. This allowed me to “gain a detailed picture of the participant’s beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic” (Greeff, 2005, p. 296). Kvale, as cited by Greeff (2005, p. 287), defines qualitative interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the participant’s point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, [and] to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations”. In my study I was interested to find out how principals as well school librarians or teachers in charge of the library experienced the school library. Gillham (2000, p.65) argues that if interviews are well done they can be the “richest single source of data”. According to Flick (1998, p. 76),

Gillham (2000, p. 63) and Cohen et al. (2007, p. 349), the interviewee's real feelings and viewpoints are more likely to emerge in a relatively open interview situation.

Semi-structured interviews use open-ended questions which can be answered freely by the interviewee (Bailey, 1987, p. 190; Flick, 1998, p. 94; Gillham, 2000, p. 67). They also provide flexibility in the interview process and allow for clarification and probing for greater detail when issues arise (Flick, 1998; de Vos, 2005). The use of probes or follow-up questions – through repeating the question, or repeating the answer, or asking neutral questions such as, “What do you mean by that?” or making neutral comments such as “Tell me more about...” – enable the researcher to explore the respondent's answers more fully (Bailey, 1987, p.189). The use of prompts (What about...?) can help ensure that certain elements are covered in the interview and that all the interviews had “comparable coverage”, which was critical to the analysis stage of the research process (Gillham, 2000, p. 67).

My interview questions needed piloting before the actual interviews took place, so that time was not wasted in asking questions that were not clear, precise and relevant to the research goal. As Gillham (2000, p. 65) warns, the researcher needs to be clear about the key issues in the research investigation, as well as about what issues might best be answered in a face-to-face interview. Flick (1998, p. 95) and Gillham (2000, p. 67) stress the need to practise interviewing as a skill, and Greeff observes that the quality of the interview depends largely on the interviewer, who should pay attention to interviewing skills, phrasing of questions, and the participant's culture or frame of reference (2005, p. 287). Bailey (1987, p. 179) reminds us that the interview is a social interaction for a single purpose, and that though the interaction would be polite it would be ‘restrained, and formal’, and there is no way of knowing whether the interviewee is behaving as s/he normally would or not.

Gillham (2000, p.71) recommends transcribing the interview as soon as possible because memory will assist in hearing what is on the recorder. I found that the writing up of field notes and memos were particularly useful in this regard.

My semi-structured interviews were guided by my schedule of questions, rather than dictated by it, to allow the interviewee to introduce a subject I had not considered (Greeff, 2005, p. 296). The interviewees would be the school librarian or the person in charge of the library space, and the principal. The questions and answers would be recorded. As has already been

mentioned, in keeping with grounded theory, I scheduled further interviews with public librarians and a GDE official to build up my understanding of the situation.

Not everyone agrees that the interview is a reliable data source that results in sound research. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 350) refer to the problem of bias as identified by Kitwood in 1977, and essentially stemming from the fact that the interview is a social encounter involving interaction. Cicourel (1964, cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 350) has elaborated on the “problematic aspects” of the latter:

- Trust, social distance and the interviewer’s control would not be the same for each interview.
- The respondent becomes “uneasy and adopts avoidance tactics if the questioning is too deep”.
- Both the interviewer and the respondent might not give all the information and “hold back part of what it is in their power to state”.
- Even when a sincere attempt at communication was made by both participants the “meanings that are clear to one will be relatively opaque to the other”.
- It was very difficult to bring every aspect of the interview under “rational control”.

Phillips is cited by Bailey (1987, p. 177) as stating that “the assumption by many social scientists that they can engage in research without influencing what they obtain in the way of data is preposterous”. But Bailey sensibly doubts that researchers are unaware of this issue as they do their investigation.

Much of the literature offers advice in the form of lists of what to do and what to avoid in the interview process, and I extracted details from these to guide myself in the interview process. Appendix A is the guide I used for these interviews (the italicised questions represent the questions that were added after the first round of analysis was completed in line with grounded theory). Appendix B is the guide for the public librarians’ interviews and Appendix C guided the interview with the official from the GDE.

There were problems I encountered:

- Bailey refers to the problem of ‘denial of access’, when a targeted respondent refuses to be interviewed or claims to be too busy to be interviewed (Bailey, 1987, p. 187). This

happened on two occasions when I arranged to interview school principals. When I arrived for the interviews I was asked to interview the deputy instead as they were too busy to spare the time. On three other occasions, access to the principal was blocked by their assistants, who conveyed the reason for my proposed visit to their bosses. The latter then gave various reasons for not having the time to spare for an interview, though they were more than happy for me to interview their librarians.

- Greeff (2005, p. 287) draws attention to the importance of establishing a rapport with the interviewee in order to obtain information, while Bailey (1987, p. 176) notes that because an interview involves interaction between people, a respondent's answers can be affected by his/her "reaction to the interviewer's sex, race, social class, age, dress and physical appearance, or accent (p. 175)". Clearly, some of these factors were beyond my control; moreover, the fact that some respondents' home language was not English made it hard for them to express what they wanted to say.
- Gillham (2000, p.62) warns that interviewing is not something that can be hurried as the interviewer needs to get to know the setting and the people in order to establish "credibility and earn people's trust". This was a problem I encountered in my study, as all the principals limited the interview to half an hour at the most. In contrast, the teachers in charge of the library and librarians were happy to spend time with me answering questions and sometimes asking for advice about their libraries.
- As the interviewer I needed to make decisions during the course of the interview about the order in which to ask the questions if a question was already answered (as happened on quite a few occasions). I was then faced with the decision of whether to leave questions out of the interview (Flick, 1998, p.94).
- I also needed to make a decision about delving into a topic if the interviewee was digressing, or returning to my interview guide (Flick, 1998, p. 94; Greeff, 2005, p. 289). Further exploration may be time-wasting or it may uncover new material, or directions not previously thought about. Flick (1998, p. 94) advises that a "permanent mediation between the course of the interview and the interview guide is necessary".
- Interviewing is time consuming (Gillham, 2000, p. 61; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 349) as the process is not confined to the interview itself, but includes setting up the interview and transcribing and analysing the data (Greeff, 2005, p. 287). I found this to be particularly true in my study, as I was working full time and had to arrange my interviews during half-term breaks and holidays.

4.4.2 Document analysis

McCulloch (2011, p. 249) defines a document as a “record of an event or process” that can take many different forms, ranging from those created by individuals (examples are diaries, letters, photographs, autobiographies, electronic formats such as blogs), to those produced by organisations and local, national or international authorities (examples are policy documents, minutes of meetings, reports, memos, birth, marriage and death certificates, utility bills, licences and bank statements). Other instances are printed or visual sources (newspapers, magazines, television) and electronic documents (emails, electronic texts accessed through the internet). Birks and Mills (2011, p. 82) state that a variety of documents, published and unpublished, can serve as sources of data in a study based on grounded theory. In my research, documents enabled me as a qualitative researcher to investigate people, events and systems in depth (Strydom & Delport, 2005, p. 325), and proved to be an “efficient use of resources” (Green & Thorogood, 2009, p. 173).

While not all the sources mentioned above were relevant to my study, documents produced by schools, national and provincial government departments, newspaper reports and articles, blogs and email discussions about school libraries did become an “important and rich source of data for the researcher to explore” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 231). Such documents illuminated or substantiated issues that were being uncovered in my research. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 201) argue that documentary research is useful as it renders “more visible the phenomena under study”, and this was certainly true in my study.

Documents proved to be a good source of information about the rationale, purposes, procedures and decisions surrounding school libraries, particularly when they “[revealed] information not always directly intended in the document about things such as values and social attitudes” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 215). Documents produced by governments, organisations and research teams are easy to access and “lend themselves to secondary analysis” (McCulloch, 2011, p. 250).

Vella is cited by McCulloch (2011, p. 251) as stating that the press is an important primary documentary source as “it provides a day-to-day public record very soon after the event being studied”. This was particularly true in my study, as newspaper articles became an important source of data, often alerting me to reports or documents being generated by government on

various aspects of school libraries.

McCulloch's warning (2011, p. 251) that the printed press has limitations as a source of data because journalists wrote for "particular kinds of public taste and interest" and its coverage "by no means comprehensive", was one that I needed to heed every time I consulted newspapers as well as electronic sources such as blogs, which usually represented the views of an individual on the topic under discussion. Charmaz (2006, p. 39) stressed that where possible "we need to situate texts in their contexts... by providing description of the times, actors and issues"; we need to know where the data comes from, who participated in shaping it, as well as the author's intentions.

Critical analysis of documents as sources of data has to be undertaken every time a document is used in order to establish authenticity (De Vos et al., 2005; Green & Thorogood, 2009; McCulloch, 2011), authority (author, place and date of production) and reliability (McCulloch, 2011). Strydom & Delpont (2005, p. 315) advise that documents need to be checked to determine if they reflect reality. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 203) remind us that as documents are "social products located in specific contexts" they must be interrogated and interpreted rather than accepted.

According to McCulloch (2011, p. 253), reliability issues are centred in the bias or viewpoint of the author as well as "the access to the event and the interpretation of the observer". He cautions that there are particular problems regarding documents that record the approaches adopted by policy makers and administrators in education, as these documents may "privilege a top-down view of education". This was illustrated in my study in the mismatch between the views and arguments of the popular movement for school libraries as epitomised by Equal Education (see Section 2.9), and the actions and views of national government as discussed in Section 2.7. Green & Thorogood (2009, p. 192) point out another problem with documentary research, and this relates to the fact that few documents detail how they were produced: "for instance, in a policy process, documents may tell us little about the decision making that led to the policy, or the role of particular groups or individuals in its formation".

The study of documents, despite the need to check for validity and reliability, proved to be an accessible and efficient method in my study.

4.4.3 Observations

I observed the library in action using a checklist (see Table 5.1) based on my experiences as a school librarian and a developer of the library at my school. This covered the resources in the library as well as the basic functioning of the library. As a non-participant observer I intended to watch what people did, listen to what they said and ask clarifying questions (Gillham, 2000, pp. 45, 59). This would be done on a separate observation schedule with enough space to allow me to make field notes on what the librarian did in a typical day; who was using the library; what the learners were using the library for; how many learners/teachers were using the library; how the library was set up to support teaching and learning, and the role of the librarian. This qualitative research would allow me to investigate the “phenomenological complexity of participants’ worlds; here situations unfold, and connections, causes and correlations can be observed as they occur over time” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 397). Cohen et al. also contend that observation schedules need piloting in order to eliminate the overlapping of categories. Each category must be “mutually exclusive and must be comprehensive” (p. 399)

I was not able to achieve this goal due to two factors: the low/no fee paying schools’ libraries in Soweto were locked and were not in use for reasons which will be explained in Chapters Five and Six, and the librarians in the functioning ex-Model C schools were happy to be interviewed but reluctant to be observed.

In grounded theory it is important that the data gathered is reliable as it forms the basis for claiming that phenomena exist (Haig, 1995, p. 4). In order to ensure reliability, validity and rigour the following strategies suggested by Wilmot (2005) would be used: my position as a researcher would be made clear as well as my role in the research; there would be an audit trail linking substantive evidence through cross referencing, as well as more than one set of data allowing for triangulation and thus ensuring validity of the study. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 141) state that triangular techniques of data collection allow the researcher to “map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint” (see Section 4.7).

4.4.4 Field Notes

Field notes supplement observations as they describe people, events, issues, conversations and settings (Wiener, 2007, p. 301). Covan (2007, p. 68) notes that seminal grounded theorists such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) stressed the importance of field notes as they provided a context for who was saying what at a particular time. Strauss added that reflecting on field notes in memos would aid the researcher in their understanding of the data and discovering what was missing. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) as cited in Covan (2007, p. 61) refer to three types of field notes that could be used: observational (descriptions of what was being noticed in the field), methodological (comments on what was being done and still needed to be done) and theoretical (notes about theoretical ideas related to the social setting). Not all authors agree on the use of field notes for musings about theory and even Strauss himself (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) as cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p. 79) felt that while you could theorise within your field notes, this might cause confusion and would be better confined to a separate memo.

Field notes are a useful supplement to interviews. Greeff (2005, p. 291) observes that the interview process is as important as the content of the interview despite being more 'elusive' as it "involves reading between the lines of what the participant says, and noticing how the participant talks and behaves during the interview". Cohen et al. (2007, p. 349) endorse this, pointing out that the interview allowed for data collection from "multi-sensory channels.... verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard". This process might confirm, enrich, or sometimes even contradict the content of what the participant says". Greeff (2005, p. 299) advises the researcher to sit down immediately after the interview to record impressions of the interview in field notes which reflect what has been heard, seen, experienced and any thoughts on the interview process, as well as "emotions, preconceptions, expectations and prejudices".

4.4.5 Literature as data

Lempert (2007, p. 254) used literature when conducting research "as I collect, code, memo and write". This goes against the writings of seminal grounded theorists such as Glaser, Strauss and Corbin, who did not advocate the use of literature at the beginning of the research process (as explained in Section 3.2), and at various times "cautioned against the pitfall of selecting data for a category that has been established by another theory" and thereby risk

forcing data into pre-existing categories (Lempert, 2007, p. 254). Glaser (2008) is cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p. 81) as stating that published literature and existing theory “are data and should be treated the same as data from any other sources that has relevance to your developing theory”.

I was persuaded by Lempert’s “pragmatic” reasons for using the literature at all stages of the research process. These were (2007, p. 254):

- The need to understand the current theoretical conversation.
- The need to know that whether what seemed like a new idea to the researcher was not in fact a reflection of his or her ignorance.
- To know if there were gaps in theorising about the topic under investigation.
- Using comparisons from the literature would also illuminate the ways in which the data collected differs from the literature.

4.5 Data Analysis

My data was downloaded, categorised, labelled and analysed as soon as possible after collection, using the grounded theory methods discussed above in Section 4.3. Having no clear break between collecting and analysing data in the grounded theory approach meant that any ideas emerging from the data analysis would be tested against ongoing data collection. In this way my research was true to Glaser and Strauss’s vision of social research where “generating theory goes hand in hand with verifying it” (Bailey, 1987, p. 54).

4.6 Ethical issues

My research needed to show respect for persons, so all participants were given the chance to remain anonymous (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 57). I conformed to the principle that informed consent by the participants involved in my research was vital (de Vos et al. 2005, p. 69) as “it is the principle that seeks to ensure that all human subjects retain autonomy and the ability to judge for themselves what risks are worth taking for the purpose of furthering scientific knowledge” (Gay et al. 2006, p. 411). All participants were informed about the nature of the research in writing and their approval was solicited. They were assured that their privacy and confidentiality would be protected. Participants would not be harmed in any way nor would

they be deceived about the nature of the research (de Vos et al. 2005, p. 69; Cohen et al., 2007, p. 66). I would also share the findings with the school. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 57) recommends that participants be given a copy of the final report. At all times in the research process I heeded Neuman's advice that "ethics begin and end with you, the researcher. A researcher's moral code is the best defence against unethical behaviour" (2006, p. 130).

4.7 Reliability and validity

Birks & Mills (2011, p.33) stress the need for the researcher to ensure that he or she "employs measures to ensure quality through the entire process" in order to be able to "demonstrate rigour in the conduct of the research". Trustworthiness would depend on several factors, such as:

1. Researcher expertise: Although I have no experience with scholarly research I am able to access resources as well as plan and manage a project. These are generic skills that I used in my work and these assisted me in the process of doing this research.
2. Methodological congruence: According to Birks & Mills (2011, p. 36) this occurs when there is concord among the researcher's personal philosophical position, the stated aims of the research and the methodological approach the researcher uses to achieve those aims. In order to achieve this I needed to ensure that those most likely to benefit from my research trusted me as well as the outcomes of the study. At all times I would need to be honest about my research process, the limitations of my research and the actual outcomes. I needed to be able to state whether my final product was a rich description of primary school libraries or I had generated theory pertaining to the phenomena under study.
3. Procedural precision: Glaser in 2004 (cited by Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 37) stressed that the generation of theory must be the result of careful attention to the rigorous application of grounded theory methods if the research was to be judged as a quality product. This applied to all the stages of data collection as well as data analysis. Here Birks & Mills (2011, p. 38) argue that the use of memos at all stages of the research process with regard to processes and outcomes would "ensure procedural precision" through providing an audit trail where decisions made during the research process are recorded. Memos would also facilitate the management of data and resources and allow me to demonstrate procedural logic through the correct application of grounded theory methods. Memos are a means of recording all planned activities, unforeseen

circumstances and changes in direction, as well as the rationale for decisions made. They are a means to “interrogate the data with the aim of developing abstract concepts necessary for the construction of theory” (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 40).

In order to achieve triangulation to validate my findings in the interviews I used documents, observations (Table 5.1, observations at a conference, debates and a showcase of school libraries already mentioned in Section 4.2.), field notes, memos, as well as literature as data (see also Section 4.3.3).

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has described in detail the methodology I used in my study. It has explained grounded theory methodology and identified the various ways in which data was generated and analysed.

Chapter Five

Data analysis and interpretation: resourcing the library

5.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly outlines my research process and presents the first category which is the result of the data analysis that has been guided by the grounded theory methodological approach used in the study.

For various reasons it was not possible to interview all the principals or the persons in charge of the library of all the schools. On two occasions (schools B and D), I had made an appointment with the principal only to arrive and be asked to interview the deputy as the principal was too busy to spare the time. The principal of school E was not at school the day I visited and the principals of school F, H and J proved to be difficult to access as I was blocked by their secretaries who put me in touch with the person in charge of the library once the purpose of my visit was clarified. At school B and C there was no person in charge of the library and school D's deputy was head of the committee in charge of the library, the only school which had a committee in charge of the library.

The issue of security (of technology) was not included in my initial interview questions but this concern was raised by the interviewees during the first round of interviews. In keeping with the tenets of grounded theory as outlined in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.4, this aspect was incorporated into the other interviews to investigate whether this was an isolated problem.

After the first round of data analysis it became clear that I needed to investigate the role the local library played in supplementing or supporting the school library in order to verify what my data analysis revealed. This was in line with the theoretical sampling (see Section 4.3.4). I visited and interviewed the librarians at four local libraries; two in Soweto and two in Johannesburg. In Soweto, the local library close to school A and B had recently been shut in order to undergo major renovations. I gleaned from the person in charge of the site that this was necessary in order to cope with the numbers of children using the library in the afternoons. I was able to interview the librarians at a large local library in the next district of Soweto. In Johannesburg I visited the local libraries close to schools G and J.

Once I had concluded all the interviews and had done a further data analysis I felt that an interview with a well-placed official in the Gauteng Department would help broaden my understanding of the issues and challenges facing school libraries and so strengthen my research. This was in line with theoretical sampling as discussed in Section 4.3.6 and the analysis of data gleaned from the interviews. This interview at the end of my data collection and analysis allowed me to verify many of the factors that I had observed and gathered from the interviews. In keeping with grounded theory I also used literature as a source of data as well as documents, memos and field notes to strengthen my understanding of what I was observing and hearing.

My data analysis used the process of constant comparative analysis as discussed in Section 4.3.5 to uncover important ‘incidents’ or concepts in the initial coding of my information (see Section 4.3.1). Using axial coding as outlined in Section 4.3.7, I connected these concepts to build three categories. These were resourcing the library, operating the library and the role of the library. The incidents or concepts which informed these categories are listed under each category. These categories are analysed in separate chapters.

The first category showed how the school libraries were resourced in terms of what was in the library (material resources) as well as how the library was funded (financial resources) and staffed (human resources). These are discussed below.

5.2 Material Resources

The difference in the availability of material resources in the schools shown in Table 5.1 is derived from the checklist I used when I visited each school library. It is clear from Table 5.1 that fee paying schools are at an advantage when it comes to resources (see also Table 5.3).

Table 5.1 Overview of library resources in all the schools visited

SCHOOL:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Low/no fee paying Soweto schools					Fee paying ex-Model C Johannesburg schools				
Spaces						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Reading area	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Study area						Y	Y	Y		Y
Teaching area		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Displays						Y	Y		Y	Y
Resources										
Computers	1					1	1	1	1	1
Printer						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Photocopier		Y				Y		Y		
Fiction	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Non-Fiction	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Textbooks	Y	Y	Y		Y					
Teacher resources		Y				Y	Y	Y		Y
Newspapers							Y		Y	
Magazines					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Journals							Y			
DVD player						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Video player						Y		Y	Y	Y
Television							Y	Y	Y	Y
Games						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Furniture										
Desks	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Comfortable chairs					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Shelving	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cupboards		Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Signage	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Posters		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
White Boards/Smart Boards		Y								Y
Other							Y	Y	Y	Y
Arrangement of Resources										
Library user information	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shelving system – use of Dewey						Y		Y	Y	Y
OPAC						Y	Y		Y	Y
Library Software programme						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

5.2.1 Resources are limited to books or textbooks

As can be seen from Table 5.1 the variety of resources available to children was limited to books in the low/no fee paying schools of Soweto. Only school E had a limited selection of magazines for the children to read. One school did have two globes of the world (school A)

and school B did have posters and some unopened resources which contained visual material aids from the Department.

The old library which was now a classroom in school C and the library in school E contained mainly textbooks. As the teacher in charge of school E pointed out ‘the thing is that most of the books that you can see are not library books, they are textbooks.’

In contrast, one fee paying ex-Model C school (H) had the most diverse and comprehensive selection of resources of all the schools with the shelves full of teacher reference, fiction and non-fiction for the children, CDs, videos, DVDs, puzzles, about 5000 posters as well as magazines such as National Geographic Kids. In addition there was a large reference section with encyclopaedias and dictionaries. This school library with its diverse collection was the most representative of the ideal resources to be found in a library described in the international literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.4).

5.2.2 Donated resources

All low/no fee paying schools in Soweto had books donated to them. Three schools (C, D and E) relied solely on donations as their source of books and saw no problem with this fact. The deputy at one school made the point that the school relied on ‘government to give us almost everything because we live in a poor area.’ At one of these schools, the teacher in charge showed me a large collection of brand new reference books as well as fiction books written in the mother tongue of the children that had been recently donated to them from a literacy project.

Donated resources were however a problem for some of the schools. As the principal of school A and the deputy of School B explained, most books were donated by people who had no use for them, but because their libraries had so few books they had no choice but to use them. The problem for both the principal and the teacher in charge of the library of school A and the deputy of school B was that many of these books were not relevant to their children as they were Eurocentric or American. Furthermore most of the donated books were old, ‘1960s books’ according to the deputy of school B, and as a result they did not relate to today’s child. The children read them because they had no choice and it was the teacher in charge of

the library of school A's opinion it could be a reason why the children did not like reading.

One should mention that although these schools did not have any choice in the books that were donated to them they at least had books for their children. Old books can still be a source of reading. Eurocentric or American books broaden horizons by introducing children to a world beyond their own country as well as a time period outside of their experience and should be valued for these reasons alone.

Of the fee paying ex-Model C schools, only one school (J) relied on donations. The librarian said that the library had been closed for a number of years until the principal sought and received corporate sponsorship to reopen the library and pay for a librarian. She relied on donations of books or donations of money for books. The difference was that she had a far greater say in the books that were taken into her library because of the cash donations. She described how she received a donation when a well known radio personality 'had spoken about it [her library] on air, so just this week I got a phone call from someone who is involved in a bridge [club], and they have charities and they chose us as their charity and we are getting R1 500.00 from there so we can go and buy a few books again.'

5.2.3 Old resources

Old, unwanted books were a feature of most of the schools, but the fee paying schools (except for school J) in Johannesburg had big enough budgets to weed the books and replace them with new books. This has been described in Section 5.3. The librarian at one of these schools (H) described this process, 'I cull [weed], I buy in new books because when I inherited here (sic) I was still sitting with books from 1961, and slowly as I buy in and I need the shelf space I say 'time for you (book) to go, time for you to go' except for the classics. There I try and replace them with a classic.' The principal of school G explained that they had spent a lot of money on the library as 'it was quite an old library with old books. We got rid of the old books and brought in new books and ..., we just made it more attractive so that kids want to go in and read.' The librarian at school J described the challenge of reopening a library that had not been in use for a while; 'we have had ancient books here and the library was unused, it was full of dust,' nothing was on computer and how she removed old books from the 1950s and the 1960s as the children did not relate to them. From my experience I am aware that children do judge books by their covers and it is very difficult to convince a child

to read a book with an old-fashioned cover.

In contrast low/no fee paying schools in Soweto had so few books they did not have the luxury of throwing out the old stock and replacing them with new resources. Table 5.2 illustrates my observation of the books in these low/no fee paying schools' libraries.

Table 5.2 Book resources

Books	Soweto Schools	Comments
Fiction	A, B, E	A –old books with labels such as labelling 'fairy tales'; B – mainly old books, E – a very small selection of old and new books
Non-Fiction	A, B, E	A – encyclopaedias separated from some non-fiction; B – old books; E – some very new and some old books, with more non-fiction books when compared to the fiction selection
Textbooks	A, B, C, E	B – some of these were new, C – old textbooks still in the shelves in the old library, E – there were many new textbooks in the library in comparison to the other schools

The deputy of school B expressed the need for new books, which related to the work being done in lessons that 'speak about the new democracy' for example. The fact that some schools had library collections dating back to the 1960s could be problematic particularly if the children require information on developments or discoveries that have occurred after this period. This would explain some of the Soweto schools' reliance on public libraries described in Section 7.4 despite the fact that they did have school libraries.

5.2.4 Limited number of books and unsuitable books

Most of the fee paying ex-Model C schools in Johannesburg had sufficient books for their children when compared to the low/no fee paying schools. The limited number of books was a problem for these libraries as the principal of one of the Soweto schools (A) explained, 'if a child is good at reading he will read all the books in a very short time and then will have nothing to read.'

The deputies of two Soweto schools (B and D) pointed out that some of the books donated by the education department were unsuitable for their learners and suggested that the books were not age appropriate with words that were too difficult and not in the mother tongue of the

children. The fact that the children could not relate to these books has already been highlighted in Section 5.2.1.

The librarian at one of the Johannesburg schools (I) did not have a problem with this and dealt with the issue in a different way. She made the point that when she chose books, she sometimes did choose a book that was far too difficult for the age group, but it did not ‘mean to say that they can’t leave, after handing the book back, with two or three facts even if their parents are looking at the pictures and giving them the sub title underneath.’ In my view this comment showed her understanding of the need to use all the resources that were available to the children at their level.

5.2.5 Securing items such as computers and televisions is a problem

The issue of security was only brought to my attention during my second interview when the deputy of school B highlighted the theft of computers and televisions as a problem at his school. Their computers had been stolen as well as their plasma television, and in a subsequent burglary, their new server and new computer monitors. Thereafter I included a question on security in the interviews with the remaining schools to determine if this was also a problem for them (see Appendix A). The principal of school C reported that their computers had been stolen three times and the teacher in charge of the library in school E said that their computers and television had been stolen.

It appears that this problem was not confined to low/no fee paying schools. Two of the fee paying ex-Model C Johannesburg schools (school G had 3 computers stolen from the staffroom and school H had been broken into four times with the loss of all their computers on one of the occasions) had problems with theft but were better able to combat the problem by paying for extra security. As the principal of one of these school commented, ‘and so again it is a matter of expenses and we are very lucky, we do have an alarm system, we are connected to ADT [and] our men [security] are very good about making sure that everything is locked and secure.’ Guards at the gates, burglar bars and alarms were all evident at these ex-Model C schools and could be the reason why schools F and J had not had a problem.

In contrast, the deputy of school B showed me their attempts to secure the computers with a

heavy duty door to the room and cages surrounding the computers and the television as well as an alarm. He explained that the school relied on the community to keep an eye on the school and this strategy was not particularly successful. It is disappointing to note that the community is not engaged in ensuring the safety and security of these schools particularly as many of its members would have or have had children at these schools.

Two reports by the Gauteng Department of Finance and the Education ad hoc committee, confirm that security is a concern in schools and outline the scale of the problem in Gauteng province (Mtshali & Ndaba, 2001, p. 6). The R3 billion *Gauteng Online* project has spent an additional R18 million to replace 6763 items that have been stolen from computer labs at schools. Of a total of 1184 schools sampled, 200 computer labs were not being used due to the theft of all their computer equipment.

The scale of theft reported in Gauteng schools and the lack of involvement by the community in helping secure the equipment is not acceptable as the children themselves are denied access to technology which is regarded as a vital tool to explore and use information as described in Section 3.3.5.

5.2.6 Traditional elements of a library

The challenge is to create a functional library where all the traditional elements of a library are in place. In the low/no fee paying schools there was no accessioning of books. If a system existed, it tended to be very rudimentary as the teacher in charge of school E explained, 'we are not as professional as the city libraries; I choose one learner, like yesterday, one who writes the name of the book and the person who takes it.' Another school (D) also recorded all transactions in the same manner. Only one of the Soweto schools (A) had a card for each child on which all loans were recorded. Although this school had an issue desk with a computer it was not in use as there was no library software programme installed.

In contrast, all the fee paying schools (see Table 5.1.) had a computer at the issue desk with a library software programme. All the books were accessioned and issued through the computer to the children, whose names were also on the computer. The librarian at school J still needed to get all her books onto the computer system but this was understandable as the library had recently reopened (mid 2010) after being shut for many years. The librarian at

school F described the problem of inheriting a library from someone who was not computer literate, ‘the way she put in the books (on the computer) was to put in the title in *Libwin*. But she did not know that you had to go to a folder to put in the author and the subject. So in the end there were no author or subject lists.’ This library had a lot of videos that were not yet on the system.

The low/no fee paying Soweto schools also did not have a system for shelving resources bar a rudimentary classification of books into textbooks, encyclopaedias, non-fiction and fiction. There was no classification of non-fiction books according to the Dewey System. Ex-Model C schools differed in that all the books were shelved according to the Dewey Decimal System (see Section 6.2.5), although in school G, where there was no librarian in place, new books were shelved by author under both fiction and non-fiction.

Hart (2006, p. 55) makes reference to the historically advantaged libraries which are “better equipped with retrieval tools”. This was true in my study of the ex-Model C schools with the exception of school H where the person in charge of the library did not believe that children were capable of using these tools despite having them available, and school G which did not use them, probably as a result of the person running the library not understanding the system.

5.2.7 The use of technology

Not one of the libraries I visited had computers that enabled children to access the internet for research purposes. School B had a computer lab some distance away from the library and the deputy explained that they did not normally use the library for research. Instead they used the computer room which was equipped with *Gauteng Online*. This was often referred to as ‘Gauteng Offline’ referring to problems with the server, which made it difficult for the children to access information through the internet. Their solution was to open the library and get the information from the one encyclopaedia that was relevant to the task.

One of the Johannesburg schools (G) had two fairly new computer labs, *Gauteng Online* as well as a computer room sponsored by company that had paid for everything including the computers and the licensing. These computer labs were right next to the library and were

used for both computer skills and for research purposes.

The librarian at one of the ex-Model C Johannesburg schools described how the library had been supplied with computers for research purposes but they had ended up in the secretary's office as they were needed there. She expressed the wish to use technology more but was hampered by the lack of access to computers for the children.

The librarian at another ex-Model C school stated that there was one computer for Gauteng Online and that was in the principal's office but she had Encarta installed on her computer which also could be used to access Wikipedia if necessary. She pointed out that the library had World Book (Encyclopaedias) and she felt that you could find what you needed in World Book or Encarta (on her computer) and photocopy. She questioned the purpose of surfing 'the net for three hours to find one item.' It would appear it was important to this librarian that children access information easily and that there was no attempt to teach the children the process of learning to find the information themselves (see also Section 7.2.2). The librarian did not understand her role in the teaching of information skills as described in the literature in Chapter three (3.4.4). This is the dilemma of using a volunteer who is not trained or equipped to be a school librarian.

The librarian at school F was the only person in charge of the library who made reference to the need to keep up with technology observing that it was lacking in her lessons saying, 'I must do a lot more technology wise.' The other interviewees did not regard ICT as being an integral part of the functioning of the library. This demonstrates a lack of awareness of the importance of the ability to search for information possibly due to ignorance of the skills required for the 21st Century described in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.5).

Gauteng Online was designed to introduce computer literacy in the schools by providing fully equipped computers connected to the internet. Two overview reports by Gauteng provincial departments (Finance and Education) found that the majority of pupils reported that they were not being taught computer literacy as part of the curriculum (Mtshali & Ndaba, 2011, p. 6; Mtshali, 2011a, p. 6). Mtshali (2011a, p. 6) found that a large percentage (43%) of the computers were not working and those that were functional were used by the children to download music and play computer games. All the low/no fee paying schools had computer labs but three had been rendered useless through theft as described in Section 5.2.5. One

Soweto school (B) had reported ongoing problems with theft and the impact it had on the children's access to computers. The continued theft of computers compounds the problem and is illustrated by two other examples. At Ikakeng Primary no computer literacy lessons had taken place since 2009 when all their computers were stolen (Mtshali, 2011a, p. 6). Morris Isaacson High School also had to cancel all their lessons after their computers were stolen in 2010 (Khanyile, 2011, p. 7).

A further cause for concern for the deputy of school B was the fact that the teachers themselves were not computer literate. Mtshali writes (2011b, p. 6) that the report tabled by the Education ad hoc committee in the Gauteng Legislature in March 2011, noted that; "It appears that there are a limited number of teachers offering computer lesson in those schools. However, none of these educators are trained specifically to teach computer literacy".

The other worrying aspect is the fact that the 21st Century skills, as discussed in the literature review and section 2.3, require children to acquire the skills needed to be more than computer literate as outlined in the stated purpose of *Gauteng Online*. Learners are expected to be able to use technology effectively and critically. Zinn's study (2006, p. 30) indicates that this is not a problem that is only confined to Gauteng. Children should be able to use computers for information literacy and to generate new knowledge and computers should be integrated across the curriculum. In her study, selected high schools in the Western Cape "still place a premium on computer literacy classes and were thus not using computers to generate new knowledge or truly integrate computers across the curriculum" and has serious doubts "whether the concept (of) computer integration across the curriculum was understood" (p.3 1). Zinn's conclusions (p. 33) are not encouraging for the school library profession or for the future development of 21st Century skills. "Driving an ICT programme is therefore more attractive than focussing on libraries (meaning focussing on books) and the low level of ICT integration and the lack of library programmes meant that a convergence of the two was not possible in the near future".

Zinn (2006, p. 33) points out, "ICT skills are seen as important in our technologically-driven working environments". It was clear that the primary schools in my study were not in a position to embrace ICT as suggested in the literature in Section 3.3.5. They did not have the required information and communication technologies in their school libraries. In my view the lack of ICT in school libraries compromises government's stated aim of providing a

quality education for all (see Section 2.2).

5.3 Library Budgets

As discussed earlier (see Section 2.5) the amount of money available to be spent on library resources represents a small percentage of the LTSM. The budget for library materials is 10% in Gauteng. This is a challenge for low/no fee paying schools. As the principal of one of the Soweto schools (A) reported, 10% was a very small percentage of the budget, which translated into a very small amount of money to buy books ‘and books are very expensive so it may allow us to buy just a few books [and] in a school such as ours when we have got a lot of children buying some books does not help.’

The deputy of school D admitted that the allocated budget did not allow the school to choose many books, and that some of the library material budget was used to buy stationery for the learners stating that ‘there should not be a shortage of stationery or textbooks; they come first and then we choose the library books. That is why we don’t have the best resources for the library.’

On the whole, with the exception of school J, the fee paying ex-Model C schools had generous budgets (on average R20 000.00) to spend on resources and salaries for librarians. Only one school (G) did not have a librarian. As the principal of one of these schools explained, ‘if I go to Exclusives Books sales and I see something that might be fun or informative I buy them. She [the librarian] does most of it, the bulk of it all but I do help. If I see a book that might help I am fortunate as there is money enough available to buy it, we are very fortunate... and also we are very fortunate to have a lady to work in the library. Most school libraries are part time, if they can do it teachers run it as extra murals but I understand many schools run it part time as there is no money... our governing body pays our librarian.’

Funding the library is a real problem for the low/no fee paying schools in Soweto and in some cases, where the fees are low, in the ex-Model C schools. At the debate I attended in Johannesburg, *School Libraries in South Africa: International Debate* (2011, June 20), Busi Dlamini (Head of the Multimedia Unit of the GDE), stated that government authorities are concerned about expenses. In her words, ‘we have not been able to convince them otherwise.’ Her view was confirmed by my contact in the GDE who described how the DBE was

investigating solutions to staffing libraries. These involved paying a stipend to students or a part time person to take care of the library. In her view, 'it is to the disadvantage to the children that they do not have librarians; but the department wants cheap labour for the libraries, cheap and untrained labour because they are talking about interns, students and volunteers... anything that is not going to cost money. They are terrified of the cost.' The unions had put a stop to this suggestion but a solution needs to be found as it is better to have the library open and accessible to the children even if the person in charge is not a trained professional.

5.4.1 Staffing the school library

The trends regarding staffing the school library are illustrated by Table 5.3. As can be seen from the table all of the low/no fee paying schools had a full time teacher in charge of the library. According to Dlamini and Brown (2010) this is a problem as these teachers have no relevant training or experience with school libraries. One of the teachers in charge of the library spent a considerable time at the end of her interview asking about library systems and for advice as she felt that at a loss as to how to run the library.

Three out of the five fee paying ex-Model C schools had librarians; only one school employed a librarian, who used to be a teacher, on a part time basis (school I) and one school relied on a teacher to work in the library as part of her duties (school G). One of the ex-Model C schools had a librarian who had been helping out in the library as a parent and was co-opted to run the library by the principal when the librarian left the school.

The principals of school A and I, and the deputy of school B pointed out that there were no posts for a school librarian.. As the principal of school A stated, 'We never had a library post, even before [1994]. At our school I have never had a librarian.' The lack of posts for school librarians is an obstacle for those schools wishing to have libraries. My contact at the GDE concurred with this view by stating; 'as you probably know our biggest challenge is that there isn't a post for a teacher librarian and without that you are dependent once again on the goodwill of the principal, the enthusiasm of an individual teacher and the goodwill of the school governing body... and something wonderful can be happening at a school while those things are in place, and when things change it falls flat.' This issue is explored further in Section 7.7.

Table 5.3 Person in charge of the library

General Properties	Possible dimensions		
Person in charge (Working hours)	Teacher in charge	Volunteer/Other	Librarian or dedicated person on a full time basis (Qualifications)
School A	Full time teacher	Volunteer - Two days a week	
School B			Had a librarian last year
School C	Deputy Head in charge of LTSM		
School D	Committee Full time teachers		
School E	Full time teacher		
School F			Full time qualified librarian
School G	Full time teacher		
School H			Full time librarian
School I		Includes a small home language library for indigenous languages manned by 2 ladies twice a week	Part time librarian
School J			Full time qualified librarian

My source at the GDE gave an illustration of the problem of not having a mandatory librarian post in schools. The librarian at a particular school started as a cleaner with Grade 10. Her principal, who was a teacher librarian, identified her potential and asked her if she would take responsibility for the library. She had since completed her matric and had also obtained her diploma in librarianship. The problem was, ‘we are going to lose her because there is no post for her. She is still in the cleaner’s post in the school...she is getting the salary of a cleaner’ (while doing the work of the librarian).

5.4.2 Funding for librarians

The low/no fee paying schools in Soweto did not have the funds to pay someone to run the library (see Section 5.2.4). School B was an exception as they had employed someone as an assistant for the Grade 4s who could take the children to the library. As the deputy explained, ‘because of funds we had to say ... ‘thank you’ and as soon as we get other funds we will bring her back.’ From Table 5.3 it is clear that all of these schools had to rely on their teachers to run the library in their spare time. This was problematic however as the deputy of

school B explained that the teachers did not have free periods and as a result they had very little time to spend in the library. School A solved this problem to a limited extent by having a volunteer open the library on two days a week for the older grades. It meant however that not all of the children benefited from the hard work put into establishing a library in the first place.

One of the Soweto schools (D) tried to solve the problem creatively with a library committee made up of an educator from each grade. As the deputy explained their job was ‘to make sure that learners go to the library, to follow the timetable to go there on certain days, [and] make sure that the library is clean and the books are available when someone takes a book and returns it to the library.’

School G was the only ex-Model C school that had a teacher in charge of the library (See Table 5.3). She oversaw the library but the actual lessons were taken by another teacher who had ‘media’ periods with the younger grades each week. The librarians of schools F, H and I were paid by the School Governing Body who raised the money through school fees as described in Section 5.3. The librarian at school J was paid by a company who donated the money.

Of all the schools, only two (F and J) had qualified librarians manning their libraries (See Table 5.3). The librarian of school F was turning 63 in 2011 and was about to retire from her post. This highlighted one of the challenges facing school libraries in the literature review in Section 3.4.7 which was the ageing profile of the school library professionals

School I also had a small library funded by a Not for Gain Organisation (NGO). As the librarian explained, ‘children of the black languages have a special little library for them and there are two ladies that come here that can each speak three black languages themselves. They come twice a week for the children in Grade 2 and Grade 3. They do Home Language. What they do is they get the information from our teachers, what the theme is and then they teach them in their language the theme words, the spellings that they are learning in English.’

5.4.3 Training opportunities for library staff

Two of the people interviewed referred to the lack of training facilities for school librarians in Gauteng. This is discussed in the literature review in Section 3.3.8. The principal of school G stated, 'I don't think there is any training taking place at the moment. There is nothing in Gauteng, even for those doing their PGCE there is no choice.' The librarian of school J, a qualified teacher who had a FDE in Educational Media, mentioned that her training college had closed down. The GDE official described this as 'a vicious circle - because there are no posts there is no demand for the qualification; because there is no demand, the majority of universities have closed them down. There are only two universities that are dealing with a school library qualification that is KZN University and the Western Cape; those are the only two, none in Gauteng.'

It was interesting to note that only one school librarian (J) relied on children to help in the library by acting as library monitors. As the library had only recently re-opened the librarian relied heavily on their help. The librarian ran a dual system and made use of children to assist her as she explained; 'me and my wonderful assistants (her Grade 7 library monitors) have done all of this... They were waiting for me; they were begging me. I was reluctant to open it because I have only one shelf, one wall that I have got on the computer and I wanted first to get all the books on the computer but I saw that this is going to take me forever. They were nagging me daily, begging me, so I just gave in. Now I have got two systems; the card and the computer.' The librarian explained, 'I have trained some Media monitors. I can't cope without them really. I have got about 16 Grade 7s and I am training some Grade 6 children because I will have no one at the beginning of next year. But they are so keen and they just love it. They run here when it is break, some of them don't even eat their lunch they are so keen. They have helped me to put the barcodes on and paste the labels [on the spine] and so on.' Older children can be a useful resource in helping to run the library and making the library accessible to more children at the school.

The consequence of having no one to staff the library, as was the case in the Soweto schools, is that the school library has a limited role to play in the life of the school. The effort to create the library in the first place is negated by the fact that the children do not have easy access to the library in the low/no fee paying schools. My visits to the low/no fee paying schools revealed a pattern of a locked library (see Table 6.1) reliant on teachers to man the libraries as

the teacher in charge of the library was busy teaching.

In contrast, fee paying ex-Model C school G had timetabled a library period and although the library was locked during the day, there was a teacher who took the periods and opened up the library for the younger children when she was teaching those periods. The library was also open during breaks and after school which meant that it was more accessible to the older children in the school.

School D's solution to the problem of staffing a library with no funds to pay for a librarian was the formation of a library committee with a teacher representative from each grade who would ensure that the library was being used by the other teachers in the grade. The library was in a state of transition and it was not clear how the model was working.

The lack of capacity of the library support division (described in Section 2.4 and Section 2.7.3) of the GDE compounded the problem. Each library facilitator simply had too many schools to monitor and support. My contact explained that each facilitator had roughly 200 schools in each district under their jurisdiction which meant that the number of visits to each school were few and far between as 'they have to follow up; it doesn't help that they just visit the schools.'

The consequences of a lack of library posts was most visible in the low/no fee paying schools and had a direct effect on the operation of the library as a facility (see also Chapter Seven). As outlined in Table 5.1 and Section 5.2.6 there was no easy way to issue and return books, no computers with library software, no user information with the exception of school A. There were no posters showing children how books were classified according to the Dewey Decimal System. Classification of sources was confined to the basic divisions of fiction, non-fiction, teacher resources and encyclopaedias. This meant that the children were not empowered to find information on their own as they could not find out for themselves what sources they could access in the library.

5.5 Synthesis and Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the material, financial and human resourcing of ten school libraries. The difference in resources, both physical and human, between the

Johannesburg ex-Model C schools and the Soweto schools was the key emergent issue of this chapter. These findings confirm the parlous state of school libraries in South Africa as outlined in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) and also reflect the impact of apartheid on the range of resources available in schools in South Africa (Section 2.5).

The difference between the trends in resources, which are described in the literature, and the reality of school libraries in South Africa is brought to light. The school libraries in my study did not have multifunctional library spaces as described in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.3) and the Soweto schools in particular did not have diverse and attractive library collections which are listed as a desirable feature in the literature (Section 3.3.4). The ongoing problems with security and the lack of funding as well as space have also meant that the use of ICT is limited to a few schools where the librarian has access to the internet. This does not reflect the embracing of ICT as described in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.5).

The next chapter discusses the second category that emerged in the data analysis, namely operating the library.

Chapter Six

Data analysis and interpretation: operating the library.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the second category of my analysis of data, namely operating the library. It begins with access to the library, the size of the library space and the form that this space takes. I also outline the contact the children have with the Dewey Decimal system.

6.2 Operating the library

In discussing the operation of a library, this study sought to ascertain how accessible the library was to the children, what purpose they used the space for and what form that space took. It also examines whether the children had access to retrieval tools in the library.

6.2.1 Accessibility

Table 6.1 illustrates how accessible the library is for the children at each school.

The lack of a library post in schools (discussed in Section 5.2.9 and Section 2.5) had repercussions with regard to how easily and regularly the library could be used. In low/no fee paying schools in Soweto, which could not afford a librarian, access to the library was restricted. School E was the only school that kept the library open but it was not used during breaks or after school as there was no one to supervise the library. The library of school B was locked and the teacher needed to fetch a key in order to gain access to the library. Because school C was using the library as a classroom the few books left on the shelves were not accessible to anyone as was the case with the library at school D which was in the process of being moved to another classroom.

Only school A was able to open their library for two of the grades twice a week. This was due to a volunteer offering her services. School A's problem was the size of the school (900 pupils) as this meant that there was only enough time for two of the older grades to use the library on the two days it was staffed. As the principal explained, 'the rest hardly use the

library because there is no one to help them.’

Table 6.1 Access to the library

General properties	Possible dimensions		
	Locked or no access	Limited access	Full access
School A	Teacher needs to get a key and bring class during her/his lessons for the younger grades	Open Tues and Wed for 2 of the older grades to take out books	
School B	Teacher needs to get a key and bring class during her/his lessons		
School C	Old library no longer used as it is now classroom		
School D	Old library no longer used as it is now classroom. New library space planned in another classroom		
School E			Open but requires teacher supervision. Teacher brings class during his/her lessons
School F			Full access including after school on a Tuesday and a Wednesday
School G		Locked except for library lessons. Open after school until 3pm and break time	
School H			Full access including after school till 3pm every day except Fridays
School I		NGO Home language library used by the Grade 2 and 3s twice a week	Access from 9:00 am till 1:30pm
School J			Full access

In contrast, as can be seen from Table 6.1, the libraries of the fee paying ex-Model C schools with librarians were open during and after school with the exception of two schools (G and I). The impact of having no full time librarian was felt by School G which used a teacher. This meant that the library was locked during teaching hours except for the library periods for Grades R to 3. It was however open during break time and after school for everyone and this meant that the older grades did have access to the library. The fact that one school (I) had a part time librarian also resulted in restricted access as the library was not open before 09h00 and after 13h30 while the NGO home language library was open twice a week when the two ladies who ran this library were on duty.

With the exception of school A from the low/no fee paying schools, only ex-Model C schools had dedicated time for the children to spend in the library (see Section 5.2.9). Library periods were restricted to half an hour. School J had double periods for all the children, which meant that there was time to do information skills as well as promote reading and allow children to take out books. One school (H) had allocated two periods for the library but this was restricted to two grades.

The time allocated to library periods was so restricted that it was difficult to achieve much with the children. The librarian at one school explained that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) ‘dictated how much time you have to put into literacy and numeracy and life skills, and how much time you have for music and all that sort of thing. So what is left at the end of the day is half an hour per class to come to the library and that is it...it works out to a minute per child if you break it down.’ She dealt with this by streamlining an elaborate system that allowed her to return and issue books and let the children record the books with their Dewey numbers in the allocated time.

Four of the schools (F, G, H and J) opened the library after school. The principal of school G said that this was an extra-mural in the afternoons where children could either do their homework which was monitored, or they could take out a book or play games such as chess. This was the opportunity for the older children who did not have library periods to use the library. The same policy applied to the school which did not have library periods for all the children.

It is obvious that having no person dedicated to running the library described in Chapter Five (Section 5.4.1) creates an access problem for the children. It seems to negate all the efforts these schools have put into creating a library in the first place. Opening the library after school for an hour or two would enable children to have access to the library and its resources. None of the Soweto schools opened the library after school for the children. It is to the detriment of the children in these schools that they did not have the option of using the library after school and had to rely on the public library to meet their needs as is discussed later in Chapter Seven (Section 7.4). They were in a similar situation to the schools that did not have libraries whose children also relied on public libraries.

6.2.2 Size of the library space

Not all the libraries were the same size. This was the result of not having a purpose-built library. As can be seen from Table 6.2 the low/no fee paying schools and one school (I) from the fee paying ex-Model C schools did not have purpose-built libraries.

Table 6.2 The physical library space

General properties Building or Space for library	Possible dimensions		
	No space	Converted classroom or other buildings	Purpose- built library
School A		Converted outbuildings	
School B		Converted classroom	
School C	Run out of space. Former classroom converted to library needed as a classroom again.		
School D		Used library space to group grades together. Going to use empty classroom.	
School E		Converted classroom	
School F			Yes
School G			Yes –one room divided into two – a junior and senior section separated by a reading train.
School H			Yes – the library is split into two separate but connected rooms
School I		Converted classroom	
School J			Yes

It was also apparent when visiting the low/no fee paying schools, none of which were new, that all of them lacked facilities, including a purpose-built library. With the exception of schools A and D there were also no sports facilities. In contrast, the fee paying model-C schools did have facilities such as halls and sports facilities.

This inequitable access to facilities mirrored the issue that was raised in Chapter Two (Section 2.5), namely the legacy of apartheid. As the principal of one of the Soweto schools (A) explained when she wished for a proper library with sufficient books suitable for all ages of her children (from five to thirteen); ‘this is not only a problem of our school only, it is a problem for all black schools. In fact our black schools have been robbed of the main things, things that really make a school a proper school.’ The principal of one ex-Model C school

recalled the years before democracy came to South Africa; ‘when we were under the TED (Transvaal Education Department) we had libraries and we had a subject called Media Instruction... and we had a full time librarian. Some schools [disadvantaged schools without libraries] are doing marvels with nothing, they have a box of books that they take around between the classrooms and that sort of thing and even when they haven’t got the books... they have a reading period, a library period in the classroom.’

It was a tribute to these poorer Soweto schools without libraries that they had made a plan and using their own initiative had created a library, with one school converting outbuildings and the rest of the schools converting classrooms for their libraries. School D was in the process of moving their library from one classroom to another in an attempt to group all the classes together according to their grade. The libraries at the fee paying ex Model- schools were all built as libraries with the exception of school I which used a converted classroom.

Hart (2009, p. 11) is of the opinion that one of the “huge problems confronting school librarianship in South Africa is the lack of space in schools. Many libraries have been taken over for classroom teaching”. This was true of School C which had to sacrifice their library and convert it back to a classroom because of the large number of children enrolling at the school. As the principal stated, ‘if we had not had so many kids we would still be using it as a library.’ This is not an isolated case as a DBE report in May 2011 showed that 59% of the schools in Gauteng had a library, but only 19% were stocked with books as many of the libraries were being used as classrooms because of the large number of children enrolled at the school (Mtshali, 2011b, p. 6).

In the ex-Model C school where the library was in a converted classroom the school governing body was in the process of designing a new library for the school. The librarian explained some of the problems associated with having a library in a converted classroom; ‘the shelves are inappropriate for the books that we have got. The children take out a big book (off the shelf) and 15 fall off the shelf... and this area over here (her work space), in every other library is closed off so no one ever see the mess... so I am busy laminating something and somebody comes in and the stuff has to lie there. It is stuff that you have to deal with during the week when you have time so unfortunately it often looks a little bit untidy, but the children don’t realise it, only the teachers and parents who come in here. And then they say “why is this place always such a mess?”’ Her library was also the sick room

and housed the lost property which reduced the space even further.

The other ex-Model C school libraries had features which made the library a functional, inviting space as referred to in the literature (Section 3.3.3). At school F there was a separate work and office space for the librarian connected to the library. The librarian's office had a large glass window which enabled the librarian to observe what was going on in the library. Attractive and comfortable couches made a delightful, sunny reading area and there was space for the children to do their work (see Table 5.1).

School G created two distinct sections in their library for their seniors and juniors with a miniature train dividing the two sections. The teacher in charge explained how this interesting feature worked, 'the kids all get a chance to go on the train, and what the teachers do they take down names and every week different children are allowed to go on. They sit in there and read, it is called the reading train.' They also had little tables and little chairs which were suitable for the younger children. School H also divided the library into two parts, a smaller area with books for the juniors and a larger area which held most of the AV resources, the senior primary fiction and non-fiction as well as tables and chairs where children could work on assignments and do their homework.

6.2.3 Capacity of the library space

Table 6.3 shows the library space which relates to the purpose for which the library was originally intended as shown in Table 6.2.

The size of the library has an impact on the number of children who can use the library at any one time and as can be seen from Table 6.3 the converted classroom libraries had severe limitations (one class) in this regard. The library at school A was very small in comparison to the other schools.

Table 6.3 Size of the library space

General properties	Possible dimensions			
	Size of library space	Small	Adequate for a class only	Sufficient space to handle more than 1 class
School A	Very small – a third of a normal classroom (estimate)			
School B		Yes		
School C	Not applicable			
School D		This is in the future plan		
School E		Yes		
School F		Yes		
School G				Yes
School H				Yes – can squash in 3 classes
School I		Yes		Can squash in more on the floor
School J				Yes

F was the only purpose-built library in the ex-Model C schools which had limited space. The librarian expressed her frustration with this aspect as she wanted more space for display boards. She described how she put up a notice board in the passage outside the library, ‘but the wind took off all my displays and that for me is a little difficult to promote reading.’ A further frustration for her was that she shared her space with someone who had no office. The librarian at school J highlighted why it was important to have space with big classes (at her school there were on average 40 children in each class), ‘it is nice to have space otherwise they bundle around the shelves.’

6.2.4 Classroom libraries

Table 6.4 illustrates the number of schools that had classroom libraries and the source of these libraries. As can be seen from Table 6.4 the low/no fee paying schools in Soweto (A, B and C) had library boxes in their classes. These had been donated by READ organisation several years ago with the GDE assisting two of the schools (B and C) as well. Only one school (B) had these boxes in every class. The deputy explained that because they had these boxes the library was not used any more as a source for reading material.

The ad hoc way the education department tried to solve the problem of a lack of libraries was evident from my visits to the schools and was highlighted in Chapter Two of my research (Section 2.7.5) as not all schools without libraries or with poorly stocked libraries received

these donations.

Table 6.4 Classroom libraries

General properties	Possible dimensions		
Classroom libraries	Absent	Some classes	All classes
School A		Library boxes (READ organisation)	
School B			Yes - or in wooden cabinets (from READ and the GDE)
School C		Library boxes (READ, 6 or 7 years ago)	
School D	Yes		
School E	Yes		
School F	Yes	Yes – reading corners with books from the library	
School G		Yes – reading corners with books from the library	
School H		Yes – block loans from the library to classes	
School I		Yes – block loans from the library to classes	
School J	Yes		

The principal of school C explained, ‘we try our best to put the books into the library boxes but you can imagine in the classes where there is no library box ... those books are dependent on the teacher because they are in the cupboard ... Usually the teachers would lock them for safety in the cupboard ... unlike if it is a library box where they [the books] are displayed.’ For the principal another issue with library boxes was the fact that there were a limited number of books for the children to choose from.

A further problem came to light during a walk around the school with one of the principals. I was shown a library box in a classroom which was sitting on top of a cupboard way out of the reach of children. When the principal questioned the teacher about why it was there it was clear that the teacher did not know what it was. The box had never been opened. The contact in the GDE acknowledges that this is not an isolated case and there have been other instances when book resources are not available to the children because the books are either locked in the principal’s office or are still in boxes.

In the fee paying ex-Model C schools (See Table 6.4) classroom libraries were used in

addition to the library. In all cases the source of the books was the school library. School G had reading corners in each Foundation Phase classroom so that children who finished their work could sit in the corner on the carpet and read. The librarian at school F did much the same thing by sending selected books to the junior classes in the school. Two of the schools (I and H) used block loans to supplement the themes taught in the class.

6.2.5 The Dewey Decimal System

The Dewey Decimal System is one of the retrieval tools that empower users in the library to find information on their own. Knowledge of how the system works and posters on the wall listing the Dewey numbers allow for user independence in the library. None of the low/no fee paying schools used the Dewey Decimal System to classify their books. Classification was limited to separating fiction from non-fiction, encyclopaedias and textbooks. The deputy of school B expressed the wish for the children to ‘know the Dewey numbers’ in order to make public libraries more accessible and ‘if we could have a teacher who could come and teach that this is how you look at a book, when it was written, the edition...all those things.’

All fee paying ex-Model C schools used the Dewey System although school G had, somewhat confusingly, recently abandoned the system. Remnants of the system were still visible on most of the books on the shelves however.

The schools in my study differed in their approach of how the children should use the Dewey System, with the librarians at three schools actively teaching the young children how to use the system. The librarian at one of these schools made the point that it was important that children become familiar with the library and the workings of the library anywhere in the world so that they can go to the shelf and know that they will find other books on their topic at a particular Dewey number. She told me that when the children in her school were interested in a topic, whether it was dinosaurs, or cars, or whether they were getting a new pet, children as young as the Grade 3s were able to use the Dewey System to find their books. This was due to her efforts in teaching them the classification system.

The librarian at another of the ex-Model C schools disagreed. She felt that the children were too young to learn the system and did not teach the children how books were classified. She claimed that, ‘Dewey is something they will never be familiar with because you have to work

with them on a daily basis. I am sorry; you have to go with them to the shelves. The easiest way is to point - there are the insects and there are the dinosaurs, there is the poetry. That is the easiest way; it is no use saying “go and look at 808”, and they just look at you.’ The problem with this approach is that children are not being empowered to seek information independently of the librarian. This represents the old paradigm of library usage as discussed in Section 3.3.1 where the library was the place where information was a ‘thing or product to be given out.’

6.3. Synthesis and Conclusion

In this chapter on operating the library, I analysed how easily the children could access the library, the size of the library space and the forms the library took as well as the retrieval tools available to the children.

What emerged was the difference in accessibility between the school libraries with teachers in charge of the library as opposed to the ex-Model C schools in Johannesburg with a full time librarian. The legacy of apartheid as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.5) was evident in the library facilities available to the children in the Soweto schools as opposed to the ex-Model C schools. The ex-Model C schools with their purpose-built libraries were attractive and inviting spaces for children reflecting the trends in the literature in Chapter Three (Section.3.3.3). The reliance of the Soweto schools on classroom libraries was an illustration of the ad hoc approach by government to the problem of the lack of school libraries discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.7.5). Finally the ease of access to resources through retrieval tools was evident in the Johannesburg ex-Model C schools with librarians.

The following chapter provides an analysis of the third category in my study; the role of the library.

Chapter Seven

Data analysis and interpretation: the role of the library

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the final category of my data analysis, namely the role of the library. Firstly the role of the library as a place to develop reading is outlined. Secondly, I describe the role of the library as a place to access information and the library's role in providing teacher resources. Thirdly I present the views of teachers and the role of principals with regard to the library. Finally I highlight popular support for school libraries.

7.2 The role of the library

This category illuminates the views of the principals or deputy principals (see Table 7.1), teachers in charge and librarians (see Table 7.2) on the role of the library and also how it is viewed by the teachers in the school. Table 7.2 also includes the librarians' perceptions of the support received from the principal for the school library. The advocacy for libraries by Equal Education is outlined.

7.2.1 Developing reading

Table 7.1 Views of Principals and Deputies

School	Possible Dimensions			
	Reading	Information	Teacher Resources	Other/The use of the local library
A	Yes	No response	No	Yes – used local library
B	Yes for the little ones	Yes		Yes – used local library
C	Yes	Yes	Depends on individual	No
D	Yes	Yes with reservations		Yes – used local library
E	No information available			
F	No information available			
G	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
H	No information available			
I	Yes	Limited		
J	No information available			

A clear link between libraries and literacy was made in the responses from the interviewees

as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.6). The main reason for the library, in the view of principals and persons in charge of the library, was for the development of reading (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2).

In the opinion of the GDE official, support for this link between the library and literacy by national government was not so clear. As she stated when asked if she felt that government was making this link she replied that to a certain extent this connection was being made ‘... but not to the extent that they are willing to do anything about it. They see the link between the lack of resources, and so they are throwing books at the schools, but they are not thinking about who is going to open up the books, who is going to look after them to see that the right book gets into the right hand. They think that if the books are there the children are going to read them and everything will be fine.’

Table 7.2 Views of Teachers in Charge (TIC) or librarian

School	Possible Dimensions				
	Reading	Information	Teachers	Principal's support	The use of the local library
A (TIC)	Yes	Some use by teachers for prepping work	Fairly negative view	Yes	Yes – reading competition
B	No information available				
C					
D					
E (TIC)					
F (Librarian)	Yes – very active in promoting reading	Yes – this was considered to be the main role	Fairly negative view	Fairly negative view	No
G (TIC)	Yes	Yes	Use of the resources for teaching	Yes	No
H (Librarian)	Fairly active in promoting reading	To a limited extent	Use of the resources for teaching	Yes but limited	No
I (Librarian)	Yes – very active in promoting reading	No response	Some teachers use resources for teaching		No
J (Librarian)	Yes	No response – librarian was quite active in this role however	Some teachers use resources for teaching		No

The principal of one school summed up the link between libraries and literacy as follows:

‘I think a school is not complete without a school library. The main thing for a school is for

children to learn how to read and write and if there are no books to read then one part of the three R's is critically not there.'

The principal of one school connected reading with learner achievement referred to in Chapter Three (Section 3.6) when stressing; 'in general, we have been saying for many years that you can't have a quick fix in Matric you have got to start at the bottom. It is no good in putting in massive hours of prep, extra meetings, Saturday School, make (sic) the children to work all holiday, it is too late.'

The teacher in charge of the library at school G stated that they had spent a lot of money (from school fees) to make the library more attractive so that the children would want to use the facility and read. She was supported by her principal who explained why they had taken the decision to refurbish their library;

'what we have ascertained is that the children are not reading like they used to, and what we have tried to do with the library is to encourage them to take books out so that we can get them reading again so that they can, you know, get a love for reading. Even to the extent now that we have reading periods during the normal day. We encourage the teachers to take a book out of the library and to read a story to the children so that they can see what reading is all about, so that they (the children) love stories, so that they listen to stories again... because it stopped for a while, (and) it did impact on their literacy. We are finding now that Maths is weak because they don't understand what they are reading and our children are struggling with writing exams because they don't read. They don't know how to read the questions and they don't know how to interpret questions. Their comprehension is bad; their understanding of what they are reading.'

The principal of one ex-Model C school felt that the role of a library was to develop a love of reading, to teach children how to handle and look after books and to prepare for assignments. She was very aware that for some of the children this was their only exposure to a library. She told me that she realised how important a library is to children who do not have access to books at home as discussed by Pretorius (2005) in Section 2.6. She recounted the following incident to illustrate her point. 'I remember one of the children distraught because the library was closed and I said to him "what is the matter" and he said "I haven't got a book for the weekend" and I said "read one of the books you have at home" and he said "we don't have any books at home"... So for some children this library is like a treasure trove.'

Research done by the *Institute for Social Development* (Kretzmann, 2011, p. 6) that investigated which factors contributed to the poor quality of education in underperforming schools in the Western Cape supports this view. One of the factors was limited resources and direct reference was made to libraries, “seven of the 12 schools did not have a library while the libraries at the other schools were inadequate”. Another factor was the poor socio-economic home circumstances where “parents were often semi-literate or illiterate, meaning that a “book culture” was not present at home”.

The way reading in the library was promoted showed interesting trends. In the low/no fee paying schools there was reliance, to a certain extent, on an external factor to encourage reading and this was the influence of community/public libraries. These libraries ran two reading competitions for the different age groups. This is described in Section 7.2.4.

In contrast the librarians at the fee paying ex-Model C schools played a significant role in the encouragement of reading as described in the review of literature in Section 3.4.3. Of all these schools the librarian at school F had a very active programme which involved her half hour periods and time in the evenings and afternoons. This included lessons where she taught the Grades 1s and 2s about genres, authors and illustrators. She described how the children loved the lesson ‘when I take out my trolley with all the new books and I say look at what I have got, and everyone wants a book.’ She also had a reading programme where the children were encouraged to read as much as possible with a prize giving at the end of the year rewarding the best readers. She promoted authors by reading out of their books to the children. She held two book displays a year where the school received 10% of the profits from the books sold from the companies represented. She reported that the parents bought the books as they were keen for their children to read. She opened her library on a Wednesday and a Tuesday so that parents of the nursery school and pre-primary school could take out books for their children. She estimated that 10 – 15 % of the parents did this. She used *Hooked on Books*, where actors act out a book to promote reading. She had a story evening every year where she enlisted parents and outsiders to read to the children in different venues. It was interesting to observe that her influence in reading had extended to the art classes in the junior school as many of the art works on display were related to books or characters from books.

School H was different in that reading was a new focus for the library. Until 2011 the focus for the library had been to support the themes taught in the classroom. The librarian reported; ‘We have decided to push reading this year. Last year what I did was I took the themes that the teachers were doing, LO, History what ever... and if I couldn’t find anything on DVD like that, then I would take out books from the shelf for them, but this year the HOD said she wants them to read.’ I had observed that there was a reading period timetabled for every grade at the start of each day and when I queried why this was so I was told it was to keep the children occupied whilst the teachers did their administration. At least the children were given the opportunity to read every day, despite the reason being somewhat dubious.

The GDE source was of the opinion that the concern with our poor literacy rates as discussed in section 2.3 could be the one factor that works to the advantage of those trying to promote or develop school libraries. She stressed this concern about literacy was changing mindsets and was the lever for school library activists or promoters. She pointed to the difficulties of members of the education departments involved with school libraries and school librarians fighting for school libraries; ‘we are regarded as looking after our jobs and so of course we want school libraries; our job is school libraries so of course we want school libraries.’

7.2.2 Access to information

In all schools, bar school F and to a limited extent school J, the role of the library as the source for information or the place where information literacy was part of teaching and learning, was secondary to reading. This can be seen by comparing the columns in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 where some role players (principals/deputies of schools D and I and the librarians of schools H, I and J) did not mention or stress this aspect of the library as being important.

The fact that these were all primary schools where the emphasis was on teaching children to read could have been a factor in this omission as the deputy of one school explained that the Grade 1s and 2s and 3s ‘are too small; they maybe can’t understand the words that they [encyclopaedias] use.’ The principal of school I supported this by saying ‘we don’t do an awful amount of research, not at our children’s age.’

It appears that there is a limited understanding in some schools of the concepts of information skills and information literacy as described in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.4)

and their importance to learning. This could be because in these schools the person in charge of the library was not a trained professional (see Table 5.3) and therefore had a limited understanding of their role in teaching information literacy and the importance to the children of being information literate (see Section 3.3.4). The librarian for example at one ex-Model C school made the telling comment that she used to teach information skills but ‘they needed time for the proper subjects, you know what I mean, so I don’t teach them anymore.’ The Grade 4 teacher seemed to be the only one teaching information skills and this was limited to dictionary skills. The teacher in charge of another Johannesburg school said that some information skills were taught in the library period but this seemed to be limited to using magazines such as National Geographic Kids as a source of information.

The librarian at one of the fee paying Johannesburg schools, who was a qualified professional, regarded the teaching of information skills as being the main role of the library for the older children in line with the literature described in Section 3.4.4. She had a very structured programme to teach these skills with comprehensive files with lesson plans for the whole year for each grade. Each child had a file in which completed work was stored.

The only other professional school librarian spoke of the challenges of teaching information skills, ‘I like to do information skills in one period and for them to take out and return books in the second period... I don’t have anything from the department, anything ... I have just done a few lessons you know, teaching them how to use the library; the difference between fiction and non-fiction. I have been spending time on non-fiction, the Dewey classification system so at least they know how to help themselves to an extent in the library. They (the children) come from a background where they have no frame of reference ... so you have got to literally start from the beginning.’

In contrast to the two qualified librarians, those interviewees who did mention information skills (see Table 7.1 and Table 7.2) concentrated on the library as a source of information, thereby demonstrating the old paradigm where the library is seen as a place where information is as a ‘thing or product to be given out’ (Kuhlthau, 2004, p. 3) as discussed in Chapter Three of my study (Section 3.3.1.). The deputy of one of the Soweto schools explained that when the children did projects they would use the relevant encyclopaedia from the library. The principal of one of the Soweto schools saw the library as being very useful for the projects. Another principal, of a Johannesburg school, commented; ‘we use it [the

library] as a resource for research for the senior school... so we do block loan books. If they do research on the weather or something like that, we reserve those books for the children and only those children can use those books/resources in the library.'

In these schools there was no attempt to make the child the centre of the information seeking process as described in Chapter Three (Section 3.4.4). The librarian at one ex-Model C school described the process as follows; 'if she [the teacher] wants to do research with them, say on the planets, she will come to me and I will pull out books because we don't send them [the children] to the shelves because that will take six months, so I pull them all out and put them all on one table and the reference books as well. It gets explained to them. They get a little worksheet which asks questions like 'Born when? Died when?' and they have to fill them in. She has got all those questions for them so that they know what they are supposed to look up, otherwise they just write anything.' It must be acknowledged that young children need to start with these basic skills and some of the schools I visited were teaching these basic information skills. As a result the first steps towards empowering children to become information literate were being made. The problem however, was that there appeared to be a limited understanding of the value of learning from a variety of sources by most of the role players (see Section 3.4.4), namely the librarian, teachers in charge of the library and the principals.

The internet was viewed as a source of information in some cases. The librarian at one ex-Model C Johannesburg school stated that when the older children had to do research they used the internet. No guidance on using the internet was given to the children however. The lack of guidance with regard to using the internet for information was an issue that was raised in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.4.5) and was evident in the schools visited. It is a concern if government's aim of providing a quality education for all children is to be accomplished. Being able to use the internet requires complex strategies as suggested in Chapter Three (Section 3.4.5) by Caviglia and Ferraris (2008) and is a skill which is required for 21st Century children.

One librarian told of her frustration of having to rely on the person in the computer laboratory to allocate time for her lessons as there was little understanding by the computer teacher of her role in information literacy.

Three schools (B, G, and H) were connected to a GDE backed initiative to make computers available to children for research known as *Gauteng Online*. The deputy of school B expressed his frustration with the initiative, ‘it has not been working well... they go offline and you can’t access...We don’t have a teacher who specifically teaches computers... and our teachers, some of them are not computer literate. They ask me to assist and then I leave class...it is so difficult’. He then showed some understanding of the librarian’s role in information literacy as discussed in Section 3.4.4 by saying, ‘maybe a librarian can assist.’

In contrast one of the ex-Model C schools did not have problems with *Gauteng Online* because they employed a teacher trained in computer skills to work with the children and did not rely on teachers as a result. The teacher in charge described how she opened the *Gauteng Online* laboratory for research in the afternoons so the children did not need to go home and do homework. Another Johannesburg school only had one computer connected to *Gauteng Online* and that was not available to the children for research purposes. The fact that the other low/no fee paying schools had lost all their computers to theft has been mentioned (see Section 5.2.5) resulting in this being another resource that the poorer schools were denied.

Hart (2005, p. 3) cites research by Todd, Kuhlthau and McMillan which indicates that the best information literacy education “is embedded in the curriculum – where children learn information skills in the context of their real assignments and projects...rather than hunt for the right answer in sources”. The findings of my study show a limited understanding of information literacy and the role of the library or librarian in facilitating this. The library was seen as a place that provided resources for assignments and projects. This was true at all the schools even school F where the librarian had a very active information skills programme. As she pointed out her biggest challenge was the support of her teachers (described in Section 7.2.5) and one sensed that she promoted information literacy without the collaboration of the teachers who did not see her programme as part of the curriculum they were teaching. The fact that the teachers did not perceive the librarians role as part of the teaching and learning at this school was at odds with the trends evident in literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.4).

Best practice with regard to information literacy education was not evident in the schools investigated in my study.

7.3 Teacher resources

The low/no fee paying school libraries did not have many resources available for teachers other than textbooks. One of the principals outlined the issue, 'We don't have enough books for research for teachers. I think if it was a well equipped beautiful library it would ... attract teachers to go there.' The school (E) with the recent donation of books was the only school where the teacher in charge reported that teachers did use the resources.

The libraries at the fee paying ex-Model C schools (F, G, H and J) did have teacher resources, with the resources at school J being very old and somewhat out of date especially in the sciences. In two schools (G and H) the person in charge of the library reported that their teachers viewed the library as a source for teaching resources. The teacher in charge of the library at school G stated, 'They use it for teacher ref (sic) and like now with the new CAPS and with new books coming out.... if they [the teachers] find books out there that they can use to make a worksheet [they] go ahead and buy it. The head is very supportive of resources; if it is going to make teaching better then we get it.'

The principal of school C was more realistic in pointing out that even if the resources were there they would not necessarily be used as 'it depends on the type of individual; the teacher who is also a learner will be using the library but the teacher who is piled up with so much paperwork and who is now tired is not going to the library.' Her words rang true at school F where the librarian expressed her frustration at the teachers not using the teacher resource section. She had a large teacher reference collection which she admitted did not work the way she intended it to. This was clear from my observations as the shelves were full of new resources that were not being used.

7.4 The role of the local Library

It would appear that the local library was seen as a supplement to the school library resources in three of the low/no fee paying schools (A, B and E). No other alternatives to school libraries as described in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.6) were being explored in the schools of my study.

According to the deputy of school B the school had a good working relationship with the local library. The children were encouraged to go to the local library when they had assignments. With no access to the internet at home it was simpler to work there. He described how they usually informed the local library about the assignment and would physically collect the library books from the children and return them to the local library. The deputy of school D said that because of old outdated books in the school library, see Chapter Five (Section 5.2) the children were encouraged to use the local library.

On a visit to two public libraries in Soweto I saw that the library closest to schools A and B was closed for renovation, but there was a large, busy community library that opened in 1996 serving the district adjacent to these schools. The community library was spacious and well laid out with two separate rooms containing study booths where children could study or complete homework and assignments. The non-fiction section was in a good state with many books available for research, but not loan, purposes. There was a large and cheerful children's section at this library with small chairs and tables as well as a carpeted floor. The near empty shelves in the children's section were testament to their success in promoting reading as the children had taken most of the books out. The librarian estimated that they served an area with ten primary and senior schools. The library provided both books and internet resources for the children. The second librarian interviewed made a link to the lack of school libraries in the area and described how busy they were in the afternoons; 'immediately after school, the first stop (for school children) is here. As a result of the lack of media centres in schools we are overwhelmed. Everyone comes here and we don't have enough material. We try the best we can but I must say the load is very heavy.' It was clear from this visit that the local library had taken over the function of the school library.

Despite the example set by school B where the deputy said they communicated and co-operated with the local library, this was not the experience of these librarians. The first librarian reported that they were not warned by the teachers; the children just came in after school. He stated, 'They don't really communicate with us. We want them to communicate with us but it seems as though it is difficult for them... it would help us if they just gave a phone call to us (sic) and said we have a project to do. It would help us so that we could prepare everything so that when they [the children] come we have books and everything ready for them.' It would be to the advantage, of both the public library and the schools they serve, if teachers did communicate their needs to the librarians instead of working in isolation

as appears to be the experience of this library.

The literature shows that this was a problem faced by local libraries in areas where schools did not have libraries. Hart (2005, p. 7) describes how the public library staff are “often caught unawares. The pattern is that a rush of children, all asking for the same information, alerts them to a project and they quickly put materials aside in the ‘project box’”. Hart comments that this short-circuits the learning experience of information seeking as discussed in Section 7.2.2.

The local libraries in Soweto in particular were very active in promoting a culture of reading in schools. The teacher in charge of one school referred to reading competitions run by the community library for the older children referred to in Section 7.2.1. Here the library gave the school 15 books for the Grades 4 and 5 children, and 25 books for Grades 6 and 7 which the children were encouraged to read. The two competitions, which went through several rounds from local to district, tested their knowledge of these books. In the teacher’s opinion these competitions encouraged reading and she was proud to report that her school had recently won the competitions.

The community librarian confirmed that they ran these competitions which were supported by the municipality and described that it took place in four rounds, the first round being held at the school. Each child selected for the competition had to read all the books and were quizzed by the community librarians about the books which they provided to the schools in February. The community library also provided transport for the local library, zonal and regional rounds as well as eats in the library round.

When I visited the local libraries in Johannesburg the librarians reported that they did not get many children working in the library in the afternoons. This was evident in both libraries as my visits took place mid-afternoon on two occasions. There were no children to be seen at the library close to school G. The librarian reported that school children did use the library for assignments on occasion but it was not a regular thing. The library close to school J had one pupil who was using the library as a quiet place to do her homework. The fact that both libraries were close to schools with functioning school libraries (schools G and J) is a probable explanation for this as the teacher in charge of the library at school G stated, “They also don’t need to (use the public library) as we have the facility here”.

7.5 Teachers' view of the library

At the *School Libraries in South Africa: International Debate* in Johannesburg (2011, June 20), one of the international speakers, James Henri (International Association of School Librarianship) stressed the importance of teacher support when we think about the need for school libraries. He observed that if teachers did not see the value in school libraries they would not work.

At school D there appears to be more of a team effort in managing the library and the deputy felt that the teachers supported the library. The fact that the library committee, made up by a representative from each grade, and the staff got together to chose books for the library was given as an example of this support.

A feature that gives concern is that many of the teachers in the schools I visited had a negative view of the library with the exception of schools D, G and H (See Table 7.2). This was an unexpected finding from my study.

School H had the largest and most up-to-date collection of teacher resources of all the schools and this could be a key factor in the teachers viewing the library in a positive light. As the librarian stated, 'if it [the library] wasn't here there would be some very unhappy people. The teachers are very happy with the library and they are very happy with the extent of what is available for them in the library for their classrooms, for their kids, for them to take out...if they ever have a request because they think something is lacking, they come to me and it is no problem, I will sort that out.' School G's library had a good supply of teacher resources and this was seen as the reason for the support the teachers gave to the library.

Despite having a large collection of teacher resources at school F, the attitude of the teachers was the librarian's biggest challenge. In her words; 'It is the co-operation of my teachers. They don't support me. I get the nursery education that does go well. The rest don't care...it feels to me sometimes I am on an island; they use me because I am an excellent organiser. The other thing I think is that the academic head must put more pressure on them [the teachers]. But in the end they want to be fed... I expect the language teachers to encourage them to read. I said to the one lot of teachers, "you don't come into the library; you do not

know what books I have”. And then they realise, and they came with their class and then they were in awe [of the resources] but then they said they are too busy. But I said, “You have a reading period, bring them to the library and read here surrounded by books. You show them that you consider the library to be important; if you don’t why would they?” ... I don’t want to be a teacher as such, and then they gave me a register class because people [teachers] were complaining about my free periods and they have such a lot of marking to do and whatever. It is a lack of understanding [of the job] and they are not in my moccasins. But some of them [teachers] is (sic) so afraid of a library and a book. How can they do without books, without beautiful pictures? You want to die because you think of what they are losing because of that lack of books.’

The librarian at school I offered another explanation for the negative attitude from the teachers which related to a lack of understanding by the teachers of the role of the librarian mentioned by the librarian at school F; ‘they think we have an easy job, we just come here and do nothing all day! That is what some of the staff think. Why shouldn’t this place be tidy? They don’t have to put away 90 books and the length of time that it takes, or repairs, or re-covering or accessioning. I mean to accession a book from beginning to end is an hour. That’s one book and there are 6,500 books in this library.’ She also commented that there were some teachers who used the library on a weekly basis and there were some teachers who had never used it.

The principal of a Soweto school explained why teachers in her school had a negative view of the library; ‘It is very small. It does not attract them ... they are just too busy doing their own things; they don’t really have time for the library. In our setup teachers have no free periods.’ The teacher in charge of the library agreed and stated, ‘they [the teachers] don’t like the library, they are just forced to come and use the library. They think it is a whole lot of work given to them.’

The lack of time set aside for the library for teachers is a possible explanation for the negative perception of the library by the teachers. Another reason was suggested by the librarian at one of the fee paying ex-Model C schools. This related to the background of the teachers, many of whom had not been exposed to libraries because they came from areas which were deprived of libraries during the apartheid era (see Section 2.5). She stated, ‘I would love to see them make more use of the library, they don’t really know how.’ She explained that when

the teachers gave a project to the children ‘Someone might arrive just out of the blue and ask if they can send their class now, and then they come with their project with very little guidance in the project or previous research on behalf of the teacher to see if I have anything ... and the teachers don’t know how to use the library and they would ask me to give them books. Whereas I would prefer them to come here and browse ... and not leave it to the last minute. Obviously I am here to help but if I am the one in the shelves I am exposed to all this extra stuff (information) and not them. So in the end I do the project for them in a sense.’

Sandy Zinn, chair of the *School Libraries in South Africa: International Debate* in Johannesburg (2011, June 20), supported this librarian’s understanding of the situation when she commented that ‘a lot depends on the teacher; if the teacher has no training in library use then [he/she] does not value the school library.’ Hart (2005, p. 9) agrees when she noted that these teachers had few books at home, their schools did not have libraries and there was no public library in the areas in which they lived. She stated that for these teachers leisure reading was confined mostly to newspapers and magazines and that almost all of these teachers “see books in terms of study and self improvement”. If this is the case for those teachers who are not familiar with libraries then it is understandable why they do not value the school library.

At the *Debate on School Libraries in South Africa* held in Cape Town (2011, June 21) EE reported that one of the panellists “suggested that a library should be regarded as a function, with its resources tying in with the school curriculum and meeting the needs of both staff and learners”. Disappointingly my study indicates that teachers viewed the library as a physical space with resources and not an integral part of the school’s function. Graham Bloch stressed that the role of the teacher is crucial at the *School Libraries – where do we go?* conference hosted by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2010, April 8) by saying, “they need to know how libraries work”. My study reveals a lack of understanding by teachers of the role of the school library. In the words of Sandy Zinn, chair of the *International Debate on School Libraries in South Africa* in Johannesburg (2011, June 20) who referred to the need to target the right people with regard to the need for school libraries, namely the teachers, ‘if teachers see no value in school libraries it is not going to work.’ It was apparent that this was the case in all the schools I visited because if there was any teacher support for the library it was for the use of teacher resources. Again this brings into question the use of the library itself. If the teachers do not see the library as being part of teaching and learning, the library itself as well

as the librarian will operate in isolation, thereby negating the very reasons for having a school library as outlined in Chapter Three. In these circumstances the lack of support of these key role players relegates the library to a place where information is ‘fetched’ and, in most instances in the fee paying schools, a resource for the literacy programme in the school

7.6 Principal’s support of the library

In the low/no fee paying schools the teacher in charge at schools A and E reported that they were supported by their principals. This was also true of three of the fee paying ex-Model C schools (G, I and J). As the teacher in charge of the library at one school explained; ‘I actually did up the library last year but he [the principal] is very supportive, he wants to see things working. That is why everything works at this school – the library, the computer centre, the science labs, after-care ... the school may be looking a bit old but the important things work. He is very supportive, when it comes to money if you can motivate why you want it. He is always telling me to buy books.’

The ex-Model C schools chose to pay for the librarian and keep the library open through the raising of schools fees. This is not mandatory as there is no national policy as described in Section 2.7.1, but the school community, namely the School Governing Bodies and the principal, continue to value the library sufficiently to ensure that they are funded. As the principal of school G explained; ‘At this school we have chosen to keep the library up and running.’ They have also allocated a library period for the younger grades to ensure that the library is used and have the library open in the afternoons.

The librarian of school J described how proactive her principal was with regard to the library. He was relatively new to the school and had inherited a situation where the library had been shut for many years. The school fees were not high and there was no money to fund the library from that source. He had secured the funding from a private company to get the library started again with a full time librarian. She described how the principal always approached the company ‘to hear if we can have another year.’ She explained that he did this because his vision was that the library was the centre of the school, at the centre of learning. And everyone, the deputy and the HOD were very supportive; ‘Any problems I have I just mention it to them and they sort it out.’

Two of the librarians from the ex-Model C Johannesburg schools had mixed feelings about the support of their principals. From her stock (large with lots of new books) it is clear that the principal of school F supported her library with regard to the funding of the library. This was also true of her reading programme. She however did not feel as though she had enough support from him with regard to encouraging the teachers to make use of the library. She thought that the library would be better promoted if he put pressure on the teachers. As she said; ‘And he doesn’t. I would like him to ask them in a departmental meeting “have you been to the library? I have seen that and that”. It is one of those things that if something is functioning that is the least of your troubles.’ She gave a further example of the lack of support from the previous principal when renovations were planned for the library, ‘she wanted to have the discussions alone with the architect because she did not consider me to have a worthwhile contribution.’

At one of the ex-Model C schools the support of the principal, in the view of the librarian, was evidenced by the fact that he had a librarian when most schools did not. It would appear however that the main reason for his support was for the development of teacher resources as the librarian explained, ‘he left me in charge of that and then to justify my existence he gives me other stuff to do... because all the things he doesn’t want to do he passes on to me like the registers to collate and all that admin.’

The GDE official I interviewed pointed out possible reasons for the lack of support shown by principals in general for libraries in their schools:

- Many of them went through their school careers and their tertiary careers without the privilege of ever using a library.
- The principals are totally ‘exam focused, matric results focused. Anything that doesn’t bear directly on the number of distinctions in matric, or the number of passes, or that they can’t see bears directly on them they don’t do.’

Clearly the latter was not the case for the principals in the primary schools who were more concerned with getting their children to read.

The official concluded that there will be no stability with regard to school libraries ‘as long as we are so dependent on individuals. There is no stability because there is no policy.’ Her example, of a successful functioning school library in a wealthy area being converted into a

classroom with the change of principal, was a good illustration of how dependent school libraries are on the support of the principal at the school. This also illustrates the important role the principal plays with regard to school libraries as outlined in the literature in Section 3.5.

7.7 Initiative taken by individuals and schools

What stood out at the majority of schools I visited was the initiative displayed by individuals (principals and teachers) to make sure that their children could have access to a library. School A had a principal and an enthusiastic teacher who firmly believed that the library was important to the school. They converted a small outbuilding into a functioning library with the teacher voluntarily giving up her time in the holidays to set up the library. The teacher in charge of school E had taught at a school where the library had been set up by some young volunteers. When she moved to her new school, with the support of her principal, she contacted these same volunteers who came and painted the class, organised shelves and cupboards. Those schools that did not have libraries, converted classrooms into library spaces (B, C, D and E) although school C had to give up the library and convert it back to a classroom as a result of increased enrolments at the school. At school J which could not afford a library because the school fees were too low, the principal had made a plan to obtain corporate sponsorship to reopen his library.

The initiative by a few individuals who have tried to make a difference and establish a school library space was also evident in the GDE's *Showcase of School Libraries* held in Johannesburg on 21 June 2011. This event highlighted those Gauteng schools that have started or continued with their libraries to ensure that they have resources available for the children. As the Gauteng Department official in charge of Multimedia and LTSM stated at the showcase, 'they did not wait for government or policy, they took it upon themselves to start making a difference.' These are some examples from the *Showcase of School Libraries* which illustrate this point:

- A secondary school had converted their library into a computer lab in 1993. It had been recently re-converted back to the library as a result of the enthusiasm of a HOD who used networking and contacts to build up the library from scratch.

- Another secondary school teacher reported that despite the initial lack of managerial support he had gone ahead with the support of learners and had reopened the school library.
- A primary school near Pretoria had used the READ library boxes as the foundation for their library. They had actively sought donations to make more shelves which a teacher had constructed in his spare time. They then relied on their budget for library materials, donations as well as fundraising to stock the library.
- In a poor school in Alexandra Township a teacher started a small library in her classroom using the fruit boxes which were supplied to the children to make shelves. She has now created a mobile library of six trolleys for the school. Her message; ‘Do not wait for the GDE (Gauteng Department of Education).’

In contrast to these initiatives there are examples of schools that have libraries that are not being used. Bearing in mind that there had been no school library funding from 1994 to 2006 (Dlamini & Brown, 2010) my source at the GDE revealed that all new schools built recently in Gauteng had ‘beautiful custom built libraries.’ The problem with these libraries was that they were not stocked. These libraries should have books however as they were supposed to spend 10% of their LTSM budget on library resources since 2007 when this became mandatory (Dlamini & Brown, 2010). The GDE official stated that some of the money however was being spent on stationery. This echoed what the deputy of school D told me about the manner in which her school spent their budget allocation in Section 5.3. My GDE contact told of a visit to a school where the library was being used as an office and a dumping ground for anything that was unwanted in the school. Their library facilitator in the GDE provided books but then met the next stumbling block in the process of making the library functional; there was no one to take responsibility for the library as all the teachers were busy teaching and had no or very few free periods. This is another illustration of the importance individuals in making a school library functional. This issue is not confined to Gauteng as can be seen from the following example reported by Jones (2011, p. 5) of a city school in the Western Cape which had been without library books for six years and the “library had not been used since the school was commissioned on the 26 January 2006”.

7.8 Advocacy

Yoliswa Duane from Equal Education spoke at the conference, *School Libraries – where do we go?* held at the Development Bank of Southern Africa on 8 April 2010. She highlighted the fact that although 98% of our children had access to schools, there was an unequal access to resources as fewer than 8% of schools had functioning libraries as described in Section 2.4. She made the point that EE felt that the main responsibility lay with government to address the inequalities and that civil society needed to ‘hold government accountable’ and make sure that government does its job. At the same conference a member of the audience made the valid point that government’s ad hoc solutions to the problem of school libraries as mentioned in Section 2.7 was not the way to redress these inequalities as ‘trolleys and classroom libraries are not enough for the poor.’ The implication being that redress could only happen when poor schools had functioning libraries.

Popular support, such as the EE’s campaign, has foregrounded school libraries as more and more is publicised about school libraries in the press and questions are raised in parliament described in Chapter Two (2.8 and 2.9). The march for ‘one school, one library, one librarian’ to the centre of Cape Town on Human Rights Day by 25,000 pupils, teachers and parents was disciplined and was highly significant as this was the biggest march by pupils since “20,000 assembled on June 16, 1976, to call for an end to Bantu Education” (Bloch, 2011, p. 12). As the GDE official explained, ‘these kids have credentials. They are being taken more seriously than we ever were ... we have been fighting for 16/17 years and we have never had school libraries on the agenda before. Since they (EE) have been fighting ... at least school libraries are on the agenda (of DBE) and they are been spoken about.’

Popular support for school libraries is acknowledged by the DBE (South Africa. DBE. 2010b, p. 14) but one has to ask if the march on Human Rights Day was taken as seriously as it should have been. Bloch reports that “the Minister of Basic Education chose to rather attend President Jacob Zuma’s rally in Athlone, down the road from the peaceful march. Her chief of staff in accepting the memorandum of demands, lectured the pupils about discipline and responsibility and dismissed their cries as ‘nothing new.’” A perfect demonstration of the department’s “blind spot” mentioned in the Chapter Two (2.7.4.) of this study.

EE researchers have estimated the cost of a rollout of school libraries over a ten year period

and have shown that it is affordable to achieve the goal of providing stocked, furnished libraries in schools staffed by a trained librarian (EE, 2010). To set up the infrastructure “will only cost South Africa less than a percent of the national budget of the Education Department (and) salaries of librarians will only cost between 1% and 2% of the education budget” (Dwane, 2010, p. 2). The DBE however maintains they cannot afford school libraries according to the source from the GDE and this is evidenced the fact that they are investigating various cheaper models discussed in Section 2.7.5.

To its credit EE has already opened several school libraries in the poorer schools of Cape Town with donated books. As Bloch (2011, p. 12) says EE is an example to all; “Young people are determined to learn and read. It is surely incumbent on those who are older to create opportunities the young people rightfully expect in our new democracy, that education may indeed be the route to development and a pathway out of poverty for all”. The lack of will by government to recognise the role of school libraries in the curriculum, as discussed in 2.7.4 is a stumbling block with regard to the goal of providing quality education to all.

7.9 Synthesis and Conclusion

This chapter examined the final category of my data collection, the role of the library. Several issues emerged from the data. These include the important role played by the principals and individuals in establishing and supporting the school library. It is due to their efforts and belief in the importance of the library that the schools in my study have libraries. In contrast the negative view of the library held by teachers was an unexpected finding. They did not see the role of the library as being central to teaching and learning in the school.

The main role of the library in this study was to support a culture of reading. Principals and persons in charge of the library made the link between literacy and the school library. This reflects trends evident in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.4.3). The poor literacy rates amongst our children which was outlined in Chapter Two (Section 2.6) has resulted in a broadening awareness of the important role the library plays in the development of reading. This has also resulted in the growth of popular support for school libraries as evidenced by EE’s campaign for a library and a librarian in every school.

The role of the library in information literacy appears to be relegated to a secondary role

amongst the schools in my study. Those who did mention the library appeared to view the library as a place where one finds information thereby demonstrating the old paradigm of a school library as a place where information is sourced as described in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.1). My study shows that no attempt is being made to make the child the centre of the information seeking process as described in the literature in Chapter Three (Section 3.4.4).

A further emergent issue was the impact on the public library system of the lack of material and human resources in the Soweto libraries described in Chapter Five. The final chapter synthesizes the main elements of the study

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the main elements of the study. It begins with a reiteration of the research goals and methodology. Secondly it describes what emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data in Chapter Five, Six and Seven, and it presents the lessons that can be learned from this study.

8.2 Synthesis

This study investigated the issues and challenges associated with libraries in selected primary schools in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Ten primary schools that had libraries or where there was some library activity were used in this study. The schools represented the full continuum of fees within the state structure. The purpose of the research was to understand what the problems existed and how the schools are responding to them. In order to achieve this goal an interpretive orientation and grounded theory methodology were adopted.

I had to undertake a literature review prior to the commencement of the fieldwork in order to fulfil the requirements of the research proposal. As explained in Chapter Three (3.2) the reviewing of literature in a study which is based on grounded theory is controversial. I was mindful of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) contention that a literature review should be delayed until after the analysis to prevent the researcher seeing the data through the lenses of others who have written on the area under study. I concur with Strauss and Corbin (1990), who argue for a literature review on the basis that it can help to point to a relatively unexplored area and indicate a need for a study because there are contradictions and ambiguities in the literature. In my study the literature review revealed a relatively unexplored area namely the importance of security and the unanticipated impact a lack of school library resources had on local public libraries. Grounded theory methodology gave me the flexibility to explore and follow unexpected findings as they emerged during the data gathering and analysis process. I

have provided evidence of how I used literature both as a means of orientating myself as well as the data.

I had expectations based on the literature and my experience of what I would find from my research (described in Section 4.2). Following Birks and Mills (2011), I articulated and made explicit what I knew about the topic and made predictions of what I expected to find before going into the field. The findings of the study confirmed and challenged my preconceptions in the following ways:

- There was some activity with regard to libraries but within the old paradigm described in the literature in Section 3.3.1. The changing role of the library outlined in Section 3.3 was not evident in the schools in my study.
- Apartheid's legacy referred to in Section 2.5 was evident in the difference in facilities between the Soweto schools and the former ex-Model C schools (see Chapter Five and Six).
- Computers (Section 5.2.7 and Section 7.2.2) did not replace libraries for the information needs in the school as described in the literature in Section 3.3.5. The non usage of ICT was an unexpected finding of my study.
- Teachers and principals do not always understand or value the role of the library or librarian in the school as described in Section 3.3 and Section 3.4. The lack of support by teachers in my study was unexpected and needs to be investigated further.

In Chapter Four I explained the particular methods that are associated with grounded theory: initial or open coding and categorization of data; concurrent data generation and analysis; writing memos; theoretical sampling; constant comparative analysis; theoretical sensitivity; axial coding ; identifying a core category; advanced coding and theoretical integration and generating theory. Using these methods was invaluable albeit it sometimes theoretical challenging. These methods enabled me to identify three core categories and achieve a 'descriptive analysis' which according to Corbin and Strauss (2008) as cited by Birks and Mills (2011, p.113) would "have the potential to add further to what we already know of the world and improve our understanding of" – in this case – the issues and challenges faced by selected primary school libraries in Gauteng. I do not make claims to theoretical integration which is when a researcher integrates her categories to form a grounded theory (de Vos, 2005, p.344). Given the size of the sample (ten schools) I argue that this was not appropriate

but it may be seen as a limitation of the study.

In sum the use of grounded theory worked well in my study as it gave me the flexibility to follow leads as they appeared from the analysis of data. It enabled me to illuminate what is happening on the ground in terms of the issues and challenges faced by school libraries. The lessons to be learned that can be extrapolated from this study may be of use to policy makers and educational planners.

8.3 Lessons learned

The findings of this study shed light on the difficulties in:

- establishing and resourcing a school library
- operating a school library
- the role of a school library

The lessons that can be extrapolated from this study are as follows:

- The **lack of a national policy and funding** for school libraries has a negative impact on the establishment and physical and human resourcing of school libraries and teaching and learning. A lack of policy and funding militates against the goal of quality education for all South African children. In the absence of a national school library policy, schools are not compelled to establish a library if they do not wish to do so. It is through the initiatives of individuals and schools (described in Section 7.2.7) together with support from principals (Section 7.2.6) that school libraries exist at all in the primary schools in Gauteng in my study.
- There is an increasing **public awareness** of the plight of school libraries and support for school libraries which is acknowledged by the Department of Basic Education.
- The **lack of a policy** has financial implications for schools as there is no funding to create libraries (described in Section 5.3) or to staff them (Section 5.4.1). The consequences were clear to see in the low/no fee paying schools of Soweto where classrooms (or at one school outbuildings), were converted into libraries (see Table 6.2) only to be sacrificed if the numbers of pupils increased as was the case at one of the Soweto schools described in Section 6.2.2. The result was that the space available

in these libraries was limited (see Table 6.3) and in not one of the Soweto schools were there attractive reading corners or suitable furniture where children could work. As a result these libraries did not match the ideal of being inviting places as described in Section 3.3.3.

- The lack of funding also affected the **resources** in the library (see Table 5.1). Only recently has there been a budget set aside for library materials but all the low/no fee paying schools relied on donations (described in Sections 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) This meant that the stock in all these libraries was mostly old, unappealing and in most cases perceived as not relevant to the children the school library was trying to serve. This in turn led to huge demands being placed on public libraries serving the areas even where there were school libraries (Section 7.4).
- The lack of policy affects **staffing** the library as there are no school librarian posts. This meant that only four schools (all ex-Model C) could afford to pay a librarian through the raising of school fees (described in Section 5.3 and Section 5.4.1).
- The **absence of a librarian** was most deleterious in schools serving the poorer communities. This resulted in restricted access to the library for children (see Table 6.1 and Section 6.2.1). The fact that full time teachers were in charge of the library added to the problem as many of the traditional elements which are key to the efficient functioning of the library were absent. This was described in Section 5.2.6 and 6.2.5). This in turn meant that children were not empowered to use a library system such as the Dewey Decimal System and find information on their own.
- The lack of **funding** for school libraries meant that the only schools that could afford to maintain a library and pay a librarian were all ex-Model C schools in the ‘wealthier’ areas of Gauteng. This confirmed that the impact of apartheid as outlined in Chapter Two (Section 2.5) has not been easy to erase in poorer schools in Soweto and raises the question of how government’s aim of a quality education described in Section 2.2 is to be achieved in the light of the lack of national policy.
- The findings of my study show a limited understanding of **information literacy** and the role of the library or librarian in facilitating this (Section 7.2.2). The library was

seen as a place that merely provided resources for assignments and projects (Section 7.2.2). Best practice with regard to information literacy education as advocated by the literature in Sections 3.3.2 and 3.4.4 was not evident in the schools investigated in my study.

- The negativity of **teachers' perceptions** of the library was an unexpected finding of this study. There are various reasons for this (as explained in Section 7.5). Those teachers who did support the library saw the library as a useful source of learning support materials. Unless teachers see the library and the school librarian as part of the teaching and learning programme of the school (see Section 3.4) and embedded in the curriculum, the role of the library will continue to be peripheral. Library advocacy amongst teachers is necessary in order to change teachers' perceptions and practices.
- None of libraries visited in this study had **computers** for the children to use. The opportunity for children to use information and communication technologies (ICT) was therefore limited (see Section 5.2.7).
- There is a disjuncture between what is written about the role of the school library and the school librarian in international literature (as discussed in Section 3.3 and Section 3.4) and what was actually happening in the schools in my study. The literature describes how the **role of the library** has changed over time. The school library and the school librarian are positioned at the very centre of teaching and learning in the school. The library is seen as a transformational space (described in Section 3.3) essential to the curriculum and the wider reading and informational needs of children.
- Contrary to the changing role of the library described in the literature, the findings of this study show that the school library is peripheral to as opposed to central to teaching and learning (Section 3.3.2). The school library is seen as a place to support reading (Section 7.2.1). In the Soweto schools and the ex-Model C schools that charged the lowest fees, even this role was limited as the libraries did not have sufficient books, and those they did have were old and did not appeal to their children.
- The **role of a school library** is outdated and needs to change if the library is to play a central role in teaching and learning. Libraries can and ought to play a pivotal role in

promoting literacy and learning, facilitating and enabling quality education for all South African children.

- Schools recognise the important role a library plays in creating a **culture of reading**. In all the schools that were involved in this study the importance of having a library to create a culture of reading (see Section 2.6) was stressed. There is evidence which suggests that the main reason for having a library was to support literacy (see Section 7.2.1). However, there is evidence which suggests that the link between libraries and literacy is not clearly understood by policy makers (see Section 2.7.1) despite our poor literacy rates (see Section 2.6).
- The role of a school library in promoting **literacy** has attracted a great deal of support at a grassroots level as can be seen from EE's campaign highlighted in Section 7.8. This confirmed the reality on the ground as described in Chapter Two (Section 2.9).
- Theft of computers as a result of the lack of security has deprived children in the poorer schools of having **access to ICT**. This has implications for their future in the development of their 21st Century skills which are reliant on the use of technology.
- The **role of public libraries** is significant in poorer areas where children do not have access to the material resources that they need from their own libraries. Public libraries and librarians come under immense pressure in the afternoons as children seek to use the public library for resources and a safe place to work.

8.4 Conclusion

The shocking statistic that fewer than 8% of public schools in South Africa have a library needs to be addressed by the government. The focus of this study was on ten primary school libraries in Gauteng province of South Africa and provides clear evidence of the disjuncture between the role of a school library described in the international literature and what is happening in the ten schools that were involved in this research. The findings suggest that school libraries are not playing an effective role in supporting and enabling quality education for all South African children.

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Appendix A

Interview guide for principals and persons in charge of the library

Italics represent questions and interviews added to the collection of data after the first round of interviews in line with grounded theory

Interview Questions (Principal)	Prompts	Reason for question
<p>What do you see as the role of the library in a school?</p> <p>Please tell me about your library. Or Can you tell me about your library?</p>	<p>Teacher Support? Homework Centre?</p> <p>Location? What resources? Users? When is it open? Opening Hours? Staffing? What is it used for mainly?</p>	<p>This question is to probe the principal's view of the role of the library in teaching and learning.</p> <p>The question is open and broad and will allow me to follow up any issues brought up by the interviewee. It also does not predetermine the answers.</p>
<p>What is working well in the library/library space? Why?</p> <p>What is not working well?</p> <p><i>Is security an issue at your school?</i></p>		<p>This allows me to discover any lessons to be learnt from this school.</p>
<p>Have there been challenges or problems in setting up and/or running the library/library space?</p>	<p>Financial? Security? Staffing? Freezing of library posts?/Role of Govt? Outdated material? Pupil perceptions? Teacher perceptions? Impact of computers in school?</p>	<p>This allows me to establish what challenges the principal has experienced with regard to the setting up or the ongoing running of the library.</p>
<p>Have you been able to deal with the issues, challenges and problems you have described?</p> <p>How? Please elaborate... (you will need to probe)</p> <p>When last where there librarians in schools?</p>		<p>This question could be asked if the principal does not deal with the issue in the previous question.</p>
<p>Who is responsible for running</p>	<p>Your role in teaching and Learning?</p>	<p>This question is to probe the principal's view of the role of the</p>

<p>the library/library space at your school?</p> <p>How is the person appointed? Probe – what is working well etc.</p> <p>How is the library resourced?</p> <p>What, if any, role do the parents and governing body play in the library?</p>	<p>Reading? Literacy?</p>	<p>library in teaching and learning.</p>
<p>How do children in your school do research work?</p>		
<p>If you had to write a letter to the Minister of Education about libraries what main points would you put in the letter?</p>		

Interview Questions (Person in charge of the library)	Prompts	Reason for question
<p>In your opinion what is the role of the library in a school?</p>	<p>Teacher Support? Homework Centre? Teaching and Learning? Reading? Literacy?</p>	<p>This question is to probe the librarian's view of the role of the library in teaching and learning.</p>
<p>Please tell me about yourself. How much time do you spend in the library? <i>What are your qualifications and experience in school libraries?</i></p> <p>Please tell me about your library.</p>	<p>librarian/teacher in charge/volunteer</p> <p>What resources? Users? Opening Hours? Staffing? What is it used for?</p>	<p>The question is open and broad and will allow me to follow up any issues brought up by the interviewee.</p>
<p>What is working well in the library/library space? Why?</p> <p>What is not? Why?</p>		<p>This allows me to discover any lessons to be learnt from this school.</p>
<p>Have there been challenges and problems of setting up and/or running the library/library space? How have you dealt with them? (same as the next question)</p>	<p>Financial? Security? Outdated material? Pupil perceptions? Teacher perceptions? Impact of computers in school? Are you trained as a</p>	<p>This allows me to establish what challenges the librarian has experienced with regard to the setting up or the ongoing running of the library.</p>

	<p>librarian? Do you have other responsibilities?</p>	
<p>How have you dealt with the issues and challenges as the librarian?</p>		<p>This question could be asked if the librarian does not deal with the issue in the previous question.</p>
<p>In your opinion what is the role of the librarian in the school?</p> <p>How is the library resourced?</p> <p>What, if any, role do the parents and governing body play in the library?</p> <p>What sort of support do you get from the Head? (probe – is it moral, financial, logistical?)</p> <p>Do you think the school values the library?</p> <p>Do teachers use the library?</p> <p>How do other members of the staff view the library?</p> <p>Who uses the library the most? How? And what role do you play in this?</p>	<p>Information Skills? Work with staff? Work with pupils? Reading promoter? Manager? Part of school leadership team?</p>	<p>This question is to enable me to understand how the librarian sees her/his job and her/his role in the school as a whole</p>
<p>How do children in your school do research work?</p>		
<p>If you had to write a letter to the Minister of Education about libraries what main points would you put in the letter?</p>		

Appendix B

Interview Guide for public librarians

Interview Questions (Public Librarian)	Probes.	Reason for question
How many schools do you serve? Which schools?	Name of schools High school/primary schools	Need to triangulate information from the schools who say they use the library
Is the library evenly used by the surrounding schools?		
Do teachers from the surrounding schools discuss the project with you before they give it do the children?		Need to triangulate information from the schools who say they use the library
Do the teachers communicate with you in any way?		Need to triangulate information from the schools who say they use the library
How many children use the library in the afternoon?		
What do they use it for?		
Do teachers work with you in planning their lessons and the resources needed in your library?		
Is space an issue for your library?	Limit time spent in the library?	To determine if the community library is able to cope with the numbers of children.
Does the community play any role in supporting your library?	Helping at the issue desk? Covering books?	
Is security an issue with your library?		To determine if it is due to break-ins or pilfering on a small scale.
How does the library support literacy?		To verify what schools were saying about the reading competition.

Appendix C

Interview guide for the GDE official

Interview Questions	Prompts	Reason for question
How do you describe your job?		This question is to ensure that the official has sufficient involvement and understanding of school libraries.
What do you see as the role of the library in a school?	Teacher Support? Homework Centre? Information Literacy? Reading?	This question is to probe the official's view of the role of the library in teaching and learning.
What is working well in the libraries in Gauteng? What is not working well? Is security an issue with your schools?		This allows me to discover any lessons to be learnt from schools.
Have there been challenges or problems in setting up and/or running the library/library spaces in schools?	Financial? Security? Staffing? Freezing of library posts?/Role of Govt? Outdated material? Pupil perceptions? Teacher perceptions? Impact of computers in school?	This allows me to establish what challenges the official has knowledge of or experienced with regard to the setting up or the ongoing running of the libraries in Gauteng.
What is the greatest obstacle faced by school libraries? Is there a solution or a way of getting around this obstacle?		
Have you been able to deal with the issues, challenges and problems you have described? How? Please elaborate... (you will need to probe) When last were there librarians in schools?		This question could be asked if the official does not deal with the issues in the previous question.
Who is responsible for running the library/library space at the schools?	Your role in teaching and Learning? Reading? Literacy?	

<p>How are the libraries resourced?</p> <p>What, if any, role do the parents and governing body play in the libraries?</p>		
<p>Why is important to have a policy document?</p> <p>What is the impact of guidelines as opposed to policy?</p>		<p>To gain an understanding of the difference between policy and guidelines and the implications for schools.</p>