TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE:

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF A SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION IN RURAL KWAZULU-NATAL

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The research presented in this thesis is a case study analysis of the school-based intervention initiated by the David Rattray Foundation [DRF]. David Rattray, a South African historian well known for his contribution to the 1879-1896 Anglo-Zulu War heritage, was murdered in January 2007. In response to his untimely death, the DRF was established by family and friends with the hope of improving education within the Umzinyathi rural municipal district of KwaZulu-Natal.

This study consisted of three phases: Phase I (May-December 2011); Phase II (January-December 2012), and Phase III (December 2012-October 2013). During Phase I, the focus was on describing the broader context in which the case is located. It resulted in a narrative account of the emergence of the DRF as a non-governmental organisation [NGO] working towards change within the local rural school community. During Phase II the focus shifted from the broader socio-political and economic context to the human dimension which included teachers, principals, volunteer workers and a district official working in the schools. During Phase II the approach to change adopted by the DRF was critically analysed in relation to models of change described in the literature. Teachers' experiences of change were also examined. Phase III was a synthesis of the findings from the first two research phases. By drawing on systems and complexity theory perspectives, insights were gained enabling a deep understanding of the DRF's school-based intervention as a whole.

This research is a qualitative study that seeks to understand individual teachers' experiences and participation in a process of change that reaches beyond the individual and his/her immediate context. The adoption of a realist ontology (Maxwell, 2012) and application of an explanatory heuristic based on the critical realist philosophy of Bhaskar (1979, 1980, 2011) enabled the layered analysis and in-depth interpretation that characterises the study.

The findings of the study reveal a complex and ongoing process of change within a rural school context. The results illuminate the efficacy of a collaborative partnership between civil

society (the DRF), the local community, under the leadership of a tribal authority, and the local government (KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education). It also reveals how teachers within this particular context do not have a strong voice in the change process and hence participate only superficially in the school-based intervention.

It is probable that the constraining mechanisms revealed through this research are not exclusive to this particular case study, but are common across the South African rural school context. The main contention of this thesis is that these mechanisms need further interrogation in order to enable further change and permit the active participation of teachers in the process.

While the study illuminates many of the tensions and problems faced by the schools and the community in which they are located, it also highlights the achievements and selfless attitude of many people working towards change and improvement within the schools. This case study thus provides an example to all South Africans of what can be achieved with commitment and effort.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the teachers who are working hard to make a difference in the lives of young South Africans. Never lose sight of how important you are and the valuable role you play in the future of our country. Our hope is in you.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum and Policy Assessment Statement
CAS	Complex Adaptive System
CASME	Centre for the Advancement of Mathematics and Science Education
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CLT	Complex Leadership Theory
CNE	Christian National Education
CR	Critical Realism
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CSTL	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEC	Delta Environmental Centre
DETA	Distance Education and Teachers' Training in Africa
DoE	Department of Education
DRF	David Rattray Foundation
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDP	Education Development Plan
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EMD	Education Management Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FSS	Full Service School
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHS	General Household Survey
HOD	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IEA	Isandlwana Education Appeal
JET	Joint Education Trust
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal Province
LDoE	Limpopo Department of Education
LRC	Learner Representative Council
LSA	Learner Support Assistant
MEC	Member of Executive Council
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NTEA	National Teacher Education Audit
OBE	Outcomes Based Education

OD	Organisational Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPEN	Public Participation Education Network
PSCBC	Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
QIDS UP	Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SATU	South African Teachers' Union
SETA	Skills Education Training Authorities
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TLGFA	Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act
TS	Together Schools
TTEMD	Task Team on Education Management Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
USDF	Umzinyathi Spatial Development Framework
VSM	Viable Systems Model
WEF	World Economic Forum
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

We should all follow his example and personally commit to doing something constructive to help reach his great vision for our great country.
(Andrew Rattray, February 2007)

1.1 Introduction

This research offers a case study analysis of the David Rattray Foundation's (DRF) school-based intervention in the rural Umzinyathi Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal. The research comprises a qualitative case study, interpretive in orientation, aimed at understanding the intervention's approach to change, as well as teachers' participation in and experiences of change processes, in relation to the broader socio-political, economic and historical context of a developing country undergoing transformation. The research is underpinned by a realist ontology and a constructivist epistemology. It draws on Maxwell's (2012) perspective on realist research and Roy Bhaskar's theorising (1979, 1989, 2011), especially his notion of a layered ontology. The latter guided the development of a heuristic framework for analysing and making sense of what emerged in the data.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the context and goals of the research and describe its theoretical and methodological orientation.

1.2 Background to the study

David and Nicky Rattray are often referred to as pioneers of historical and heritage tourism in the northern KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields district of South Africa. Together they built a successful business, Fugitive's Drift Lodge, which has become world renowned for the oral history tours of the various battlefield sites in the area. The lodge provides employment to many people from the surrounding rural areas. The Rattray's support for the community, however, has extended far beyond the walls of Fugitive's Drift Lodge.

During the mid-1990s the Rattrays initiated informal support programmes for some of the local schools. Two small trusts were subsequently established, the Rorke's Drift Educational Appeal and the Isandlwana Education Trust. During these years, the Rattrays devoted much time and effort engaging with communities in an attempt to better understand their needs.

David Rattray was murdered by a local community member in January 2007.[1] In response to his untimely death, the David Rattray Foundation (DRF) was established by close family and friends, with the aim of promoting development and improvement of the schools within this rural district of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

The main goals and activities of the DRF centre on education, in that the belief that "access to quality education in a safe and caring atmosphere is the best provider of personal and community upliftment" (DRF Strategic Plan, 2009, p.4). The DRF values community input and believes that in order for its initiatives to be sustainable, they have to be based on values and commitments shared and understood by local community members (DRF Strategic Plan, 2009, p.4).

My research interest lies in the education upliftment interventions attempted by the DRF within the local community schools. Being a teacher myself, I am especially interested in understanding the experiences and participation of the teachers working within these schools with respect to the changes and intervention strategies devised by the DRF.

1.3 The broad context of the research

1.3.1 The research site

The research study site is located in the Battlefields region of KwaZulu-Natal, within the Umzinyathi Municipality (refer to Section 3.2.2, Figure 3.1 and Section 3.2.3, Figure 3.2 for maps of the area). Over half (54%) of KwaZulu-Natal's total population is estimated to reside within rural communities in fairly isolated regions of the province (StatsSA, 2011, p.3). The Umzinyathi District covers an area of approximately 8 079.68 km^2. Based on the 2011 National Census results (the most recent population information available for this area), the district has an estimated population of 514 840, the majority of the population (72%) under

[1] Crime is a prominent issue within South Africa. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, South Africa is rated nine out of 10 of the countries around the world with the highest crime rates. The murder rate for South Africa is currently estimated to be at 35.5 homicides per 100 000 people (RSA. CrimeStats SA, 2012).

35 years of age. The region is characterised by low levels of urbanisation, with 82% of the population reportedly residing within the rural area of this district (KZN Umzinyathi district profile, 2011, p.3). Within this district there are 17 Tribal Authorities.

A large majority of the Umzinyathi district municipality falls within the former homeland area of KwaZulu (South Africa's apartheid history is briefly outlined in Section 2.3). Poverty levels are high, with 44% of residents reporting no formal education, and an estimated 80% of families living below the poverty line (Republic of South Africa (RSA). Umzinyathi Spatial Development Framework report (USDF), 2009, pp.24-25).

There are limited economic opportunities in the region, and the majority of the population is completely reliant on social grants for its livelihood.[2]

Refer to the DVD inserted together with this thesis which provides a short video clip extract/photo montage which attempts to capture the essence of the research context.

1.3.2 Rural education within a period of educational transformation

As explained in the preceding section, the research site is located in a rural region that falls partly within the former homeland area of KwaZulu. Much of the literature on rural education in South Africa emphasises the histories and structures that created conditions and circumstances of "oppression, deprivation, disadvantage and deficit" (RSA. Department of Education (DoE), 2005, p.8). Under the former apartheid regime, the education system was divided into 18 separate departments, each providing for different provinces, former homeland regions and different racial groupings (Christie, 2008, p.178). The result was that the schools that are the subject of this study were during this period disadvantaged by inadequate infrastructure and resources, coupled with the fact that many of their teachers were trained in former black teacher training colleges. Teacher training at these colleges was considered inferior, and many of their graduates lacked the basic professional competence required in the classroom (Enslin, 1990; Chisholm, 1993; Jansen, 2001; Christie, 2008).

[2] Social grants are paid out to over 15.3 million South Africans (RSA. South African Social Security Agency [SASSA], 2012). In order to qualify for a grant single applicants must not earn more than R47 400 a year or have assets worth more than R792 000. For married applicants the combined income requirements are no more than R94 800 and assets no more than R1 584 000 (Groundup, 2013). The most commonly awarded grants within the Umzinyathi Municipality include the child support grant (R300/month), the pension (R1200/month) and the disability grant (R1200/month).

After South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, the new government was tasked with having to redress a complex and divided system of education. The *White Paper on Education and Training* (1995) describes the legacies of South Africa's unequal education system and the need for reform and transition within this new era. During the first five years of government, the new national and provincial education departments were concerned with two main imperatives: the development and implementation of policy to redress the inequalities of the past, and the complex process of amalgamating and reorganising teachers and the bureaucratic system as a whole (Diphofa, Vinjevold & Taylor, 1999, p.2).

Despite the introduction of new policies and systems, coupled with a huge percentage of national budget being focussed on education, our schooling system remains a national disaster (Bloch, 2009, p.58). The vast majority of South Africa's schools (60-80%) are still classified as dysfunctional (Bloch, 2009, p.17). Research on school transformation has revealed that "better resourced, historically privileged schools are more likely to manage the new policies than historically disadvantaged, mainly black schools, and particularly the poor, rural and marginalised among them" (Christie, 1998, p.290).

The key findings of the curriculum review commissioned by the then education minister Kader Asmal in 2000 revealed that the "essence of learning and teaching had been lost in a mechanical deference to a poorly understood Curriculum 2005" (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p.284). This was further echoed in the findings of policy analysis and classroom-based research, which revealed that policy was out of touch with the realities of school and classroom situations throughout South Africa, and that urgent revisiting and rethinking of policy was necessary (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p.284).

Some 12 years after the initial curriculum review, and despite two subsequent curriculum policy adjustments (*Revised National Curriculum Statement* (RNCS), 2005, and *Curriculum and Policy Assessment Statement* (CAPS), 2011), the system remains problematic.

This study seeks to explore the school-based intervention strategy the DRF has initiated in an effort to address some of the many challenges faced by the 17 rural schools the organisation supports. While the study has illuminated many of the tensions and problems faced by the schools and community as a whole, it also highlights the achievements and selfless attitudes of many people working towards change and improvement within these schools. This case study provides an example to all South Africans of what can be achieved with commitment and effort. It offers an illustration of the importance of effective partnerships, in this

particular context, between civil society, the local community and the state. Bloch (2009, p.89) highlights the importance of South Africans pulling together as a nation to develop a common framework that help us to make sense of the looming disaster we see in the education sector within our country. “Differences in politics, approaches and skills should be turned into strengths that are brought together” (Bloch , 2009, p.89).

1.4 The research goals and focus

The aim of my research is to generate insights necessary for a deep understanding of a particular school-based intervention in terms of both its approach to change and the ways in which change is experienced by the teachers affected, within the broader context of rural education in South Africa.

The research has three goals:

1. To describe and analyse the approach to change used by the DRF in relation to models of change described in the literature.
2. To examine teachers’ experiences and participation in a change process.
3. To establish how the context has shaped the intervention and teachers’ participation in it.

1.4.1 Research design and processes

Maxwell (2012, p.71) notes that one of the most important applications for realist research is to view the research design as a “real entity”: the conceptions and plans pertaining to the research process are real in that they consist of the actual ideas held by myself, whilst whatever action I take in the field will be influenced by, and have an influence on, the context and relationships in the community in which the study is conducted. This in itself is a real phenomenon, and as Maxwell cautions, the actual research process may differ substantially from what was originally intended. For these reasons, important as it is to plan the research process, its design must be regarded as flexible to a point, since an “ongoing, interactive process is a much better fit for qualitative research” (Maxwell, 2012, p.76). This is significant in that this project was initially conceptualised as an interpretive study.

When the research was conceptualised in 2011, the primary purpose was to *understand* the approach to change that informed the school-based intervention and teachers’ roles,

participation and experience of the DRF-initiated change process. To accomplish this goal, an interpretive qualitative inquiry approach was chosen. This paradigm assumes a relativist ontology. It acknowledges that the reality to be understood consists of individuals' subjective perceptions and experiences of the external world (Merriam & Associates, 2002 and Erickson, 2013). This orientation informed the methodological choices I made, including the use of a case study method to gain a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2008) note how the exploration and description of the case take place through detailed and in-depth data gathering methods which involve multiple sources of information that are rich in a particular context (I used interviews, document analysis, observations and focus group discussions).

Once the document analysis and work in the field began, it became increasingly apparent that the 'teacher's world', while subjective, does not exist in a vacuum, but is part of and shaped by an external reality that consists of structures and mechanisms which they may not be aware of and over which they may not have control. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 20) cite Rex (1974), who contends that:

> Whilst patterns of social reactions and institutions may be the product of the actors' definitions of the situations, there is also the possibility that those actors might be falsely conscious and that sociologists have an obligation to seek an objective perspective which is not necessarily that of any of the participant actors at all . . . . We need not be purely confined to that social reality which is made available to us by participant actors themselves.

Freire (1985, p.12) asserts that "no educational practice takes place in a vacuum, only in a real context – historical; economic, political and is not necessarily identical to any other context". Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011, p.21) caution that interpretive studies are criticised for their narrow "micro- sociological perspectives". The insights gained through my initial fieldwork and document analysis helped me to understand the importance of the context in which the DRF school-based intervention took place and how historical, socio-political and economic factors affected change processes and teachers' level of participation and experiences of change. Recognising the limitations and inadequacy of interpretive research's relativist ontology for generating the insights necessary for a deep understanding of how the contextual reality shaped change processes and teachers' experiences, I decided to re-position the study as realist research. The adoption of a realist ontology enabled me to move beyond the subjective world of teachers' experiences per se, and focus instead on attempting to explain the causal structures and mechanisms shaping their ideas and actions.

Maxwell's conception of an "interactive research design model" (2012, p.78) guided the re-design of my research, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. His design model helped me to conceptualise and plan my research systematically and carefully while, at the same time, it provided me with the flexibility I needed when dealing with what emerged in the data.

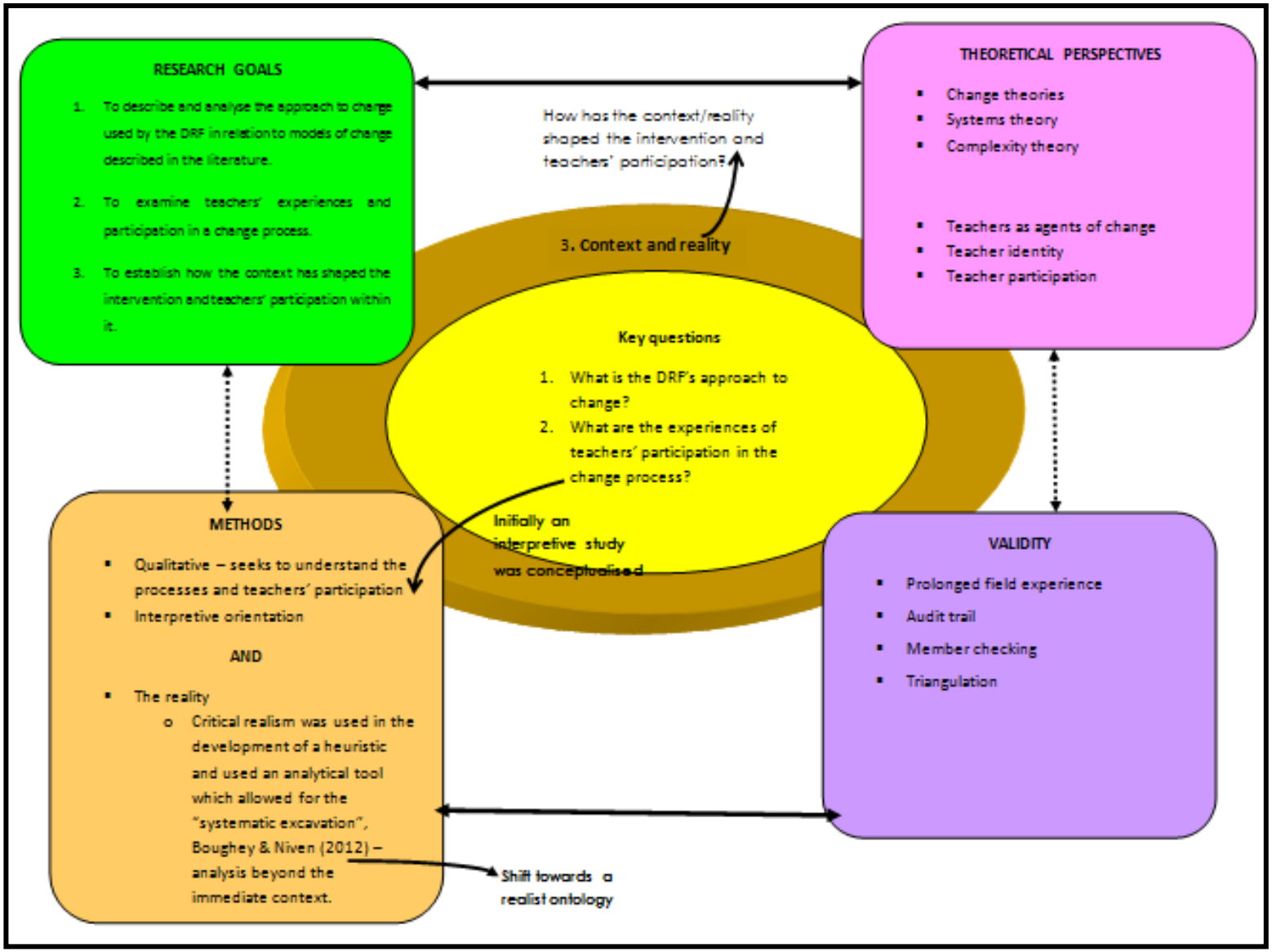


Figure 1.1 The interactive model of research design used in this study. Adapted from Maxwell (2012, p.78).

The study consisted of three phases which unfolded over a period of three years (2011-2013). Phase I of the research took place from January-December 2011, Phase II from January-December 2012, and Phase III from January 2013 to October 2013. Key features of the research process are summarised in Figure 1.2.

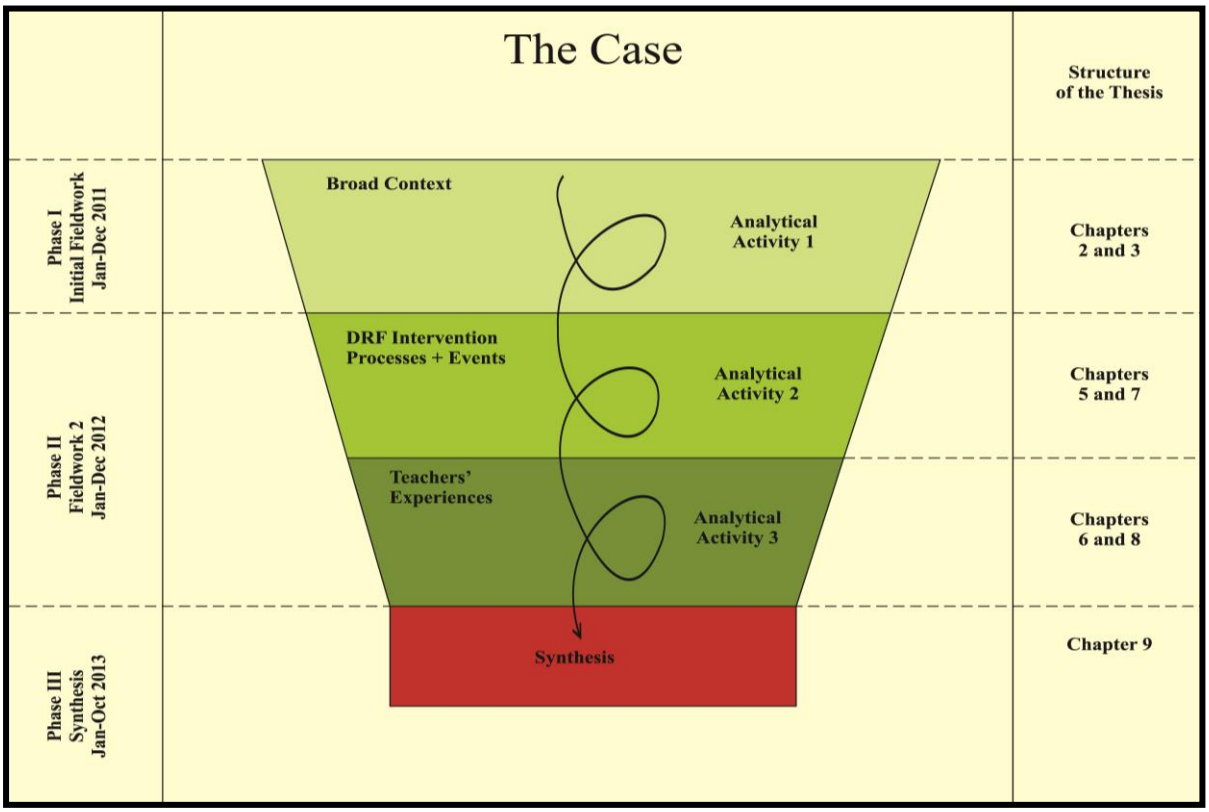


Figure 1.2 The research design and analytical activities.

Table 1.1 provides the reader with a route map of the study which may be a useful point of reference as s/he proceeds. The summary provides an overview of the layered nature of the research process and is useful to explore in conjunction with Figure 1.2.

Table 1.1 Route to the analysis

Research design	Analytical Activities	Focus of Analysis	Summary of Emergent Findings	Thesis structure

Phase I	Analytical Activity 1
	REAL
		Emergent theme: Broad context
		Structures, powers and enabling mechanisms
		Research goal 1
			• Transitive elements (socio-economic context)
			• Intransitive elements
			  ○ Global trends
			  ○ Transformational actions
			  ○ SA's apartheid legacy
			  ○ Culture & tribal governance
				Chapter 7

Phase II	Analytical Activity 2 ACTUAL	**Emergent theme: Events** Actions and interventions *Research goal 2*	• Baseline assessments • Goals of the DRF • DRF Achievements • Future goals/aspirations of the DRF	Chapter 7
Phase II	Analytical Activity 3 EMPIRICAL	**Emergent theme: Human dimension** People and processes at work *Research goal 3*	1. Partnerships 2. Leadership 3. Key drivers in the change process 4. Obstacles and barriers to change 5. Teachers and change	Chapter 8

Phase III	**Towards Synthesis**	Phases I and II integrated and looked at critically from the perspective of the DRF's intervention as a whole.	Complexity and systems theory perspectives were utilised to explore the DRF's intervention as a whole.
			• Complexity theory points to the complex and dynamic phenomena of schools as organisations
			• Systems theory provided a lens from which:
			  ○ various components of the functioning of the school systems are explored, and
			  ○ key elements of the organisational system which appear to be poorly aligned are also drawn attention to.
				Chapter 9

1.4.2 Phase I (2011)

My research on the DRF's school-based intervention formally commenced in January 2011. My interest in this initiative was triggered by the numerous visits I had made to the area and the time I had spent in the schools as part of a community project at the school where I was teaching. From January through May, 2011, I was involved in reading literature regarding policy change and implementation in South African schools, particularly from a rural school perspective. Literature concerning school reform and transformation formed part of developing the background for my first field visit in May 2011.

The purpose of my first field work experience was as follows:

- to gain an understanding of the historical development and establishment of the DRF;
- to observe and gain insights into the challenges and difficulties faced by the schools in the research area and understand why an intervention was needed;
- to observe and understand the DRF's intervention strategies, and
- to gain insights into the attitudes and perspectives of DRF board members and community members involved in the intervention.

This fieldwork experience was informed by my first research goal, namely to describe and analyse with a view to understanding:

- *The DRF's approach to change.*

In order to answer my research question, I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the DRF and the community. I spent time in the rural schools observing their environment, culture and ethos. I also had an opportunity to work in the DRF's office, where I was given full access to all documents pertaining to the DRF. Due to the nature of this particular study, at times I have had to include the actual names of people forming a part of this case study. For this purpose I have received special permission from the individuals concerned.

In order to facilitate the organisation, indexing, storage and retrieval of data, a coding system was devised (see Box 1.1 for further explanation of this system). An inventory of documents included in the data files is detailed in Appendix A and B. The case archive containing all the documents, including the raw data, is available for inspection. A case archive audit was conducted by a fellow academic colleague external to the research process, so as to ensure the authenticity of material. See the audit certificate in Appendix G.

Box 1.1

The case archive consisted of two components;

- Data File 1 [DF1] – data generated in Phase I
- Data File 2 [DF2] – data generated mainly during Phase II.

DF1 consisted of five separate document files [DOCS 1-5] in hard copy. Each document file contained a number of individual items referred to as folders. For example, the interview transcripts were coded as follows:

- Date File 1
- Document 3
- Folder D

The coding system describing the **location** of the interview transcripts pertaining to Phase I of the research would read as follows: [DF 1: DOC 3D].

Throughout the thesis reference is made to interviews and focus group discussions. Interview transcripts and analytical memos were stored in the following files:

DF 1: DOC 3D – interview transcripts DRF and community members

DF2: DOC 1B – interview transcripts of principals and district official

DF2: DOC 2D – focus group transcripts

When referencing an interview in text, the following coding system is used:

IT#1, 2011 – this refers to interview transcript number 1 conducted in 2011.

FG#1, 2012 – this refers to the focus group transcript number 1 conducted in 2012.

The various quotations extracted and used throughout this thesis from the various interview have been incorporated verbatim, and hence there are several grammatical and language irregularities.

Data generated in Phase 1 were analysed (Analysis Activity 1 as shown in Figure 1.2) and three main themes were identified. These were:

- the context,
- actions and interventions; and
- human dimensions.

I initially struggled to understand what had emerged in the data analysis, given the ontological assumptions of the interpretive research orientation informing my research. But drawing on the theoretical and methodological perspectives of Bhaskar's critical realism (1979, 1989, 2011) and his notion of a layered ontology, I developed a heuristic framework (see Figure 4.1) that helped me to make sense of the emergent themes in relation to each other. It provided me with a theoretical vantage point from which to see beyond the subjective experiences of the teachers and ask probing questions related to causal factors, and thus view the case study in relation to the broader context of rural schooling in South Africa.

1.4.3 Phase II (2012)

Phase I provided the initial platform or layer from which I could launch Phase II of the research process. The emergent themes and trends from Analysis Activity 1 assisted me in designing my interview schedules and research questions for the second fieldwork activity, which took place eight months after the initial fieldwork experience. During this stage I also engaged with literature pertaining to theories of change and organisational development. This literature was useful in devising the questions for the second round of interviews and focus group discussions.

At this point my focus shifted in that I became interested in the perspectives of the District Official at the local district office in Dundee, as well as those of the teachers and principals at the various DRF-supported schools. The purpose of my second fieldwork experience was to establish the following.

- What assumptions have been made with respect to change?
- Who or what are the driving forces behind the changes/intervention strategies?
- Who are the agents of change, and why?
- Are there are any barriers to change and if so, what are they?
- How are changes decided upon and implemented?
- How are schools and teachers responding to change?
- Is change sustainable in the schools that are the subject of my research?

This would ultimately lead me to fulfilling the second research goal which this study aimed at achieving, namely to examine:

- *Teachers' experiences and participation in a change process.*

In order to develop insight and understanding regarding teachers and change, a number of individual, semi-structured interviews were arranged with principals of the local schools. I also arranged three focus group discussions, to which teachers and volunteers from the local schools were invited. Once more a detailed interpretive analysis of the interview and focus group transcriptions was conducted using coding techniques. However, this time around the data were coded and organised in relation to the three themes which had emerged from Phase I of the study. Detailed analysis of the data ensued, making use of the heuristic tool, and this constituted Analytical Activity number 2 (refer to Figure 1.2 and Table 1.1).

1.4.4 Phase II: Analysis Activity 3

The final analysis activity to take place within Phase II involved an in-depth exploration of the role and involvement of teachers within the processes of change. During this analysis activity, I explored the role and participation of teachers beyond their immediate context, drawing on Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) philosophy of critical realism as an analytical tool. This generated a broader, more complex perspective on teachers and change.

1.4.5 Phase III: Synthesis (2013)

The latter stages of the research design process involved a process of integration and synthesis. Here the findings from Analysis Activities 1, 2 and 3 were combined and explored in the light of theoretical perspectives from change, organisational development (OD) complexity and systems theory. Change theory provided deeper insight into the reasons driving the need for change within the local rural schools, as well as the manner in which the DRF has conducted and executed their school-based intervention (see Section 8.3). Complexity theory was utilised as a theoretical lens through which the multi-dimensional and complex structure of schools was explored. Despite the recent emergence of complexity theory in the Social Sciences domain, it was perceived to be incompatible with the particular context of this case study. I argue for the inappropriateness of complexity theory as an OD theory in this study on account of the developing, rural context of the Umzinyathi School, which does not exhibit the characteristics of a postmodern organisational context with which complexity theory is largely associated (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007).

Systems theory proved to be a more appropriate theoretical lens to work with when considering and understanding the DRF's school-based intervention strategy *as a whole***,** particularly in the light of organisational change. French and Bell (1999, p.82) note that "Systems Theory is one of

the most powerful conceptual tools available for understanding the dynamics of an organisation and organisational change".

During the latter phase of the research process systems theory was specifically used to explore the inputs, throughput phase and outputs of the DRF's school-based intervention strategy. More specifically Nadler's (1998) Congruence Model approach to systems theory and Organisational Development is drawn on and adapted for the purposes of the synthesis of evidence and critical analysis of the intervention. In addition, I have continued to view the process of synthesis broadly through the lens of Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) critical realist domains, since this study has revealed the impact of the broader context or reality on the effective functioning of schools as organisations, as well as on the implementation of the DRF's school-based intervention.

Drawing on theoretical principles linked to organisational function and change was useful in exploring the various system breakdowns observed in the context of the rural schools profiled in this research (see Figure 9.1). The final process of synthesis revealed several breakdowns in the functioning of rural schools in the Umzinyathi municipal district. This has proved useful as a diagnostic in developing a refined intervention strategy.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: A contextual profile of rural education in South Africa

In this chapter I provide an overview of the socio-political factors that have shaped rural education in our country. My discussion centres on rural schools and the numerous difficulties these schools encounter in undergoing a process of change.

Chapter 3: An overview of the case

This chapter provides an overview of the particular case, detailing the factors which led up to the formation of the DRF as a Public Benefit Organisation. The objectives and goals of the DRF are briefly outlined and its area of operation and involvement with 17 rural schools is described. The discussion includes an account of the challenges faced by the Umzinyathi district municipality rural schools.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter explores and accounts for the methodological decisions that informed this study. The research is a qualitative case study, interpretive in orientation and underpinned by a realist ontology and constructivist epistemology. The methodology draws on Maxwell's (2012) perspective on realist research together with Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) layered ontological view of critical realism. Critical realism is explored in this chapter in terms of the manner in which it informed the development of a heuristic instrument for the purpose of data analysis. This chapter explores the three-phased research design process and associated data analytical cycles. Ethical issues and trustworthiness are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Theoretical perspectives

This chapter follows on from the contextual and historical overview provided in Chapters 2 and 3. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the body of literature on change theory. I also examine the concept of a school as an organisation using the literature related to the field of Organisation Development [OD]. Culture and leadership are explored with reference to the literature on change and OD.

Chapter 6: Positioning teachers within the context of educational transformation

In this chapter I review the literature pertaining specifically to teachers in South Africa within the context of a changing educational landscape. The central argument put forward in this chapter is that teacher agency has been constrained in the new reform context. In line with the realist ontology adopted in this research, the chapter explores possible reasons for these constraining factors by looking more broadly at the socio-historical and cultural factors which have shaped teacher education and training in our country to date. These factors are explored with a view to better understanding the role and position of teachers within the context of this study.

Chapter 7: A critical analysis of the DRF's intervention strategy: context and events

This chapter offers a critical analysis and interpretation of the DRF's school-based intervention from January 2011 to June 2013. Bhaskar's (1979) tiered critical realist framework is used as an analytic tool to help illuminate the findings from the first two analysis activities within the study. This provides the necessary platform for the in-depth analysis of the final layer of the study – the human dimension – which is discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: Analysis and discussion of the human dimension

In this chapter, I focus on the analysis and interpretation of the data relating to the final layer within the heuristic framework, namely the human dimension. Within this dimension a number of sub-themes emerged, including those of partnerships and leadership. This chapter puts forward a strong case for the role of partnerships in an effective intervention. The chapter illuminates the various leadership structures operating at the level of the DRF and more broadly within the community level.

The chapter also draws attention to the various human obstacles which are creating barriers to the efficacy of the change processes at work. Here I argue that teachers' knowledge and understanding of change is superficial, a circumstance explored and accounted for both in terms of the teachers' experiences and, more broadly, the reality beyond.

Chapter 9: Phase III: towards synthesis

In this final phase (Phase III) of the study, the findings from Phases I and II are integrated, synthesised and explored critically through the lenses of complexity and systems theory. This chapter indicates the incompatibility of complexity theory with the research context of the Umzinyathi community. Such theory is more applicable to sophisticated, complex and highly dynamic organisations working within a knowledge-based society. Systems theory was seen to be more appropriate within the context of this community, which remains largely under-developed and still reliant on traditional value systems and practices.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

In this chapter I summarise the various layers of meaning which emerged in the study over a three-year period. I provide commentary on the lessons learned from the DRF's school-based intervention and my research investigation as a whole.

CHAPTER 2

A CONTEXTUAL PROFILE OF RURAL SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Schools are inseparable from the communities they serve, and without a holistic approach to the general conditions of poverty, neither the school nor the community can address the challenges.
(Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, p.24)

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the investigation was initially to examine the model of change used by the DRF in its school-based intervention, and then to examine and understand the experiences and participation of teachers in the process of change. This qualitative investigation is informed by a realist ontology, and more specifically draws on Bhaskar's (1979) theory of critical realism as a method of analysis. Critical realism suggests there are real, unseen mechanisms in the natural and social world which help shape social happenings and people's lives (Bhaskar 1979; Archer 1995, 1996; Sayer 2000; Benton & Craib 2001; Houston 2010). Through the perspective afforded by critical realism, I was better able to understand the complex and varied socio-economic and political forces at play within the broader context of the study. This assisted me in realising the third goal of the research, which was to generate insights necessary for a deep understanding of how the broader context has shaped the DRF's intervention and the teachers' participation therein.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to explore such real and unseen mechanisms as are at work in the broader context, in an attempt to better understand the motivation behind the DRF's school-based intervention process.

First, this chapter explains what is meant by a "rural area" in the South African context. This is followed by a detailed description of the geographical context of the research site, in which reference is made to the history of apartheid and its homeland policies. Thereafter I explore the complex and multiple challenges South African rural schools are facing almost two decades after the transition to democracy. Following on from the discussion in this chapter, Chapter 3 provides

an overview of the actual case, presenting evidence of the realities with which the rural schools within the Umzinyathi district municipality are faced.

2.2 Concept of a rural environment

Buckler (2011, p. 245) argues that there is a need both for more geographically specific data on rural teachers' qualifications, and for researchers to explore teachers' perceptions of how the rural environment affects both teaching and learning.

While Hartshorne maintains that "[t]he dilemmas of education in relation to the social, economic and political structures are nowhere more evident than within the **rural areas** of the less developed world" (1992, p. 111), there is little agreement as to what constitutes a 'rural' as opposed to an 'urban' area in South Africa. The continuous movement of people between so-called rural and urban areas, together with the effects of apartheid and the homelands policy, make such definitions even more complex. In South Africa the notion of rural settlement has been adapted and expanded to include areas of dense settlement created by apartheid land resettlement policies (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 111).

The area in which my research was conducted is classified according to the definitions provided by the Department of Education [DoE], and now more recently the Department of Basic Education [DBE][3] as a rural area[4]. A large majority of the Umzinyathi district municipality falls within the former homeland area of KwaZulu. However Hartshorne (1992, p. 121) cautions one against assuming that rural areas are synonymous with former homeland regions.[5] While extensive areas of the former homeland regions in South Africa can still be classified as rural, as far back as the mid-1980s Muller suggested that the average urbanisation of homelands was

[3] In 2009 the South African Department of Education split into the Department of Basic Education [DBE] and the Department of Higher Education and Training. The acronyms DoE and DBE are used throughout this thesis, and have been used fairly interchangeably, the reason being documents/decisions prior to 2009 essentially refer to the DoE. Many teachers and other stakeholders interviewed in this research also refer to the current Department of Basic Education as the DoE – even still today in 2013.

[4] Definitions of 'rural' tend to emphasise particular features of a rural area or community, for example demographic patterns, socio-cultural and historical factors, as well as economic and environmental characteristics. In general, the DoE defines 'rural' as:

> [a] space where human settlement and infrastructure occupy only small patches of the landscape, and economic activity is dominated by primary production. (RSA. Department of Education [DoE], 2005, p. 8)

[5] Hartshorne provides a critical commentary on the meanings and definitions of rural areas within a South African context in his chapter entitled "Education in Rural Areas" (pp. 111-48). In K. Hartshorne (1992), *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910-1990*.

around 13,5 percent (Muller, 1985, p. 56), while Graaff (1986, p. 10), using different research methods, maintained that the figure was a lot higher.

When deciding whether an area is rural or not, Hartshorne (1992, p. 123) suggests that the following criteria be considered:

- the geographical isolation of the settlement, with a smallness of scale;
- limited access to social amenities and facilities;
- low population densities;
- a limited range or employment opportunities;
- communities are often traditionally administered and therefore are resistant to change; and perhaps most of all,
- communities are politically, socially and intellectually considered to be on the periphery.

Within the context of this study, Hartshorne's (1992) criteria hold true. The region in which this research study was conducted is remote and isolated, settlement consists of a number of traditional homesteads dispersed across the landscape, and the population density is low. Infrastructure and services are very basic within this community, with few homesteads reporting access to running water and electricity (RSA. USDF Report, 2009, pp. 24-25). Further details regarding the context of this research, are provided in Chapter 3.

2.3 The broad context of the research

The research study site is located in the Battlefields region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (see Figure 2.1). The province of KwaZulu-Natal has the second largest population in the country after Gauteng, with 21.39% of the country's population or 10. 8 million people (StatsSA, 2011, p. 3). Just over half (54%) of KwaZulu-Natal's population live in rural communities.

The rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal have a complex history of ongoing struggles over land and natural resources. Although British colonial rule dispossessed a large majority of African people of their land, racial segregation was entrenched with the victory of the National Party in 1948. Apartheid provided South Africa's white population with a large percentage of the land, while black people, comprising the majority of the country's population, were regarded as residing within the 10 Bantustans or homelands, comprising a much smaller percentage of South Africa's workable land and resources. The black people in these areas sustained themselves through agriculture, local service industries, and as migrant labourers in white-owned mines and industry.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal as we know it today was separated into regions as a result of the homeland policy. The former province of Natal represented the former ‘white region’, while several smaller regions dotted across the area constituted the homeland area of KwaZulu. Refer to Figure 2.1.

The former homeland of KwaZulu was granted self-governing status in 1977, but was eventually reintegrated into South Africa to form the new amalgamated province of KwaZulu-Natal in 1994. The homelands policy was a political attempt to divert reasonable black economic and political power aspirations away from the greater, common ‘white’ South Africa (Hartshorne 1992, p. 121). Its legacy is a number of serious and complex socio-economic and environmental problems within the former homeland areas.

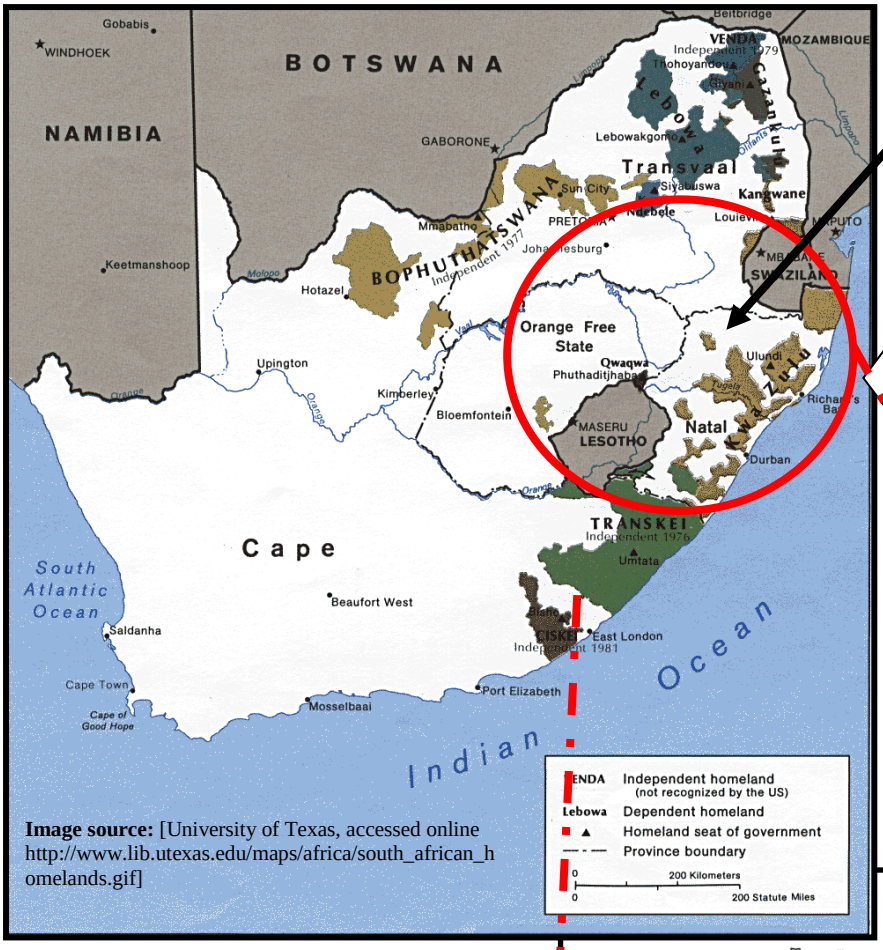


Image source: [University of Texas, accessed online http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/south_african_homelands.gif]

Figure 2.1: Former homeland regions in South Africa during apartheid rule.

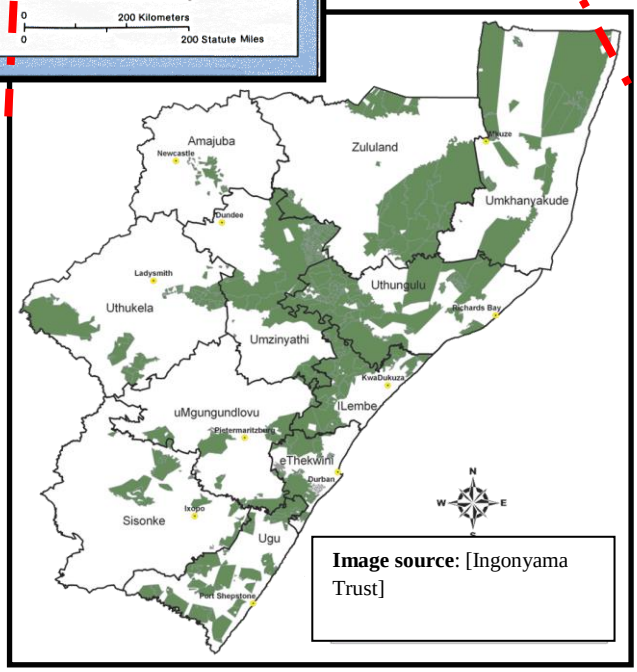


Image source: [Ingonyama Trust]

Figure 2.2: A closer view of the former homeland regions making up KwaZulu. This image shows the fragmented nature of the homeland region.

Location of the Research site

The former KwaZulu homeland (1972-1994) was a comprised of a series of fragmented regions, located within Natal Province. See the enlarged image below.

2.4 Challenges of rural schooling in a period of educational transformation

2.4.1 Education and the apartheid legacy

Apartheid rule (1948-1994) impacted upon the ways in which privilege, power and position were distributed in South African society, and it has left a legacy of unequal infrastructure, resources and capacity across the country. The apartheid state had a particular ideology and value system that it promoted largely through the vehicle of education. The education system was complex and fragmented, with 18 different departments catering for different provinces, former homeland areas and various racial groups. Christie (2008, p. 178) speaks of the "institutional geography" of schooling under the apartheid regime, whereby "racially based departments provided different resources for schooling, different levels of teacher qualification, and different learning outcomes". The approach to teaching and learning during this time was very authoritarian in nature: teachers were viewed as the experts, learners were largely passive, and examinations were the main driving force behind learning.

The notion of separateness extended beyond primary and secondary education into the tertiary sphere, where teacher training colleges were also divided. Many of the former black teacher training facilities were inferior and resulted in "teachers lacking professional confidence and falling short of the required subject competence" (Jansen, 2001, p. 243). Research conducted by Hugo, Jack, Wedekind and Wilson (2010) indicated that around 14% of the teaching corps in KwaZulu-Natal was completely unqualified. Christie (2008, pp. 199-200) draws on the research conducted by Enslin (1990) and Chisholm (1993) in suggesting that separate educational training facilities, coupled with a training philosophy based on fundamental pedagogics, produced a "silent generation of teachers". The lack of strong voices among teachers and their superficial understanding of change with respect to this research context is explored in Section 8.5.1.

As discussed in Section 2.3 of this chapter, the research took place in the former homeland area of KwaZulu. This is significant in that the apartheid system is partly responsible for the huge socio-economic and infrastructural disparities within the region. This is evident in the poor households from which many of the school pupils emanate, the poorly resourced and developed schooling infrastructure, and several generations of teachers formally trained at black teacher training colleges.

2.4.2 The path to educational transformation

With the transition to democracy came new hope of a better future for all citizens, yet, problematically, the new government inherited a "fragmented, racially polarised, and profoundly unequal system of education" (Harley, Barasa, Bertra, Mattson & Pillay, 2000, p. 287). In response to these inequalities, post-1994 South Africa needed an educational policy that could "reduce social inequalities and overhaul the economy" (Lutyens, 2011, p. 10). The reality of the situation is that apartheid created a largely dysfunctional education system for the majority of South Africa's schools which did not simply vanish with the transition to democracy (Christie, 1998, p. 284).

Educational transformation in South Africa needs therefore to be considered within the broader context of the country's socio-political history, as well as from a global perspective, considering the re-entry of our country into the world economy after its first democratic elections in 1994.

The *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development* (1994) describes South Africa's history as:

> A bitter one dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labour policies . . . . A combination of lavish wealth and abject poverty characterises our society . . . . Segregation in education, health, welfare, transport and employment left deep scars of inequality and economic inefficiency. (RSA, 1994, p. 8)

The *White Paper on Education and Training* (1995) describes the context of education in the country thus:

> South Africa has achieved, by a large measure, the most developed and well resourced systems of education and training on the African continent, with the highest participation rates at all levels of the system . . . at the same time, millions of South African adults are functionally illiterate, and millions of children come from the large poorly resourced sectors . . . a majority of students drop out permanently or fail Senior Certificate, and a small minority win entrance to higher education. Access to technological and professional careers requiring a strong basis in mathematics and science is denied to all but a fraction of the age cohort, largely because of the chronic inadequacy of teaching in these subjects. . . . Mutual ignorance amongst the historically separate education systems has been the norm, even between teachers and administrators working virtually side by side in neighbouring systems. (RSA, 1995, pp. 12-13)

The quotations from the two White Paper documents clarify the realities and complexities of South African society, coupled with the educational problems our country faces. Society and education are deeply intertwined, which makes educational transformation even more of a challenge for our leaders, teachers and citizens. There is no 'quick fix' solution to inherited societal and educational problems.

Bloch (2009, p. 89) highlights the importance of South Africans pulling together as a nation to develop a common framework that will assist us in trying to make sense of the looming disaster we see in the education sector within our country: "Differences in politics, approaches and skills should be turned into strengths that are brought together" (Bloch, 2009, p. 89). In identifying a common framework we need to develop an understanding that education is complex and is associated with a number of causal factors that all operate together. Bloch (2009) argues that a set of actions working towards addressing problems need to be seen and to operate as an integrated package.

In seeking to understand the DRF's school-based intervention and the role and participation of teachers within the process of change, it is important to consider the realities faced by our school systems within this period of educational transformation. This study illuminates the plethora of issues associated with educational transformation which need to be considered in each unique school context. Rural education does not happen in a vacuum and therefore it is necessary for one to delve deeper into the complex socio-political factors which have assisted in shaping educational transformation in this country.

2.4.3 The current realities of education in South Africa

As described above (Sections 2.4.1-2.4.2) South Africa has inherited a complex array of issues and challenges associated with education and the broader socio-economic landscape. Whilst people and communities are working towards change, what is of concern is that the country's education system as a whole appears to be in a crisis and remains largely unequal and divided, despite the country having been a democracy for over 19 years (Pease, 2012, p. 1). Mukeredzi (2013, p. 3) comments on the deficiencies in South African rural schools in particular, noting how the majority of South African rural schools lack the necessary material and infrastructural resources, as well as basic services and facilities. In addition, rural schools are facing increasing pressure to perform, whilst having to contend with large class sizes and multi-grade teaching (Mukeredzi, 2009). Quality is seen as the most pressing problem facing education in South Africa.

The recent Limpopo textbook crisis (further details regarding this are provided in Section 2.5.6) is testament to the mismanagement of provincial education departments and the lack of accountability of their staff. To this effect the Public Participation Education Network (PPEN) and its supporters are preparing to "litigate in the Constitutional Court on the right to quality basic education being in the national public interest" (Pease, 2012, p. 1). The PPEN argue that the following are basic priorities that the current education system is failing to deliver:

- proper nutrition programmes and decent early childhood development;
- school infrastructure that is fit for purpose;
- the use of mother-tongue, bilingual education in the foundation phase and intermediate phases (at least six years of schooling);
- the professional development and promotion of skilled teachers and the development of accountability and support structures at school level;
- the provision of appropriate education support materials; and
- the restructuring of school funding to ensure quality education for all.

(cited by Pease, 2012)

The above goals are achievable and need to be pursued as a matter of priority as many children's lives and futures are at stake. Section 2.5 of this chapter explores these "basic education priorities" as identified by the PPEN, and discusses them within the context of rural education.

2.4.4 Transformational tensions

According to literature on rural education in a South African context, the histories and various structures in place have created conditions and circumstances of "oppression, deprivation, disadvantage and deficit" (RSA. DoE, 2005, p. 8). People and communities living within rural contexts are frequently stereotyped as living on the 'periphery' and as a result being powerless and on the 'dark side' of the 'enlightened and progressive' urban centres. The committee that conducted extensive research for the *Ministerial Report on Rural Education* (RSA. DoE, 2005) noted the importance of recognising the positive capabilities and assets of rural people. This emphasises the importance of the participation and involvement of people and community members working towards change and improvement in their own communities (refer to Section 8.5.2).

The following statement by a rural teacher speaks to the realities of policies and change in education in this country:

> [m]ost of our policies do not speak to the challenges experienced by teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in rural communities. The experience of the community in practice should be mirrored by policies that address these issues. (RSA. DoE, 2005, p. 11)

A review of literature and my own observations in the field have illuminated various **tensions** associated with the educational transformation process. These tensions, I argue, are preventing teachers and rural community members from having an active voice and role in working towards change and betterment within their schools and ultimately their environment generally (see Section 8.5). I have identified tensions operating at two levels:

- at the policy level; and
- at the level of participation.

Mattson and Harley (2002, p. 289) argue that "modernist neo-liberal discourses cannot simply be integrated or 'indigenised' into traditional settings through policy edict, specification of teacher roles and the good intentions of social reconstructionism". Their argument is presented against the backdrop of Giddens's work presented in the book *The Consequence of Modernity* (1990). In this work, Giddens explains how modernity cannot be imposed and integrated with tradition in any balanced way; in his view modernity can only "displace and appropriate tradition" (cited in Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 289). Giddens views modernity as being able to open up all knowledge to doubt and questioning. In the quest for social progress, practices need to be regularly re-evaluated and adjusted in accordance with incoming 'new knowledge'; i.e., a modern, western approach means constant change, and a desire to work towards better and more efficient systems and processes – in this case, of school function and operation.

The new South African state found it necessary to adopt a modern and western education model rooted in social justice, equity and democracy, so as to address the inequalities of the previous system. The shifts in thinking about the curriculum have been influenced by global discourses (information-based, high-tech, high skills, post-Fordist), whereby a high degree of teacher sophistication, resources and modernisation are assumed (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 285).

I agree with the arguments presented by Giddens (1990) and Mattson & Harley (2002), in that modern discourses cannot simply be integrated into traditional contexts. In this instance, new

educational policy has created many tensions and challenges for rural school contexts in South Africa. As previously mentioned, Giddens (1990) associates modernity with change and progress, and these factors come into conflict with traditional contexts and mindsets: "Tradition, by contrast, is a self-validating system which does not open its practices up to doubt, but defends them unreflexively through appeals to ritual and authority, in the interests of preservation rather than progress" (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 289).

The tension created here results from a modernist, western education policy being imposed in a rural context steeped in traditional practices; that is, approach that values progress and change is being forced onto a community which values ritual, authority and preservation. Mattson & Harley (2002, pp. 284-326) contend that these shifts have resulted in many tensions and paradoxes for teachers, parents and pupils within rural school contexts.

To clarify the concept of "traditional mindsets and practises" within schools, Mattson & Harley (2002, p. 290) note that these traditional systems relate to a combination of indigenous customs and early modern schooling systems, overlaid with a highly conservative philosophy of apartheid education. In addition to traditional views of education, governance and leadership practices operating within rural contexts also need to be taken into consideration, particularly as these pertain to the tensions associated with participation.

In his research on rural poverty within the Eastern Cape, Westaway (2012, pp. 115-25) argues that two modes of leadership and governance co-exist concurrently in South Africa. We have a civil society which is ruled and run according to democratic principles, whilst at the same time we have a number of rural areas in South Africa governed according to traditional practices and custom. In 2004, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act [TLGFA] was endorsed. This act stipulates that traditional councils must be established in former homeland areas and must operate alongside elected local municipalities (Westaway, 2012, p.122). Traditional councils operating within these areas are not governed under the guidelines of democratic principles. No elections take place, and members are rather drawn from traditional authorities and those appointed by them (Westaway, 2012, p. 122).

Within a rural community, where there is a strong presence of tribal authority, change within schools is difficult and complex. Hartshorne (1992, p. 124), drawing on the work of Smith (1984) notes that several rural schools across the landscape remain powerless among local leadership structures. Teachers and parents feel the need to respect tribal authorities and cultural practices. Whilst Hartshorne (1992) and Westaway (2012) argue that traditional leadership structures

frequently inhibit change within rural contexts, the findings from this research suggest otherwise. This study provides evidence of a progressive and forward-thinking traditional authority which has enabled change in many situations. Section 8.2.1 of this research explores the role of partnerships among civil society, the state and the traditional authority, working together towards change within the community.

Schools are having to deal with the pressures of a modern curriculum steeped in democratic ideals and fostering fair participation and input. Teachers, principals and parents are caught in the contradictions between the new curriculum and education policy and traditional ways of being. Coupled with this, different generations of teachers as well as pupils face an increasing gap and therefore tension between the 'old' and the 'new' ways of being. Jessop (1997, p. 128) captures some these tensions as follows:

> Rural teachers were ambivalent about the impact of modernity on schooling. There was considerable nostalgia among teachers for an imagined golden age, where children respected their elders and certainty prevailed. Nostalgia for the old order imagined or real, was coupled with suspicion towards the new battery of urban-biased, democratic and politically radical values that have accompanied the collapse of Apartheid and the coming of modernity. For some teachers there were difficulties in reconciling the contradictions of the breakdown in traditional values ('a bad thing') being heralded at the same time as the collapse of apartheid ('as a good thing'). These ideological tensions were exacerbated by the fact that virtually all teachers regarded technology and the tools of modernity in a positive light.

2.5 The complex nature of rural schooling

There is a great deal of evidence illustrating the challenges and difficulties teachers within Sub-Saharan Africa grapple with on a daily basis (Moon & Buckler, 2007). Buckler (2011, p. 246) speaks of the over-crowded nature of schools, under-resourced classrooms, poor teacher salaries, the debilitating impact of HIV/AIDS in this region, and the prevalence of corruption. Such challenges appear to be particularly acute in rural school contexts and are having an impact upon teacher performance and morale (Buckler, 2011, p. 246). This section of the chapter highlights specific challenges unique to the South African rural context.

2.5.1 Governance, leadership and decision making in rural schools

It is a widespread practice for education officials operating at provincial and district levels to support and play a developmental role in assisting school principals and teachers (RSA. DoE,

2000b). Since 1994, new systems have been put in place to assist schools and teachers with the implementation of new policy and curricula. The 2011 Education Management Information System (EMIS) survey statistics revealed that there are an estimated 420 608 teachers, 12 283 875 pupils and 25 851 schools within South Africa (RSA. Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 1). KwaZulu-Natal province has 2956 rural schools, which provide education to approximately 1 097 499 pupils (Gardiner 2008). The high level of attrition within this system, together with the distribution of school-going children across remote areas, provides additional administration challenges for government officials. In addition, many district officials themselves lack the necessary administrative and management skills and have demonstrated a superficial knowledge and understanding of policy shifts and changes to pedagogical practice (RSA. DoE, 2000b).

Within rural environments the contrasts between the district office in the nearby urban centre and schools in the surrounding district are vast. District offices are operational, with electricity, water and sanitation facilities. They are equipped with the necessary telecommunication technology and other administration resources and support staff, whilst the schools down the road often have none of the above (Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), 2005, pp. 128-29). This has been known to create tensions between officials and local school staff. Research conducted in rural schools has found that overall the district officials are perceived as unsupportive and authoritarian, operating as an 'inspectorate' rather than fulfilling a supportive and developmental role. The district office is known to call meetings at the last minute and frequently during school hours, with no contingency plans for the schools' pupils (NMF, 2005, pp. 128-29). The differences between the district office and outlying rural schools have created further divisions, and the "modern versus traditional" tension explored in the previous section of this chapter (Section 2.4.4) reappears.

As far as leadership and governance is concerned, each school elects a School Governing Body (SGB) which is normally made up of the school principal and a select group of teachers and parents. SGBs have been given a variety of responsibilities, from the setting of school admission policies subject to requirements stipulated by the provincial DoE, to making recommendations regarding the appointment of teachers and other school staff members (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 60). According to the *South African Schools Act* the role of the SGB is as follows:

> A governing body of a public school **must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources** supplied by the State in order to **improve the quality of education** provided by the schools to all learners at the school. (RSA. 1996a, p. 21, bold added)

It is widely reported that parental involvement and participation within rural communities is limited and marginalised, while teachers and principals dominate the decision-making process and frequently the Tribal Chief exercises his own authority on issues. It is widely reported that SGBs do not fulfil the expectations of a democratic process (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 60).

With well-functioning and competent district offices and officials, school management should improve and school principals and teachers should reap the benefits. Bloch (2009, p. 170) provides the example of a district curriculum leader working in the rural areas of the Little Karoo. The district curriculum leader speaks of the importance of

> [c]reating exceptional schools. Paying attention to the whole cycle of learning, teaching and assessment, continuous professional development of teachers; working with the special requirements of HoDs, subject leaders and subject heads; building school management teams – especially around timetabling, use of resources; and involvement and planning within the greater school community.

2.5.2 Socio- economic factors within the context of rural schooling

- **Educational spending**

Buckland and Fielden (1994) describe how during the apartheid regime education expenditure was extraordinarily and purposefully unequal between race groups. Christie (2008, p. 135) reiterates this point, noting that in 1994 the apartheid government was spending four times more on the education of a white child than on a black child, whilst during the heyday of apartheid this statistic was as high as twelve times. Since the passing of the *South African Schools Act* in 1996, the following school funding obligations are now mandatory;

> The state must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities in educational provision. (RSA. South African Schools Act 1996a, Section 34.1)

Educational expenditure has increased exponentially in South Africa from 3.1 billion Rand in 1995 to 105.5 billion Rand in 2007 (RSA. National Treasury, 2007, pp. 3-19). The recent 2012

National Budget report published by the National Treasury revealed that education was receiving the largest share in the annual budget allocation, with R207.3 billion being put forward. The government declared a very clear mandate in 2012 by placing huge priority on educational expenditure. Table 2.1 shows select countries' contribution to education as a percentage of their annual GDP, in relation to their global education ranking according to overall quality of the education system as a whole. The ranking system is that of the World Economic Forum [WEF] (Schwab, 2010). What is interesting to note is that many of the more developed countries are spending a smaller amount of their annual GDP on education, yet are delivering better results and school performance overall. South Africa is near to the bottom as far as overall quality is concerned. This table suggests that educational expenditure is not always associated with good performance and pupil achievement.

Table 2.1: Public expenditure on education, select countries (2009-2010) vs global education rankings (2010-2011).

Country	As a percentage of country's GDP	WEF Global Education ranking out of a total of 139 countries
South Africa	**5.98**	**130**
Argentina	6.09	90
Australia	5.1	12
Botswana	7.8	48
Chile	4.5	100
Kenya	6.7	32
Malaysia	5.7	23
Mauritius	3.1	50
Singapore	3.07	1
Zimbabwe	2.5	46

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009-2010 and WEF Global Competitiveness Report, 2010-2011. (Schwab 2010)

In a review conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2008, it was revealed that despite huge financial inputs into transformation in education in South Africa, the performance of the educational system and its various components remains very disappointing. Research indicates that many other developing countries far poorer than South Africa achieve better results in terms of learner achievement, retention and completion, as indicated in Table 2.1. The OECD suggests that educational transformation in South Africa has been slowed by a variety of complex problems, including the scale of existing inequalities, slow

economic growths rates, competition from other social sectors, and inefficiencies in education management and delivery (OECD, 2008, p. 96).

- **Poverty and Performance**

Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga (cited by Taylor & Yu, 2009, p. 66) has been quoted as saying that "quality education is a key weapon in fighting poverty and unemployment". Fleisch, (2008, p. 55) talks of poverty as "an inability to acquire the essential material means to maintain life". Poverty and unemployment are everyday realities within rural communities in South Africa, and – in the absence of effective education – poverty is all too easily passed on from one generation to the next.

Much of how poverty affects performance at school is linked to the functioning of the family and home environment. Fleisch (2008, p. 60) makes reference to the types of "socialisation and enculturation" that take place within the home. These involve the processes of communication and discussion with children, the type of language that is used and the quality of conversations that occur. It is also about how reading is modelled and the general beliefs pertaining to education and literacy within the home. Access to resources such as books and computers within the home should also be taken into consideration. Research conducted by Hill and Taylor (2004) shows how poor communities are less likely to be involved in the life of the school. Furthermore, schools located within such communities themselves have a tendency not to promote parent-school involvement.

Research indicates strong correlations between the duration of parents' educational careers and the success of their children (Anderson, Case & Lam, 2001, pp. 37-59). Sender (2002) notes that women who are more highly educated are better able to access a wage and so improve the opportunities and situation for their children. Statistics from the 2003 Rural Education Survey (cited in the NMF, 2005) revealed that 41% of rural women in KwaZulu-Natal and 30% in the Eastern Cape are illiterate.

School enrolment and regular attendance are strongly linked to wealth and a regular income within a family (Fleisch 2008, p. 67). Porteus, Clacherty, Mdiya, Pelo, Matsai, Qwade and Donald (2000) observe that families in extreme poverty and isolated environments have fewer social support structures in place and are less likely to access social grants. This results in social isolation, few educational opportunities for children, and an exacerbation of the poverty cycle.

Other education-related costs such as uniforms, stationery and transportation are also obstacles to regular school attendance and therefore barriers to learner achievement (Fleisch 2008, p. 67).

In South Africa in 2011, there were a total of 12 283 875 pupils in ordinary public and independent schools, with 2.8 million pupils enrolled in KwaZulu-Natal (23.2% of the national total), 1.9 million (16% of the national total) in the Eastern Cape and 1.7 million in Limpopo Province (13.8% of the national total) respectively (RSA. Department of Basic Education EMIS report, 2011, p.1). Each of these provinces includes former homeland regions within their boundaries, and – partly as a result of this – some of the most problematic schools are to be found in these areas. In addition, high levels of unemployment, adult illiteracy and poverty are reported in these regions. The following statistics from the General Household Survey (GHS) (Statistics South Africa, 2011) reveal the extent of dependence on social grants as the only form of income for households: 37.9% of households in the Eastern Cape, 33.8% of households in Limpopo, and 24% of all households in KwaZulu-Natal.

This chapter has explored the notions of poverty and performance. The work of Paulo Freire in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is relevant within this context. He is well known for his emancipatory ideas concerning illiteracy, especially amongst adults within oppressed communities (Giroux, 1985, p. xii). Freire worked and conducted research in less developed regions of the world, namely Latin America, particularly Brazil, Africa and the 'ghetto' areas within some of North America's largest cities. This renders Freire's philosophies about teaching and learning of particular relevance to this study.

Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* centres on leading individuals to take a new approach to dealing with and overcoming their problems. An education focussing on the principle of "I wonder, instead of I merely do" is fundamental to Freire's pedagogy (Freire, 1973, pp. 36-38). Freire rejects the idea that there is a "universalised form of oppression" (Giroux, 1985, p. xii). Instead he acknowledges the unique environment and context in which people are located, with their own unique modes of domination and social order.

Poverty in South Africa is associated with illiteracy and lack of skills, deficits shared by many adults within rural communities across our country. Parental illiteracy was cited as an issue within local school communities in the course of this case study; see Section 8.4.3. Within this context Freire would note that "illiteracy itself is not the original problem" (Freire, 1985, p. 13). Developing an understanding of these people's situation and the context of their struggle is crucial to assisting people to realise their own liberation. Freire has redefined and politicised our

understanding of literacy. He (1985) argues that traditional forms of education have functioned in a way to further alienate oppressed groups. This is relevant in the context of apartheid South Africa and can be traced back to South Africa's pre-apartheid days where segregation was already in place. As Westaway (2012, p. 115) has pointed out, "segregationism was a foundation stone of South Africa in the moment of its creation in 1910".

"To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness, to understand what one reads and writes and to communicate graphically" (Freire, 1973, p. 48). Freire fashioned his adult literacy programme around these principles, teaching adults to read in relation to the awakening of their socio-political consciousness. Incorporating Freire's pedagogical ideas into adult literacy and parent participation programmes within the context of this study is discussed in Section 8.4.3.

- **The issue of school fees**

Central to the new democracy was the constitutional guarantee of basic education for all. Once the ANC came into power it quickly realised, however, that there would be insufficient public funds to equalise the backlogs required and provide quality education to all South African pupils (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 62). The only alternative seemed to lie in allowing schools to charge user fees (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 62). In 1995, the Hunter Report[6] recommended three policy options, all of which called for school fees to support the public funding of schools. There was initially opposition to the notion of school fees. However arguments were eventually accepted noting that fees would provide schools with the required additional funding. Fees paid by wealthier communities would also assist in releasing funding for poorer schools, therefore promoting more equal opportunities for all (Donaldson, 1992, and Pampallis, 1998). This argument for fees was clearly communicated in the Hunter Report, which was referred to as the "preferred partnership funding" option, calling for the combination of obligatory fees and voluntary contributions in conjunction with public funding. Furthermore, the Hunter Report also recommended that school fees be paid on a sliding scale relative to the income levels of households, with poor families paying no fees.

The role of the DBE is to create and maintain infrastructure, pay teacher salaries and provide a subsidy per pupil based on various financial factors (Luytens, 2011, p. 11). Per pupil subsidies

[6] The *Hunter Report* (named after its chairperson, Prof. Peter Hunter) was commissioned by the Minister of Education in 1995 and compiled by a committee working towards reviewing the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools.

were originally managed through a quintile system that divided schools into five categories, according to the poverty levels in the geographical areas in which they were located. The intention here was to provide poorer regions with larger state subsidies. The system had a number of irregularities and many schools complained that they had been placed in the incorrect quintile. In April 2011, a simpler version of public school funding was introduced. Schools would be classified as either 'fee-paying' or 'non-fee paying'. The new system is to provide 'non-fee paying' schools with the current quintile 1 amount of R960-00 per pupil on an annual basis, while fee-paying schools will be subsidised in relation to the value of fees they are able to collect (Luytens, 2011, p. 11).

Whilst a no-fee school policy appears to have impacted significantly upon school enrolment levels (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 71), there are a number of hidden costs which also result in learners failing to attend school, such as the costs of school uniforms, stationery, and transport. One of the greatest concerns with respect to no-fee schools is that these schools have no sense of accountability. "Parents cannot demand anything since they are not paying anything" (Luytens, 2011, p. 12). Within the area of my research, all 17 of the schools forming a part of the DRF's school-based intervention are classified as 'non fee-paying schools'. This means that none of the schools require parents to pay school fees, and that no child can be excluded from school as a result of the non-payment of school fees. Section 8.4.3 of this research makes reference to the issue of school fees within the rural Umzinyathi school community.

2.5.3 Health, nutrition and vulnerability

- **Health**

Research done by the NMF (2005) indicates that in South Africa poor health in children is strongly associated with poverty. Many caregivers cite ill health as a major reason for absenteeism, yet it has been noted that within rural school environments the impact of ill health is rarely spoken of (NMF, 2005, p. 57). In her seminal paper on AIDS in education, Coombe (2000) has suggested that the impact of the pandemic on the education system has the potential to be "catastrophic". HIV/AIDS will result in altered schooling systems within our country, with a reduction in pupil and teacher numbers, a loss of valuable experience and more trauma within the classroom. It is estimated that 45 000 teachers (making up 12.5% of the public school work force) living in South Africa are HIV positive, with KwaZulu-Natal reporting the highest infection rate of teachers at 21% (Louw, Shisana, Peltzer & Zungu, 2009, p. 205). It is estimated that around

4000 teachers die each year from AIDs-related deaths, equating to around 11 teacher deaths each day (www.myfundi.co.za, accessed 24 June 2012).

According to research conducted by Louw et al. (2009, p. 205) HIV/AIDS is having the following impacts on schools around South Africa:

- high teacher absenteeism – up to 20 days per annum
- some of the time away is for funerals, with
- 6.7% of teachers reporting attendance at colleagues' funerals;
- 13.4% of teachers reporting attendance at family funerals; and
- 47.6% of teachers reporting attendance at community funerals.

As a result, large numbers of teachers (71%) are experiencing symptoms of depression. These results indicate a need for support systems to be put in place for both teachers and pupils in dealing with the problem of HIV/AIDS within schools and the community at large (Louw *et al.*, p. 206). Thus, the "relationship between AIDS and the education sector is circular: as the epidemic worsens, the education sector is damaged, which in turn is likely to increase the incidence of HIV transmission" (Peltzer, Ramlagan, Shisana, Connolly & Zuma, 2008).

An increase in orphans will impact upon school enrolment numbers and the effects of poverty are likely to deepen. Child-headed households are increasing, as is the need for child labour, the consequence being that school absenteeism will be exacerbated. Child-headed households are a reality within the context of this case study, as is discussed in Section 3.3.2.

Children with disabilities form a large group whose needs often go unnoticed. Exclusion and shame are associated with disabilities, particularly within rural communities.[7] Government policy (*White Paper 6*) highlights the importance of inclusion; however, the realities confronted by disabled children in rural environments are such that many do not have the means to even get to school. Disability also imposes additional costs on a family. In a study conducted within rural communities in Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape Provinces by the Human Sciences

[7] Within the area of study, a Full Service School [FSS] is in the process of being built. See Figures 8.1 and 8.2 which illustrate the building progress of the FSS at one of the local primary schools. The concept of a FSS was introduced in *White Paper 6*. FSS refers to "mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner" (RSA. DoE, 2009, p. 7). Such schools embrace a philosophy that is underpinned by the principles of inclusion: "FSS celebrate diversity through recognising potential, increasing participation, overcoming and reducing barriers and removing stigmatisation and labelling" (RSA. DoE, 2009, p. 7).

Research Council (HSRC) (2000), a mere (29%) of school principals interviewed felt that their schools and staff were adequately equipped and trained to deal with special needs cases.

- **Nutrition**

Malnutrition is a reality faced by many school children in South Africa, resulting in stunting, micro-nutrient deficiencies and short term hunger (Fleisch, 2008, p. 34). School feeding schemes are thus a major incentive for school attendance. The Primary School Feeding Programme was introduced in 1994 as one of the Presidential Projects for the country. This programme formed part of the Integrated Nutrition Programme which was jointly run and managed by the Departments of Health and Education. In 2004 the Department of Education took full control of the project. The targeting strategy for school feeding relates to the following factors:

- geographical areas where poverty levels are high
- prioritise certain areas according to severity of poverty
- identification of high priority schools with informal settlement and rural areas.

(OEDC, 2008, p. 60)

Despite such feeding schemes being in place, not all school nutrition programmes have the correct nutritional value and micro-nutrients required by children for cognitive development. In a study done by Faber, Smuts and Benade (1999) of a poor community in Durban, it was found that children consumed a small variety of foodstuffs, and these consisted largely consisted of carbohydrates. There was little fruit and vegetables in their diet, despite the presence of food gardens in many communities. Children seldom ate protein products. These facts point to ignorance about nutrition and to the importance of diet-related education for teachers and parental bodies. Other problems with school feeding schemes in general include the concern that food is not available to vulnerable children over weekends and school holiday periods. In addition, not all the food being served at school is always of sufficient nutritional quality, and frequently departmental grant allocations (R1.50 per child per school day) are inadequate to meet the correct nutritional needs of children (Castle & Bialobrzeska, (date unknown), cited in Siyanakekela Baseline Report, 2010, p. 34).

- **Child vulnerability**

Family structure plays a role in the progress of a child at school. The statistics relating to broken or vulnerable homes in South Africa are extensive. With particular reference to former

disadvantaged groups in South Africa, research conducted by Anderson, Case and Lam (2001), revealed that at the age of 12, only 55% of black and coloured children live with both parents. By the age of 17 this figure has fallen to 50%. Their conclusion is that children living with both parents obtain the best outcomes in terms of enrolments, number of grades completed and overall results. The statistics relating to single-parent homes or, in some cases, parents being completely absent, is a reality linked to the AIDS pandemic as well as the fact that parents in rural areas are often forced to seek employment in nearby urban areas. See Section 3.3.2, which explores the notion of vulnerable children within the context of this case study.

2.5.4 Transport

For the majority of rural school-going children, attending school involves a lengthy walk to and from school each day. Some children have to walk long distances and do not always have the necessary nutrition to meet their energy requirements; they arrive at school late, exhausted and hungry. Many children have to face the elements, walking in very hot, cold or wet weather, which affects their health and results in greater absentee rates. The road to school is not always safe, with a high chance of pedestrian accidents, and low-lying drifts or bridges to cross which may be flooded in the rainy season. Crime has also been cited as an issue, with perpetrators preying on young children on their way to or from school. The quotation below captures the realities faced by many rural school pupils in our country:

> I walk a long distance from here to Nongeke. I have to buy school shoes approximately three times a year. Our journeys to school are actually not right. We have to pass scary bushes. When we get to school we are no longer tidy as we were when we left home. It is worse when it is raining. (NMF, 2005, p. 47)

The literature pertaining to rural schools also points to the long and expensive journeys teachers make on a daily basis, commuting between home and school (Buckler, 2011, p. 246). Section 3.3.3, below, describes the specific challenge transport poses to both teachers and pupils within the rural context of this case study.

2.5.5 Service delivery and infrastructure

Schools form an integral part of the communities which they serve and in many ways are viewed as a symbol of development. Schools are utilised for many purposes besides learning: meetings are held here, they are used as polling stations, adult learning centres, and in some cases places of public shelter. For many communities, schools are viewed as centres of hope. However, when the community goes without water or electricity, so will the school. In many rural communities today,

despite efforts and promises made by local governments, people are reliant on village pumps, pit-latrines and forests or bush for firewood. Access to services is limited and as a result a lengthy period of time is spent each day collecting wood and water. In many cases children perform these chores before and after school. This is by no means unique to South African rural life, as research into the broader African context suggests. Many rural schools are poorly built structures and are in need of repair. Buckler (2011, p. 246) cites Leach, 2005, Mukichi, 2008, and Osei, 2006, who all note the inadequacies of rural schools to meet the needs of expanding enrolments. Furthermore a shortage of classroom resources (Lujara, Kissaka, Trojer, & Mvungi, 2007), a lack of water and no or limited hygienic toilet facilities (Mitchell & Sowe, 2003; Bennell, 2004; LaFraniere, 2005) are also cited as common service delivery and infrastructural issues within the broader African rural school context.

In South Africa the lack of basic services affects every aspect of community life, but particularly schools. Many school buildings are in a state of disrepair, with doors, windows and roofing needing to be replaced. As a result classrooms are not always safe learning spaces. In the Rural Education survey conducted in 2003 (cited in the NMF report, 2005, p. 84), 76% of schools in South Africa were reported at that stage not to have proper doors, windows, flooring and adequate toilet facilities. Only 45% of schools reported that they had access to clean drinking water. A number of factors can be held responsible for the lack of infrastructure and service delivery to rural communities and schools. First, under the apartheid regime the system of Bantu Education laid the basis for under-funded and under-resourced schools, many of which are found within rural areas today (Bloch, 2009, p. 91), including disadvantaged former homeland areas. There was huge resistance to the system of Bantu education, which manifested itself in the damage of school property and infrastructure (Bloch, 2009, p. 92). In some instances, repairs to damaged property have never occurred.

The new government has inherited a huge backlog of infrastructural disparities, and these will take time and money to resolve. While education policy is managed by national government, the implementation of projects such as infrastructural upgrade and development is managed and run at a provincial level (Lutyens, 2011, p. 11). This can be problematic, as the national government does not have the power to insist how money is allocated or spent within provincial boundaries, and as a result there is no direct accountability. The Eastern Cape Department of Education is a case in point, where in its last audit, it was revealed that R40 million was paid over to companies owned by department officials or family members, “R325 million worth of goods and services was accounted for and R27 million was written off as fruitless and wasteful expenditure”

(Capazorio, 2011). Hence the decision that the National Department take over the running of the Eastern Cape Education Department in 2011 (Hoffmann & Strydom, 2011). Much of the literature regarding poor delivery and protracted school reform processes in South Africa points to issues of poor planning, incompetence, misuse of funding and an inability to attract competent and skilled staff members at a provincial and district level (Christie, 2008; Fleisch, 2008; Bloch, 2009; Luytens, 2011). Consequently, infrastructural backlogs remain a problem in many schools, particularly in rural areas, despite large budgetary allocations being made and the fact that nineteen years have elapsed since the end of apartheid. Infrastructural backlogs are an element the DRF is working hard to address in its 17 supported schools. This is explored in detail in Section 3.3.4, whilst Table 7.3 documents evidence of infrastructural progress within the community schools.

In the study conducted by the HSRC for the NMF report (2005, p. 72), it was found that communities see the provision of infrastructure as integral to the improvement of schooling and education. Yet Crouch and Mabogoane (2001) found that physical resources and the infrastructure within schools had little bearing on pupil performance. Van der Berg and Burger (2002) concur to some extent, noting that poverty per se is not a predictor of learning and outcomes, as many poor schools have been shown to outperform richer and better resourced schools. However, I contend that if service delivery improves within a community, children are likely to have more time to learn, learning will be easier and absentee rates are also likely to decline. Schools that are safe environments, that have access to water and proper toilet facilities, are also likely to have better attendance rates. The findings from the NMF report (2005, p. 72) conclude that for rural development and service delivery initiatives to be sustainable, they require the integration of educational issues together with strong community involvement and participation.

2.5.6 Learning and teaching materials

In any education system, books are an important means of introducing and reinforcing the curriculum. In South Africa books play a role in supporting the type of learning and content associated with curriculum reform. In many schools textbooks are the main and sometimes the only resource. In his 2011 State of the Nation Address, President Zuma indicated that the focus of the Department of Basic Education would be on "teachers, textbooks and time" (RSA, 2011). For many remote and disadvantaged schools, access to the curriculum and policy documents is limited and so textbooks by default become the "defined curriculum" (OEDC report, 2008, p. 178). Due to the fact that textbooks are the most widely used teaching aid, it is important that they be

accessible, understandable and relevant to a wide range of the country's populace. To this end, the National Treasury has prioritised spending on textbooks and other learner support materials.

The recent Limpopo textbook debacle (May 2012, ongoing at the time of writing) has put the reality many schools face with respect to inadequate learning materials into the spotlight. Human Rights Organisation Section 27 took the Department of Basic Education to the Gauteng North High Court on 17 May 2012 with the aim of forcing it to deliver textbooks to schools within Limpopo Province, many of which have been without textbooks for up to seven months (Maromo, 2012). Mary Metcalfe, former Higher Education Director General, was asked to put together a task team to investigate the textbook crisis in Limpopo. Her report noted many shortcomings in the functioning of the Limpopo Department of Education [LDoE], and a lack of accountability as far as its officials were concerned. Key findings from the report pointed to poor management of the LDoE's budget, meaning that no money was available for textbooks in 2012; a five-month delay in the initial ordering of textbooks, coupled with serious shortcomings as far as the despatch and delivery of books to schools were concerned (Metcalfe, 2012). While these findings are unique to the LDoE, many other provincial Education Departments have shown similar shortcomings that continue to place schools within their jurisdiction at a disadvantage (Section 2.4.3 of this chapter identifies key priority areas as far as education in our country is concerned).

In research conducted by the HSRC for the NMF (2005, p. 84), 71% of rural teachers surveyed cited a lack of teaching aids as one of the major barriers to effective teaching and learning. Research conducted by the Rural Education Survey (2003, cited in the NMF report, 2005, p. 84) reported that within the rural schools observed, only 5% reported basic access to a library, 49% to maps and charts, and 10% to educational toys and games.

A wide variety of teaching materials is required to cater for the demands of the new curriculum, the various subjects, and the learning style of each pupil. In South Africa there is a relatively large market (R9.6 million) for commercially available teaching aids such as posters, maps, globes and other non-book products (OECD report, 2008, p. 186). But these resources are expensive and their availability tends to be concentrated in urban centres. The Department of Education has a "QIDS UP" plan in place (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme) aiming to provide support in the form of libraries, science laboratories, computer centres etc. to disadvantaged schools in need (OECD report, 2008, p. 186).

Of concern, however, is that many of the teachers in rural and disadvantaged schools lack the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge to use the resources and teaching aids appropriately

and effectively. Teacher competency is explored in greater depth in Section 6.4. In a survey conducted by the HSRC for the NMF (2005, p. 85), the majority of the teachers claimed that they found the material in the textbooks too difficult; many of them did not understand the concepts involved and consequently were unable to explain them to the pupils concerned.

2.5.7 Language and learning

It is argued that language considerations in education policy, like most other aspects of educational policy in South Africa, are framed and motivated by political and economic interests rather than sound educational theory and practice (Vinjevold, 1999, p. 206). The medium of instruction is a critical issue for pupil performance and success at school. In South Africa less than one child in ten speaks English as their first language (Fleisch, 2008, p. 98), yet by Grade Three the majority of pupils will be taught and assessed in the English language. In the last few years there has been widespread movement of people in and around South Africa, which has led to a dynamic demography and a multicultural population. This has presented a number of challenges, mainly observable in urban areas where classrooms contain a wide variety of pupils speaking different mother-tongue languages. Brown (1999, p. 9) observes that a "significant proportion of South Africa's learners will face a situation where their home language in not on offer at the schools at which they attend". Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold (2003, p. 54) note that language is a social factor and has strong ties to poverty, and in our specific context, the legacy of discrimination associated with apartheid policy. Vinjevold (1999, p. 220) cites a study done by Setati, who observed that English is perceived by a large majority of teachers and parents as a language of power and socio-economic progress in South Africa. As a result, English is the language of choice for most classrooms as it is seen to be in the 'best interest of the learners'. A large amount of research has been done on language and school achievement. The literature unanimously points to the covariance of under-achievement being strongly tied a subject being taught in a second or additional language (Fleisch, 2008, p. 99). Language has been cited as an area of concern within the schools making up this case study. This issue is explored in Section 3.3.6.

The rapid shifts in the linguistic profiles of schools over the last decade have not necessarily been accompanied by changes in language policies within schools or teaching staff (Vinjevold, 1999, p. 221). The result is that teachers are not proficient in the language spoken by the majority of the learners; in many cases, the teacher is not a mother-tongue English speaker who is now being faced with the additional challenge of communicating and teaching complex terminology in a

language he or she is not comfortable with. As a result language mixing, code switching and translation take place. To further complicate the problem, textbooks are usually in English as well as the final assessment. Both situations described above result in limited communication between the teacher and pupils; responses and instructions tend to be monosyllabic, and as a result deep learning and vocabulary development is impossible (Vinjevold, 1999, p. 221). Brock-Unte and Holmarscottir's (2004) study of classrooms in the Western Cape where language mixing occurred revealed that code switching seldom provides children with the necessary "language knowledge" and confidence to cope in assessment situations: hence the high rates of failure.

The impact of family and home environments on language development must also be considered. In a large majority of poor home environments, the educational attainment of the parents is very low, and as a result the exposure to literary materials at home, the frequency of reading and communication activities remain limited, if not non-existent (Fleisch, 2008, p. 61). Exposure to the English language will also be limited, and this is exacerbated within more isolated or rural communities.

2.6 Conclusion

The environment in which I have conducted this study is characterised by rich cultural, social and economic complexities. Underlying the context are the unique roles played by various historical forces that have contributed to the shape of rural schooling today.

This chapter reviewed the literature that has proved useful in developing a theoretical understanding of the complex nature of rural schooling in a South African context. This in turn has assisted in the exploration of real and unseen mechanisms informing the immediate and broader context of the case study. The literature draws attention to the crisis in which rural education in South Africa finds itself and the multiple challenges that it faces.

Chapter 3 continues to explore the issues introduced in this chapter, but the focus sharpens to the specific case of the rural schools within the Umzinyathi district municipality

CHAPTER 3

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CASE

The goal of complex reform is specifically to improve instruction, and thereby student achievement. Bringing about this type of reform is long-term work requiring additional capacity at both the state and local level.

(Lusi, 1997, p. 170)

3.1 Introduction

Buckler (2011, p. 2) calls on policy makers and individuals working within the changing landscape of rural education to consider the context in which teachers live and work. She argues for a better understanding of the personal, environmental and social contexts that impact upon both teacher development and effective teaching and learning. This chapter provides insight into the context of the DRF's school-based intervention in the Umzinyathi district municipality of KwaZulu-Natal.

The chapter provides an overview of the particular case, detailing the factors which led to the formation of the DRF as a Public Benefit Organisation. The DRF's area of operation and involvement with 17 rural schools is described, and the objectives and goals of the organisation are briefly touched upon. The discussion then shifts to a description of the challenges faced by the Umzinyathi district municipality schools. Photographic evidence is used to illustrate and substantiate claims made.

3.2 The DRF

3.2.1 Conceptualisation

As Umzinyathi community members, the Rattrays have spent much time trying to understand the community and its difficulties so as to assist those most in need. Their commitment to community engagement and upliftment was originally formalised through the establishment of two trusts, the Rorke's Drift Education Appeal which Nicky Rattray oversaw, and the Isandlwana Education Appeal which David Rattray directed [IT#3, 2011]. From the beginning their involvement with the surrounding community centred on educational initiatives and interventions.

The Rorke's Drift Educational Appeal started raising funds in 2001. The fund's initial project was to provide milk to children who had long distances to walk to school each morning [DF1, DVD:NL#1, p. 1]. With additional fundraising efforts classroom refurbishment projects commenced, funding the purchase of new educational toys, equipment and furniture for schools. Further funding, together with government sponsorship, allowed for a kitchen to be built in which daily meals could be prepared for children [DF1, DVD: NL#1, p. 1].

The Isandlwana Education Appeal (IEA) raised substantial amounts of money through David Rattray's connections in London. The Nquthu local municipal area in which Isandlwana is located is a large area with a considerable number of schools requiring assistance. The IEA worked collaboratively with members of the community, with both Mr Xaba (local community member and lawyer in Nquthu) and Mr Mazibuko (tribal leader) sitting on the IEA trust committee to solve problems and represent the needs of local school communities in the area. This is evident in the following extract from the minutes of a committee meeting:

> I was very impressed with the partnerships established between the community, the tribal authority, the Department of Education and with tourism. This collaborative formula could serve as an example to everybody. [DF1, DVD: MM4, p. 2]

From the outset it was clear that the success of the IEA was the result of its partnerships with various stakeholders within the community. The IEA intervention focused largely on two areas, school infrastructure development and matters concerning school administration. A number of requests for new classrooms and even whole schools had been put forward to the IEA. The IEA responded to appeals on a "first come first served basis" [DF1: DVD: MM3, p. 1]. Table 3.1 provides a summary of applications made to the IEA as well as successful intervention projects completed.

Table 3.1: A summary of requests put forward and successful interventions by the IEA (2004-2006)

Requests from community schools	• To build 2 small primary schools at Thusi and Madutshane. • To build 3 new classrooms at Buhlebamangwe • Security guard at Gadaleni. • Fencing of School at Thusi. • Electrification of Gadaleni, Mampunga and Isandlwana. • New classrooms at Mabaso.
Interventions completed	• Classrooms at Mabaso. • Electrification of above 3 schools.

[refer to DF1: DVD: MM1-5]

The IEA was not solely concerned with school infrastructure. The evidence points towards the organisation's commitment in forging relationships with the Department of Education District office and officials, in an attempt to alert the DBE to problems within schools and direct much needed funding from the KZN DoE towards interventions in these schools. The IEA provided assistance and support to school principals in helping them with matters concerning school administration and access to support from the KZN DoE. The following extract from minutes of a meeting in August 2004, recorded in Box 3.1, illustrates the IEA's commitment to local partnerships and working towards securing support from the KZN DoE.

Box 3.1

On 17 June, a meeting was held with:

- Regional Chief Director, DET, KZN
- Circuit Manager, Nquthu Circuit
- Superintendant for Educational Management, Hlazakazi Ward
- Mr Xaba
- Mr Rattray

This was a very positive discussion. We did a full inspection of all the schools where we are busy. We described all our problems. We had assurances that these problems would be analysed in full by the Department of Education, and that they would contribute where possible.

Department of Works would apply themselves to:

a. electrification
b. secure ceiling in the computer centre
c. furnishings of computer centre
d. Nquthu Circuit budget would take care of the tables
e. Nquthu Circuit would take care of the security guard

Extract from [DF1: DVD: MM1, 18 August 2004.]

Whilst it was clear that the IEA provided administrative support, it was still up to the school principals to complete the necessary documentation and communicate with the KZN DoE. The IEA recognised the importance of empowering school principals and respecting their authority. The following quotation is from the minutes of an IEA meeting in which the electrification of a school was being discussed. The minutes emphasise the commitment of the IEA to supporting school principals, but not taking away their authority in terms of conducting administration and communicating with the KZN DoE:

> Mazibuko will contact the principal Mrs X when she returns from sick leave. She must as principal make the application. [DF1: DVD: MM4, p. 1]

The future of the IEA, in which David Rattray was closely involved, became uncertain after his murder in January 2007.

There is consensus that Rattray's death was the catalyst in the conceptualisation of the David Rattray Foundation. The Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana Educational Appeal trusts were eventually amalgamated under the DRF. The extract in Box 3.2 provides evidence of this process of amalgamation (italics have been added for emphasis).

Box 3.2

> The chairman requested clarification of the status of the existing Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana community trusts. While Mr Xaba suggested these two should be maintained, Mrs Rattray averred that the *running of three separate trusts was impractical*. She and Xaba confirmed that there were funds in place to allow the completion of all the planned activities of the two existing organisations, whereafter it would be *simpler for all to fall under one umbrella organisation.*
>
> Extract from [DF1: DVD: DRFM#1, 2007, March 13, p. 3]

The DRF was formalised and registered as a tax exempt Public Benefit Organisation on the 13th of March 2007. It is governed by a Board of Directors comprised initially of many of the Rattrays' family friends who were leaders in their field of business, together with representatives from the local community and other key local and international figures.

Once the DRF had been formally registered, efforts could commence towards achieving the outlined objectives and intervention strategies (see Section 3.2.3). In order for effective change to occur, research and investigations had to be conducted by the board members. Documents were analysed with

respect to the earlier work and research Rattray had involved himself in through the Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana Educational Appeals. Surveys, community interviews and infrastructure baseline studies were conducted in order to establish the needs of the schools in the area (see Section 7.4.1).

3.2.2 The DRF's area of operation

The DRF is concentrating its work on educational upliftment initiatives within the Umzinyathi District Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal. Umzinyathi is one of ten district municipalities within KwaZulu-Natal and is comprised of four local municipalities: Endumeni, Nquthu, Umvoti and Msinga. Figure 3.1 illustrates these local municipal regions.

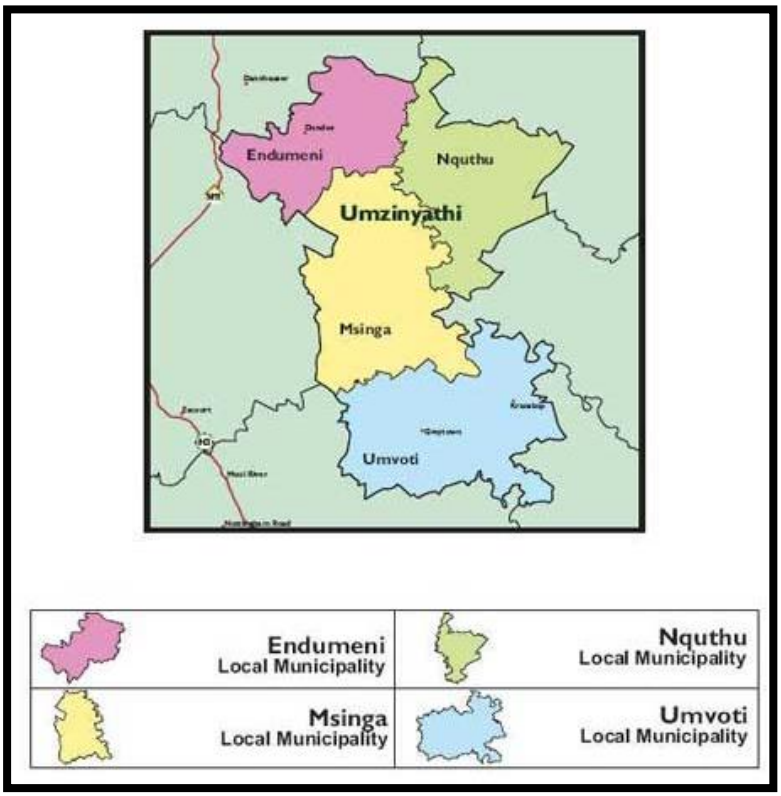


Image source: [Umzinyathi District Municipality homepage. Accessed online: http://www.umzinyathi.gov.za]

Figure 3.1: A map of the Umzinyathi district municipal regions

The Umzinyathi District covers an area of approximately 8 079.68 km^2. As indicated in Section 1.3.1, the people residing in the area are largely rural dwellers, spread across 17 tribal authorities. A large proportion (44%) of these residents have had no formal education (RSA. USDF report, 2009, pp. 24-25). Unemployment is a major problem, with the poverty index standing at 92% (KZN Umzinyathi District profile, 2011, p. 3). There are limited economic and farming

opportunities in the region, and the majority of the population is completely reliant on income from social grants.

The Umzinyathi district municipality has the third smallest economy within KwaZulu-Natal, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of R2.6 billion and a GDP per capita of approximately R66 002. 80% of households report an income of less than R1600 per a month, with the largest number of poor households located in rural regions (RSA. USDF report, 2009, p. 15). The district is characterised by large infrastructure backlogs: as of 2007, it reported a 74% backlog in terms of water supply, 68% for sanitation, 75% for electricity and 81% for refuse removal (Water Services Development Plan, cited in USDF report, 2009, p. 15). According to the Deprivation Index Survey (2008/9) as cited by the KZN Umzinyathi District Profile (2011, p. 4), the Umzinyathi District is the most deprived district in South Africa. As a result of the limited economic profile of the area and service delivery backlogs, the district is heavily dependent on provincial and national grant funding.

3.2.3 The work of the DRF

In response to the poor quality of schools and ineffective teaching and learning in the district, the DRF commenced work with a network of 14 schools. This has subsequently increased to 17 schools across the Umzinyathi District (see Figure 3.2). The main goal and work of the DRF is to improve education within the local community:

> The Foundation activities with the community have remained focused on education in the belief that access to quality education in a safe and caring atmosphere is the best provider of the means of personal and community uplift. (DRF Strategic plan, 2009, p. 4)

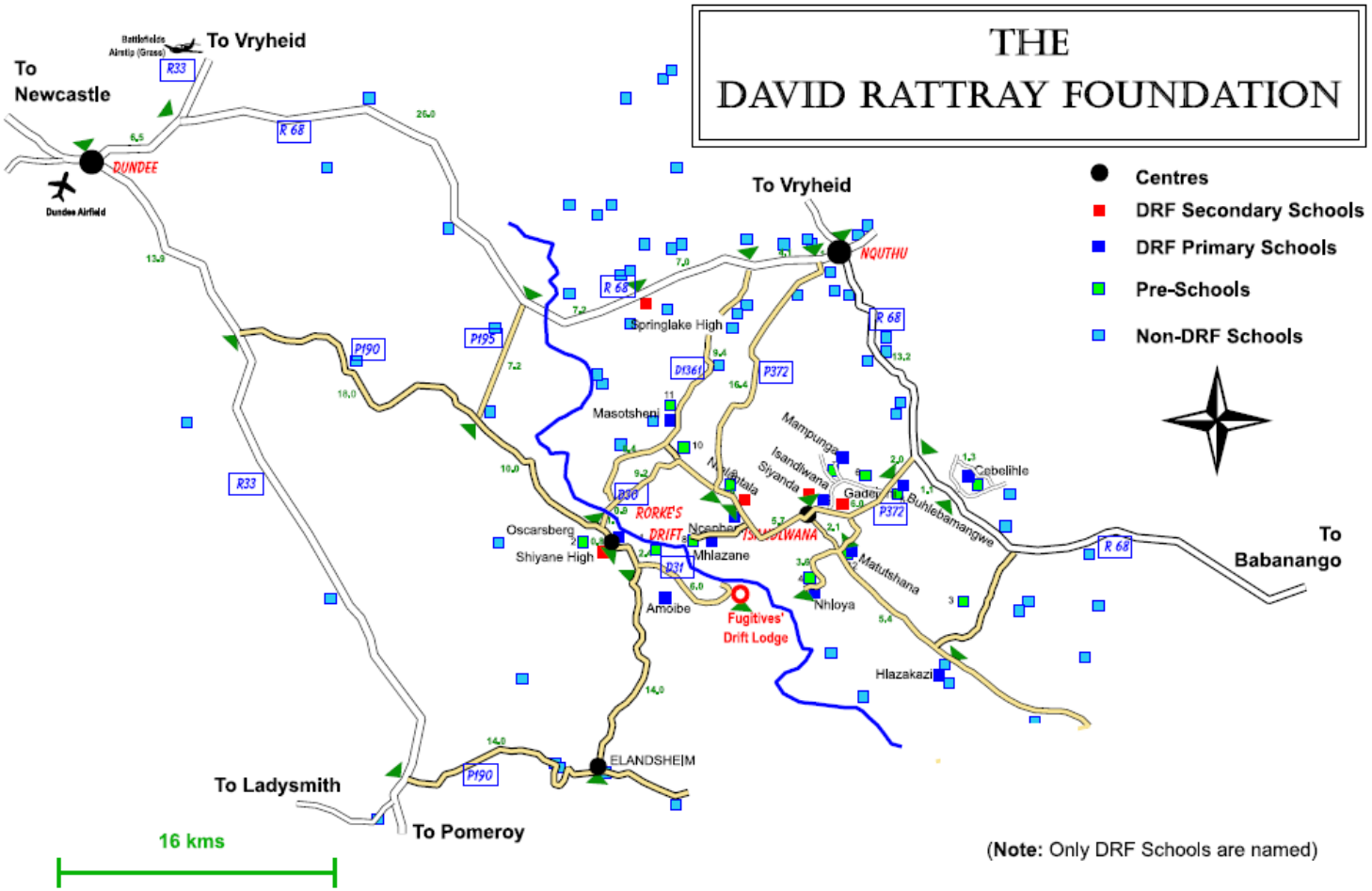


Figure 3.2: The 17 schools supported by the DRF, 2011.

The DRF's main objective is to improve the educational outcome of these schools so that local Grade 12 pupils can compete equally with school leavers from around the country. In order to achieve this objective the DRF has identified the following key interventions:

- adequate physical structures to provide an environment conducive to learning;
- suitably qualified and caring educators;
- appropriate psycho-social support for the many deprived and disadvantaged learners; and
- adequate nutrition, water and sanitation.

(DRF Strategic Plan, 2009, p. 4)

From the outset the DRF has been aware that in order for the above interventions to be sustainable, "the process and conditions that provide a good education have to be based on values and commitments shared by local communities" (DRF Strategic Plan, 2009, p. 4). Section 8.2.1 of this thesis explores the role of partnerships and examines the way in which the local community has been involved in the DRF's intervention.

The DRF has adopted a community-minded approach that David Rattray worked hard to foster in the IEA initiative. Many of the same community members, including Xaba and Mazibuko, remain an integral part of the work of the Foundation today. These two community leaders understood Rattray and appreciated his values and moral position. They have played an important role in seeing to completion many of the original projects and ensuring the continuation of Rattray's legacy via the DRF [InI#1, 2011].

3.2.4 Financing the DRF interventions

In order for the DRF to carry out its various intervention strategies a great deal of fundraising is necessary. The first chairman of the board dedicated much of his time to this, securing funding from local corporate organisations and from donors in the United Kingdom, using some of the original contacts Rattray had forged in the early days. An annual David Rattray Lecture is held in Johannesburg to ensure that interest in the area is maintained and regular funding is secured.

Through the work of the Foundation with community members and schools, money has come to be seen as a major motivating factor for change. It is also perceived as evidence of the seriousness of an intervention and a sign of commitment and buy-in on behalf of a school

community [IT#1, 2011, p. 5]. For a new infrastructural project to commence – such as the building of a new classroom – the school will itself first have to raise a certain amount of money as a contribution. According to the DRF, this approach has been successful in giving the school and its associated community a sense of ownership with respect to a particular project.

3.3 Rural schooling within the Umzinyathi context

3.3.1 Poverty and performance

Within the Umzinyathi municipality, poverty is of real concern. The region has one of the highest unemployment rates in the province (66.41%), with 80% of rural households reporting an income of less than R1600 a month (USDF Report, 2009). The district is therefore largely dependent upon provincial grant funding for support.

Figure 3.3: A typical rural homestead within the Umzinyathi district municipality. Many such households are reliant on social grants as the only means of household income.

Household surveys conducted reveal that families do not derive their main income from farming, despite the cultivation of land and the keeping of livestock still being central to the lives of community members (NMF, 2005, p. 26).

The majority of rural settlements are located within tribal authority areas (USDF Report, 2009). Traditional authorities and communities continue to have a powerful presence in the governance and decision making in these former homeland regions, as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA) stipulates that traditional councils must be established in former homeland areas to run concurrently with elected municipalities (Westaway, 2012, p. 122).

Figure 3.4: Tribal authority headquarters, Nquthu Local Municipality.

It is important to note that schools are inseparable from the communities in which they are located and which they serve. Economic, social and environmental factors affecting the community will also directly affect the school.

3.3.2 Vulnerability, nutrition and health

Within the context of this research, vulnerability, nutrition and health are key concerns impacting upon both school attendance and pupil performance. Vulnerability according to the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) programme (as cited in the Siyanakekela Baseline Report, 2010, p. 22) is defined as "involuntary situations or conditions that place a child at higher risk of deprivation of their basic survival and developmental needs". A baseline study was conducted and compiled by MiEt Africa, the DRF and the KwaZulu-Natal DoE in 2010, focussing on the 17 schools and surrounding community

forming part of the DRF's school-based intervention. This baseline study constituted the initial stages of the Siyanakekela project aimed at ensuring "schools and communities collectively provide care for their children" (Siyanakekela Baseline Report, 2010, p. 15). Further details of this project and its partnership with the DRF are provided in Section 8.2.1. A number of findings from this baseline study point towards the health, nutrition and vulnerability of children. From the study I have selected key findings that pertain to children's ability to attend or perform well at school. The findings from this study are consistent with the literature and other similar studies conducted in rural contexts in South Africa. This is discussed in Section 2.5.

These findings from the baseline study conducted in 2010 are summarised below:

- **Vulnerability: households and family life**

- 75% of pupils reported that their fathers were still alive, but of these 3% admitted that their fathers were missing; 25% of pupils reported that their fathers were deceased. Therefore 28% of the households within my area of study reported no father figure.
- 58% of pupils lived with their mothers; 14% of their mothers were deceased and 1% were missing.
- The majority of pupils (65%) not living with their mothers reported that they resided with their grandparents.
- 9% of pupils indicated that they lived with and were being cared for by their older siblings.
- The average size of a rural household within the Umzinyathi municipality was eight people, five of them children.
- 73% of adults living within households directly associated with the sample of schools were unemployed, though it was not clear whether all these adults had school-going children.

These findings reveal that a large number of children living within the Umzinyathi community and attending DRF project schools may be classified as vulnerable. Literature concerning the widespread vulnerability of rural school-going children in South Africa in general is cited in Section 2.5.3 of this thesis.

- **Nutrition**

- All primary schools forming a part of the DRF intervention are non-fee paying and therefore qualify for the Department of Health's Primary School Nutrition

Programme. This programme provides each child with a daily cooked meal during term time. The grant allocated is R1.50 per pupil per school day.

- All primary schools reported that they had a system in place to provide each child with a daily meal.
- Only one school reported making available take-home food parcels for vulnerable children and their families.
- 13 schools reported having functioning food gardens (see Figure 3.5 for an example of a typical food garden).
- During the Focus Group interviews conducted in this research, teachers noted the positive role the DRF has played in assisting with feeding schemes and their efficiency. Greater detail with respect to the DRF's intervention is provided in Section 7.4.2-3.

Figure 3.5: Food garden at one of the local schools, Nquthu Local Municipality.

- **Health**

- Findings from the baseline study revealed that the majority of schools had no formal means to assess the health needs of vulnerable children.
- None of the schools have facilities to cater for in-school health matters (a sick-room, counselling venue etc).
- Six schools noted that they had regular health assessment procedures in place, and seven schools noted that they make use of a referral system when a high level of support or care is required.

3.3.3 Transport

Within the Umzinyathi Municipality, rural school-going children face the daily realities of long and difficult journeys to school and back (refer to Section 2.5.4). In the DRF School Survey Report (2009, p.5) all the DRF schools cited accessibility and transport as a major issue. All the schools are located on gravel roads, and 11 of the 14 schools included in the original study are located at least a 30-minute drive away from the nearest tarred road. According to an interview with one of the primary school principals, some pupils are walking as far as 10 kilometres to and from school each day [IT#8, 2012]. As a result there is little time for sport or cultural activities after school. Teachers are affected too, with many being unable to stay after school for meetings or teacher development sessions. As a result, staff development sessions and meetings happen during school hours, impacting on the time available for teaching and learning. Transport has emerged as a threat to the successful implementation and sustainability of the DRF's school-based intervention. The impact of transport is discussed in Section 8.4.2.

3.3.4 Service delivery and infrastructure

A large majority of the population (82%) with which this study is concerned lives within what would be considered a deep rural area. The Umzinyathi SDF Report (2009) indicates that the Umzinyathi Municipality has some of the poorest and most underdeveloped areas in the whole of KwaZulu-Natal. The region is characterised by infrastructure backlogs, poor basic services and limited access to social services (Umzinyathi SDF Report, 2009). Figure 3.6 provides evidence of this "infrastructure backlog"

Figure 3.6: A school pit-latrine block in my area of study, which the KZN DoE has, to date, half-built. The school has been waiting for the completion of this block for several months. The school has no other toilet facilities.

The DRF has identified school infrastructure development and upgrade as a key priority within their school-based intervention plan (refer to the DRF's Education Development Plan (EDP), Appendix C). Various baseline studies and assessments were conducted in order to establish priority areas (see Section 7.4.1), and a number of audits carried out with respect to physical structures at the DRF schools. These included classrooms, laboratories, administration blocks, toilets and kitchens (DRF School Survey Report and Recommendations, 2009, p. 9). The DRF has also investigated access to utilities at each school involved, and identified both electricity and water provision as major challenges to be addressed.

> Of the 14 schools forming part of the original study, nine have electricity. However it is not installed in all school buildings. In some schools, Eskom has completed the wiring, but has not yet connected the power. Only eight schools have piped water and yet these schools do not have flush toilets and their kitchens do not have basins to access water. In most cases there is only one water point through which schools access the piped water. (DRF School Survey Report, 2009, p. 9)

In the DRF School Survey Report of August 2009, it was recommended that "schools receive assistance to prioritise their infrastructure needs and develop a plan detailing how they plan to address these" (p. 16).

Both pupils and teachers require an environment that is conducive to effective learning and teaching. In order to address this need the DRF has put together a comprehensive Education Development Plan (see Appendix C). Within this plan key infrastructural improvement projects have been identified. Many projects are underway and a number of the DRF schools have benefitted already (see Section 7.4.2, Table 7.3 for details of the EDP as well as a discussion of what has been achieved).

One of the current infrastructural projects managed and facilitated by the DRF is the community classroom construction project, in partnership with the Aveng Group. This project has involved skills transfer (SETA accredited),[8] in that local community members have been trained and developed as builders. Local materials are used, so as to construct more sustainable and affordable schools. Figures 3.7-8 illustrate the community-built classroom structures. The design, construction and interior finishes are all done by the community, with the input of the Aveng Group and the DRF. Further details of this project are highlighted in Section 8.2.1.

Figure 3.7: Classroom walls are constructed out of local soil mixed with cement and water using the rammed earth building technique. This photograph illustrates local community members at work at one of the DRF's primary schools.

Figure 3.8: A completed classroom block. This new facility has provided the school with two large new classrooms, which are joined by a retractable door that can be removed to create a large school hall. A new administration office block is also included within this structure.

[8] Recognising the need to improve skills in South Africa, in 1998 the South African government ratified the *Skills Development Act* which defined a new sector training system – Skills Education Training Authorities (SETA). A SETA accredited qualification means individuals will gain skills and training which are recognised nationally under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (iEducation Seta South Africa, accessed November 22, 2012).

3.3.5 Learning and teaching materials

The DRF is striving to ensure that children within their 17 supported schools are receiving a well-rounded, good quality education. It is the belief of the DRF that this goal "is more easily achieved in a safe and nurturing environment, with competent and caring teachers who have available to them all the *facilities and equipment* necessary to carry out their role" (EDP, p. 1, see Appendix C).

The DRF has identified the importance of teachers and pupils having access to appropriate learning materials to aid in the effective delivery of the curriculum. With reference to the DRF's EDP, Section 6(e) "*Academic, Curriculum and Resources*", I have extracted specific points which refer to learning and teaching resources that the DRF has prioritised and written into their overall school-based intervention strategy. These are summarised in Box 3.3. The textbox provides evidence of the importance of teaching and learning materials in curriculum delivery.

Box 3.3: An extract from the DRF's EDP, (p. 1)

Academic, Curriculum & Resources

- A functioning computer lab with a competent teacher teaching computer skills to a competent standard.
- A functioning science lab with a competent teacher teaching Science knowledge to a competent standard.
- Has a broad range of sports equipment, all in good condition and regular use.
- Learning and Teaching Support Materials accessible to all teachers and in regular use by knowledgeable school staff.
- Provides an orderly, well stocked, supervised and relevant library and careers guidance centre (for FET Phases) regularly in use by the students.

During the time I spent at some of the DRF's schools, I noticed the availability of many resources within the schools' storerooms (refer to Figure 3.9). These included large numbers of exercise books, stationery and posters. Yet it seemed that little of this material was being utilised. Classroom walls remain bare in many instances, and pupils have limited stationery supplies. My concern is that schools are being provided with thousands of Rands of resources by the KZN DBE, and the government is investing millions of Rands in learning materials,

but teachers are not being shown how use these effectively, which means that the expenditure is essentially futile. Again, while it is important that rural schools have access to technology and provide learners with opportunities to develop computer skills, very few schools have qualified and skilled computer teachers.

Figure 3.9 The above photo-collage illustrates various examples of academic and curriculum resources alluded to in Box 3.3. Note the absence of evidence of a well equipped and functioning science laboratory.

3.3.6 Language and learning

Language has been identified by teachers taking part in the focus group discussions as an issue affecting effective teaching and learning (see Section 2.5.7). The quotation that follows comes from one of the interviews I conducted with a school principal. This quotation speaks to the issue of challenges around teaching and learning in the English language amongst non-mother tongue speakers. The following quotation is unedited and reflect the transcription word for word.

> *I would like to see the whole school, all of the learners speaking English confidently that is my biggest hope. It is something that I dream of everyday and I think what is it that I can do to make sure all of these learners, because they do understand, but sometimes they are afraid to speak. So what is that I can do to make them speak? All of them, because some of them are speaking, but not all of them. The problem that I have discovered is that some of the teachers and we have had our SWOT analysis with the teachers, where some of the teachers were writing that they are not confident in English. And so I want, I have told them that we are not English speakers, but we have to try. What is it that you are going to do with the learners in the classroom if you are not trying? Nobody is going to laugh at you, because you are teaching, so you must try all the time and use this English.*
>
> *Because when I am having a School Management Team (SMT) meeting with some of them here, I will find some of them saying "No Mam and changing into isiZulu" and I say "You know our meetings are in English". With the staff meeting when someone is saying that, I say "no". Our meetings are in English and I have told them like this that if you want to ask something, then maybe you are afraid then rather just write it down so that we can correct you. But you need to practice and the only people that can help you to practice are these learners because they are not going to laugh at you. So you have to practice your language skills all the time. Practice them, practice them all the time [IT#8, 2012, p. 3*-4].

Key issues around language which have emerged from my area of research indicate:

- a lack of English proficiency amongst teachers;
- anxiety amongst teachers as far as the English language is concerned;
- a fear of being ridiculed by learners or colleagues; and
- a recognition of the importance of trying to develop and improve upon English language skills.

In addition to challenges associated with language at school, the impact of the home environment must be taken into consideration. As discussed in Section 3.3.2, many children

are classified as being vulnerable, in that they come from homes where one or both parents are absent. According to the USDF report (2009, p. 24), 44% of the population living in these rural communities have been exposed to no schooling at all, with only 12% having completed Grade 12. As a result, exposure to reading and other literacy materials at home is likely to be poor. This was confirmed in an interview with one of the principals, when she noted that "*there is no reading at home at all, in most of the homes, there is no reading*" [IT#8, 2012, p. 2]. This study has revealed a lack of parental support and involvement in pupil learning and school activities, which is discussed and analysed in Section 8.4.3. Furthermore, many homesteads lack modern amenities and technology such as electricity, television sets and computers. One of the volunteers noted the following in one of the focus group discussions "*So electricity came here not even a year before I came here* (2010)" [FG#1, p. 4]. In the second focus group discussion, one of the teachers noted:

> *[y]ou cannot compare urban learners with rural learners. In the Hlazagazi area, they have no access to television that is the first thing. It is not easy to teach them in a language that is not their own....They don't even listen to the news, so it is not easy for us. The access to electricity is not available*. [FG#2, 2012, pp.1-2]

Being within a deep rural area, many homesteads are at least an hour's travelling distance from the nearest towns of Nquthu and Dundee. This further reduces opportunities for exposure to the English language.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the case at the centre of this research investigation. The chapter has been organised so as to complement the description of the context of rural education gleaned from the literature in Chapter 2.

The focus of the chapter has rested on the DRF as a dynamic Public Benefit Organisation that has been working towards educational upliftment since its inception in 2007. The chapter explores the complex socio-economic challenges that the DRF is up against within the context of the Umzinyathi district municipality, which in many ways reflects the broader rural education context across South Africa. Several constraining factors standing in the way of the successful implementation of the organisation's school-based intervention have been identified.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Social reality is unlike any other because of its human constitution. (Margaret Archer, 1995, p. 1)

4.1 Introduction

The goal of the research was to generate insights necessary for a deep understanding of the DRF's school-based intervention, in terms of its approach to change, the intervention adopted, and teachers' experience of and participation in the process of change. Particular emphasis was placed on how the teachers influence and are influenced by the real world of which they are a part (for a general description of the research design of the study, see Section 1.4 and Figure 1.1). In this chapter I explain and justify how the research goals informed the methodological choices made in this study.

The chapter commences with an explanation as to why a qualitative research paradigm with a realist approach and interpretive orientation was utilised. The research integrates "ontological realism" with "epistemological constructivism" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 6). A uniquely developed heuristic tool which draws on Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) tiered critical realist philosophy is explained and accounted for with respect to the analysis of data. The research design, consisting of three distinct but interrelated phases, is described and justified. Data gathering through two field experiences and analysis activities is discussed. Issues pertaining to ethical considerations and the validity of the data are also discussed.

4.2 Philosophical assumptions

4.2.1 A qualitative approach

Merriam and Associates (2002, p. 3) connect the social constructivist's view of the world with qualitative research by noting how "the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world". They highlight the unknown and dynamic nature of the world (or reality) as it unfolds

over time. Erickson (2013, p. 89) notes how a qualitative approach to research seeks to "discover and to describe in narrative reporting what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them". Similarly Creswell (2009, p. 4) describes qualitative enquiry as a suitable approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups of individuals ascribe to a social or human problem.

Merriam and Associates' (2002) explanation of qualitative research is in line with the social constructivist view which this research embraced as an overarching philosophy. Creswell (2003) defines a qualitative study as a process of inquiry leading to an understanding of a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words reporting in detail the views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Thus adopting a qualitative approach allowed me to observe and interact with teachers and community members from the position of a non-member. As Flick (1998, p. 6) notes, "qualitative methods take the researcher's communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge production". Patton (2002, p. 10) draws attention to the value of qualitative study's ability to "capture [the] stories" of the participants concerned. And Merriam and Associates (2002, p. 5) note how the final product of qualitative research is therefore richly descriptive.

Denzin and Lincoln (2013, pp. 1-31) trace the history and use of qualitative research, emphasising the complexity of this approach to research in that it "cross-cuts disciplines, fields and subject matter" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 5). These authors review the domain of qualitative research from a North American perspective and identify "eight historical moments" in its development. This particular study would be located within the "eighth moment", an era in which qualitative research is concerned with a "moral discourse". This moment calls on social science researchers to engage in "critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalisation, freedom, and community" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 6), adopting, in essence, an emancipatory approach. Whilst Denzin and Lincoln's research and the experience it draws on may be unique to their context, there is nevertheless a certain relevance to the current moment in South Africa. Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, a great deal of research in the social sciences has focussed on the voices and experiences of minority or disadvantaged groups. This explains why the philosophy of critical realism increasingly provides the underlying ontology in qualitative social sciences-based research. Section 4.3.2 explores the notion of 'critical' in critical realism, which is tied to the emancipatory nature of this philosophy.

Whilst my research approach is not exactly emancipatory in function or aim, it has the moral dimension of a concern with educational upliftment and teacher empowerment, and the ultimate goal of improving the quality of education in rural South Africa.

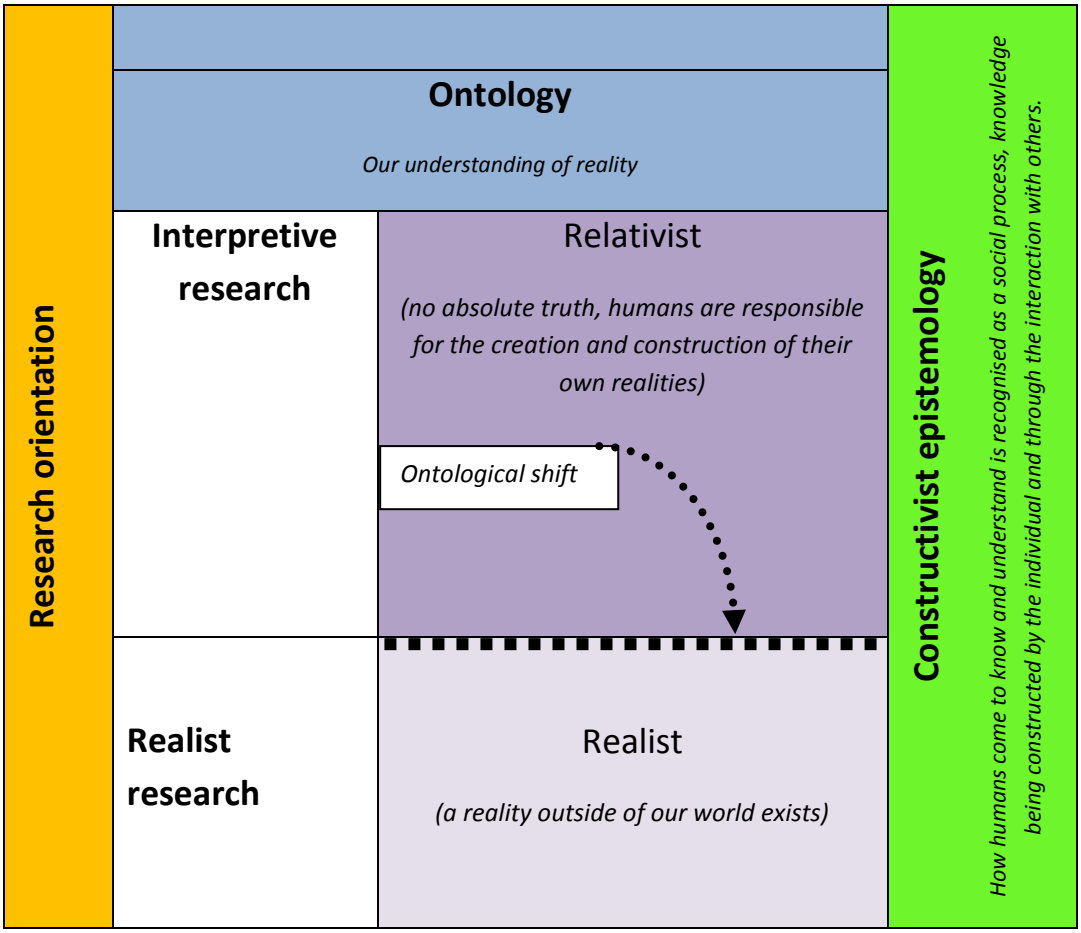
As a qualitative researcher I adopted a variety of interconnected approaches in this research, hoping to get a better understanding of the research context and the participants in the study.

4.2.1.1 An ontological shift

This study is concerned with understanding the roles and experiences of teachers and community members within a specific context. This would be considered an interpretive qualitative approach to research (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 4). When the research was initially conceptualised it was informed by a relativist ontology, in keeping with an interpretive paradigm.

Maxwell (2012, p. 71) writes about the researcher's experiences in the field or "on the ground" as he puts it, noting how the researcher can be influenced by the specific context in which the study is conducted. This is certainly valid with regard to my own situation, since my field experiences and initial data analysis led me to believe that there is indeed a reality outside and beyond that created by teachers' interpretations of their individual experiences. Coming to this understanding required an ontological shift in the paradigmatic structure of my research towards a realist approach. Table 4.1 offers a summary representation of the philosophical assumptions which underpin the study and illustrates the shift in orientation towards a realist ontology.

Table 4.1 The ontological shift



Outhwaite (1987, pp. 19-20) speaks of realism as a "common sense ontology" in that it takes seriously the existence of the "things, structures and mechanisms" which may be revealed at the various levels of reality. Accepting the fact that a reality exists that could affect the way in which teachers' as individuals perceive the world was a significant shift in this study. In my view this shift provided for a more in-depth and meaningful look at teachers within a rural school context. Kazi (2003, p. 19) speaks of the limitations associated with interpretivist approaches to research, which tend to concentrate on the needs of specific stakeholders or individuals' perceptions and therefore frequently fail to consider the context or research environment in a more comprehensive way. Realism, on the other hand, recognises the world as an "open system or a constellation of structures, mechanisms and contexts" (Kazi, 2003, p. 23). Adopting a realist approach to this study provided me with the ontological depth required for an understanding of complex structures and mechanisms necessary to illuminate

both the successes achieved and challenges faced by the DRF's school-based intervention. Kazi (2003, p. 23) notes how the realist researcher seeks to develop an understanding **beyond** appearances. Despite the necessary shift in ontological perspective, the broader aim and function of my research remain rooted in an interpretivist paradigm, since I am concerned with documenting and developing a deep **understanding** of a process of change.

4.2.1.2 A realist approach for qualitative research

Chapter 2 of this study outlines the economic and socio-political factors at play within the broader context of the rural schools forming a part of this case study. The purpose of Chapter 2 was to explore the so called "real and unseen mechanisms" (Bhaskar 1979; Archer 1995, 1996; Sayer 2000; Benton & Craib 2001; Houston 2010) at work, in an attempt to better understand the motivation behind the DRF's school-based intervention process. The desire to create a rich and in-depth understanding of the broader context of this case study informed my choice of methodology. A combination of ontological realism and epistemological constructivism was considered appropriate to understanding both the specific case of the DRF and the broader structures and processes at work within South African and global contexts. In the adoption of an ontological realist approach I would endorse Maxwell's (2012, p. 5) observation that "there is a real world which exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions", whilst a constructivist epistemology allows me the philosophical vantage point of recognising that our understanding of the world is a construction predicated on our own perspectives.

In exploring the context of rural education in South Africa, a realist ontology was useful in tracing the determinants of human experience through various levels and structures (Huckle, 1993, p. 2). The second goal of this research was to examine teachers' experiences and participation in the DRF's school-based intervention. The constructivist epistemology adopted (see Table 4.1) privileged the individualised perspectives of teachers in the DRF's intervention and provided insight into their involvement and experiences within the process of change.

Through this study I have come to recognise that there is no *one* correct way of understanding the world, or as Putnam (1999) puts it, there is no "God's eye view" of the world. By adopting a combination of a realist ontology and constructivist epistemology I acknowledge that there is neither an independent nor a correct view of the world.

Karl Barth, an anthropologist working with communities in New Guinea, says the following about the multiple constructions of reality encountered in social research:

> Like most of us, I assume that there is a real world out there – but our representations of that world are constructions. People create and apply these constructions in a struggle to grasp the world, relate to it, and manipulate it through concepts, knowledge, and acts . . . . A people's way of life is thus not a closed system, contained within their own cultural constructions. That part of the real world on which we as anthropologists need to focus is composed of this widest compass: a natural world, a human population with all its collective and statistical features, and a set of cultural ideas in terms of which these people try to understand and cope with themselves and their habitat (Barth, 1987, p. 87).

4.2.1.3 Key concepts of realist research

The aim of a realist is to provide an account of what happens within society. Phillips (1987, p. 205) defines philosophic realism as "the view that entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of our theories about them". Archer (1995) concurs, noting also that a realist approach emphasises the imperfection and open-ended nature of human knowledge: there are structures and processes at work in the world which generate various phenomena that remain independent of the human power to experience and access them (Sayer, 1992).

Maxwell (2012, p. 3) alerts us to the numerous ongoing philosophical debates concerning realism; however, the idea that there is a "real world in which we interact, and to which our concepts and theories refer, has proved to be a resilient and powerful one that has attracted increased philosophical attention following the demise of positivism" (Maxwell, 2012, pp. 3-4). Maxwell (2012, p. ix) suggests that a realist approach to qualitative research provides a useful perspective, since it provides "insights and strategies" that other approaches may ignore or misrepresent.

In the social sciences one of the most prominent versions of realism is the critical realist tradition associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (1979, 1989, 2011). In this study I have drawn on Bhaskar's conception of a layered ontology to develop a heuristic tool (see Figure 4.1 in Section 4.3) for the **analysis** of my data (see the discussion in Section 4.3.2). Whilst I have adopted Bhaskar's ontological domains as a *tool* in this study, I wish to make it clear that this study as a *whole* has not adopted the 'critical' orientation that is associated with

Bhaskar's philosophy of critical realism. The aim of this study is not to provide strategies for changing or altering the DRF's school-based intervention; it is rather concerned with trying to develop a deeper *understanding* of the intervention and the community in which it is occurring. In other words, while the study is underpinned by a realist approach, the knowledge that it has produced remains rooted in an interpretivist orientation (hence the dotted line separating relativist and realist orientations in Table 4.1).

- **The stratification of reality**

Huckle (1993, p. 2) asserts that a realist ontology allows the researcher to trace the origins of experience through various levels of *events* to the level of *structures and processes*. A similar view is held by Bhaskar (1979), whose philosophy of critical realism postulates a conception of reality that consists of three tiers. I have worked with this notion of a stratified ontology to develop a heuristic tool for the analysis of the data (see Figure 4.1 and Section 4.3). Huckle (1993, p. 2) argues for the *level of structures and processes*, the *level of events* and the *level of experience* or the empirical domain. Huckle's (1993) level of structures and processes may be viewed as synonymous with what Bhaskar (1979) referred to as the "Domain of the Real". Such elements relate to broader and unseen mechanisms that make possible various causal powers and processes. The second level, which according to Huckle (1993) refers to that of "events", is similar to that of Bhaskar's (1979) "Actual Domain". Here the workings and functioning of an organisation are realised. Such events are visible and experienced. Lastly Huckle (1993) refers to the level of experience which Bhaskar (1979) calls the "Empirical Domain". This innermost level relates to the human experience of the Actual Domain, which is influenced and impacted upon by the processes and structures in the broad and intangible Real Domain.

Bhaskar (1979, p. 78) distinguishes between transitive and intransitive dimensions of knowledge. The intransitive dimension is the underlying structure of reality and consists of physical processes and social phenomena; it is this dimension that we are often not overtly aware of. The transitive dimension, on the other hand, represents our interpretation of reality and is associated with features and factors that we can see and are conscious of in our daily lives. These dimensions are significant to this study and are explored in the analysis of the findings in Section 7.3.

As a researcher I have attempted to understand and provide an account of the DRF's school-based intervention within a specific rural school community in KwaZulu-Natal (i.e. a specific

societal group). This element of the study focuses on the functioning and workings of the intervention and schools within the Umzinyathi community and constitutes part of what Huckle (1993) refers to as the "level of events". In conducting my interviews, through my reading and document analysis, as well as through my observations of schools and learning environments, I have come to see that there are many broader, often external factors which are not at the forefront of teachers' minds as they deal with changes at a school level on a daily basis. For example, many teachers are not thinking about the impact of globalisation or the move towards a knowledge-based economy when trying to grasp the approaches to teaching and learning outlined by the new curriculum documents. There are broader complexities still, for example the tensions between modern, Western ways of thinking and attitudes to change, and traditional Zulu beliefs and value systems that survive within such a community, especially amongst the older generations (see Section 7.3.2.1). Whilst teachers may not be overtly aware of these broader influences, there is no doubt that they have an impact on the ways in which they and other community members are involved in coping and "experiencing" events associated with educational intervention.

Archer (1995) notes the ubiquitous presence of structures and processes which have a direct bearing on how society and our social world is structured and arranged. She goes on to describe how the social sciences paradigm has had to confront its "entity, society, and deal conceptually with its three characteristics" (Archer, 1995, p.1). According to Archer these characteristics are such that the

- social sciences are inseparable from human components because the very existence of society depends upon our own activities.
- Secondly, society is characteristically transformable in that it has no irreversible form or even preferred state.
- And, lastly as humans, we are not unalterable as social agents, for what we are and what we do as social beings is affected by society and by our very efforts to transform the society in which we live.

We deceive one another by believing that society is simply what we choose to make of it. Generically society is that which nobody wants in exactly the form they find it; yet it resists both individual and collective efforts at transformation, not necessarily by remaining unchanged but by altering to become something else which still conforms to no one's ideal.

The three characteristics of the social sciences paradigm isolated by Archer (1995) are pertinent to my research process and findings. The community of Umzinyathi is a unique rural environment operating within KwaZulu-Natal. The people living within this community have created their own social reality and micro-society through their culture and belief system as well as through their actions and activities. Through my research and interaction with community members I have been able to arrive at an understanding of the relationships and interaction among civil society, the local community and the government that feature in the case study. This is discussed in my findings in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Maxwell (2012, p. ix), in his interpretation of critical realism, suggests that there are important implications for how we conceptualise meaning and culture, causation and diversity. These key concepts of a realist approach attempt to capture or tell us something about reality. Maxwell (2012) argues that the phenomena of meaning and culture, causation and diversity are "real".

- **Meaning and culture are real**

Meaning is generally understood to be a mental rather than a physical phenomenon, the nature of meaning being dependent on the nature of the mind and its relationship with the physical world (Maxwell, 2012, p. 15). Realist philosophers, on the other hand, argue that "mental and physical entities are interacting parts of a single real world" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 16). In the course of this research I came to realise that it was difficult to separate mental processes from the causal factors affecting human behaviour and social interaction within the rural community of the Umzinyathi Municipality. As Bhaskar (1989, p. 6) observes, "we have to see the natural and social dimensions of existence as in continuous causal interaction".

Maxwell's (2012) understanding of meaning as "real" is important in the interpretation and understanding of the process of change in this research, as well as of the manner in which the teachers themselves engaged with the process. Sections 8.5 and 8.6 explore 'human meanings' derived through analysis of the data collected in the research. The "continuous causal interactions" between the environmental context and social interactions that Bhaskar (1989) speaks of formed a necessary part of the in-depth explanation and understanding of the human dimension in this study.

A realist ontological perspective challenges some prevailing assumptions about the complex phenomenon of culture. Culture is a factor that features prominently in this study, where it is explored from several different perspectives. Section 5.2.4 explores literature concerning the culture of a school organisation. This is of relevance since in order to understand and reflect upon change processes put forward by the DRF's school-based intervention, I needed to have a grasp of the particular 'culture' embodied by the organisational structure of the schools concerned. Section 5.2.5 reviews culture from a broader, more generalised perspective, engaging with various understandings and perspectives on culture, seen as a contested element.

Our understanding and interpretation of culture and society is a 'grey area', in that frequently when the concept of culture is being referred to, one may actually mean societal process or factors. Through adopting a realist approach to research, Maxwell (2012, p. 24) notes how "culture and society are inextricably intertwined networks of mutual influence", and therefore any attempt to understand and document socio-cultural phenomena must take into consideration both the social and cultural aspects of these phenomena. In his writing on culture, Maxwell (2012, pp. 26-32) contends that

> culture is a domain of phenomena that are real, rather than abstractions; both symbolic and meaningful (i.e. part of the mental rather than the physical perspective) and collective (that is a property of groups rather than single individuals); that cannot be reduced to individual behaviour or thought or subsumed in social structure; and that it is causally interrelated with both behaviour and social structure. (p. 26)

In this research I have identified culture as an intransitive factor impacting upon the community and society of the rural schools in the Umzinyathi Municipality. This is dealt with in Section 7.3.2.1.

- **Causation is real**

Kazi (2003, p. 25) notes how conventional approaches to research frequently strive to isolate the system being investigated from extraneous factors in order to explore causal relationships. But a realist analysis seeks to explore the complexity of the interaction of various causal tendencies within the open and complex system in which we live (Kazi, 2003, p. 25). After my first fieldwork engagement session I became aware of the complex nature of the context and environment in which the DRF was involved, and this precipitated the ontological shift towards a realist approach (refer to Section 4.2.1.1). A realist ontology assisted me in

exploring, documenting and coming to understand the work of the DRF in a particular context defined by pre-existing historical, socio-political and cultural conditions. Through adopting a realist approach I was able critically to evaluate the causal properties of structures that exist and operate within the rural context of the Umzinyathi district municipality. Chapters 7-9 provide an in-depth analysis of these causal properties and structures.

Sayer (1992, p. 103) draws our attention to the fact that a realist understanding of causality concerns not a relationship between discrete events – i.e. a simple cause-effect relationship – but rather looks to the greater complexity of "causal powers or liabilities of objects, relations or more generally their way of acting or mechanisms". Furthermore the relationship between causal powers and/or mechanisms and their effects is not fixed, but rather conditional. In applying Sayer's (1992) argument to the context of this study, the process of change which I focus on within the community of the Umzinyathi district municipality involved several causal mechanisms. According to Sayer's (1992) thinking, these causal powers and mechanisms and their associated effects, many of which my data analysis has revealed (refer to Chapter 7), are only tenuously linked. In this study I agree with Sayer (1992) with respect the *complexity* of causality; however I oppose his view regarding the "contingent" or tenuous relationship between causal powers and mechanisms, since my research has revealed in detail definite links between several causal mechanisms. While these effects may not necessarily be permanent or indefinitely "fixed", my findings suggest that such powers and mechanisms have been in place for several years, i.e. long enough for the DRF to identify the need for an intervention within the local rural school community. The application of both systems and complexity theory in the synthesis of the findings of this study (see Chapter 9) supports this viewpoint.

Maxwell (2012, pp. 38-42) explores the use of qualitative methods to identify causality in single cases, the essential role of context in causal explanation, and the legitimacy of seeing the beliefs, values, motives, and meanings of individuals as causes.

- Identifying causality in single cases

This is of particular relevance to my research, since the study is focussed on the particular case of the DRF school-based intervention. Through the adoption of a realist approach, I have been able to identify causality and come to various conclusions within my single case study, without having to utilise a control group or conduct formalised pre- and post-comparison studies.

- Causation and context

Huberman and Miles (1985, p. 345) and Sayer (1992, pp. 60-61) note how realist researchers place emphasis on the context of casual explanation. Maxwell (2012, p. 40) observes that "causality is fundamentally local rather than general, and general claims must be grounded in valid site-specific causal explanations". With reference to this research, context has played a significant role. The fact that the study took place within a rural community, much of which formed a part of the former homeland area of KwaZulu during the apartheid years, is significant in trying to understand how the context has shaped reality today. Teachers' participation in the DRF's school-based intervention has been shaped by their context, which it is necessary to explore in order to understand causality in this study.

- Meaning and causality

As discussed earlier, Maxwell (2012) argues that "critical realist social scientists see the beliefs, values, and intentions held by participants in a study as just as real as the physical phenomena" (p. 40). With this in mind, I have both documented the physical phenomena forming the environmental context, and – through a variety of interviews and focus group discussions – obtained an understanding of the views and beliefs of teachers and community members. As far as the latter was concerned, the challenge for me as a researcher was to try to "understand the action as it is understood by the actors" (Manicas, 2009, p.33).

- **Diversity is real**

In his interpretation of critical realism, Maxwell (2012, pp. 49, 66) warns the researcher to be aware of the danger of assuming uniformity in the people and communities being studied, observing that diversity is a "real and important phenomenon". Kincheloe and McLaren (2000, p. 280) suggest that post-modern researchers need to adopt a sense of "critical humility" that respects the complexity of the social world and the vast differences and imperfections which are 'real' and in existence.

The community in which this case study is rooted in is to an extent a homogenous one, with the majority of members being amaZulu people. The community lives in a rural, isolated geographical space and its members together face the challenges associated with such a way of life. To a degree the homogenous nature of the community that is the subject of this research has made the research process less complex. In saying this, I am influenced by the

views of Maxwell (2012) on diversity. He has alerted me to potential differences among people's actions, behaviour, and thinking within the same community. This is an important consideration with respect to the second goal of this study, which is to examine and understand the teachers' experiences and participation within the DRF's school-based intervention. Elements pertaining to teachers' experiences and participation among the teacher-subjects are explored in Section 8.5 of this study.

4.3 Philosophical assumptions and how they informed the methodological decisions that were taken

4.3.1 Bhaskar's critical realism as applied in this study

Critical realism served as a useful analytical lens in this study since it allowed for the existence of an *external world* free of human consciousness as well as an element which includes *our reality*, determined by our experiences within society and culture.

Boughey and Niven (2012, pp. 642-43) highlight the fact that the work of a realist researcher is to "identify the deeper layer of generative mechanisms that are not immediately obvious or visible". They go on to explain that these invisible mechanisms are often "counter-phenomenal, hidden or dormant and so need careful and systematic excavation" (2012, p. 643). The adoption of a realist ontology and the application of Bhaskar's (1979) stratified view of reality as an analytical tool in this study has allowed for just such a "systematic excavation" of my findings beyond the immediate context of the case.

Maxwell (2012) draws on the work of Geertz (1973) regarding the nature and use of theories. He notes how scientific theories "neither mirror nor correspond to reality" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 7), preferring to call them "tools"; in essence, "theories are tools for a changing world". Tools assist in the facilitation of our actions both in and on the world, "enabling us not to mirror, but to bump against, to perturb and to transform that material reality" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 7). Echoing Maxwell's (2012) concept of a tool, I have used a layered critical realist approach as a tool to probe and better understand the reality of the context of this particular case study.

Houston (2010) argues that critical realism offers a more informed way of understanding and explaining how and why social programmes succeed or fail. This research has focussed on understanding the interventions put in place by the DRF, with a specific concentration on teachers' experiences and participation within a change process.

Critical realism has provided me with a set of lenses through which to:

- examine the model of change used by the DRF;
- examine teachers' experiences and participation within the school-based intervention; and
- understand how the context has shaped both the intervention and the teachers' participation within it.

The following section explores and accounts for the heuristic tool which was used in the analysis process of this study.

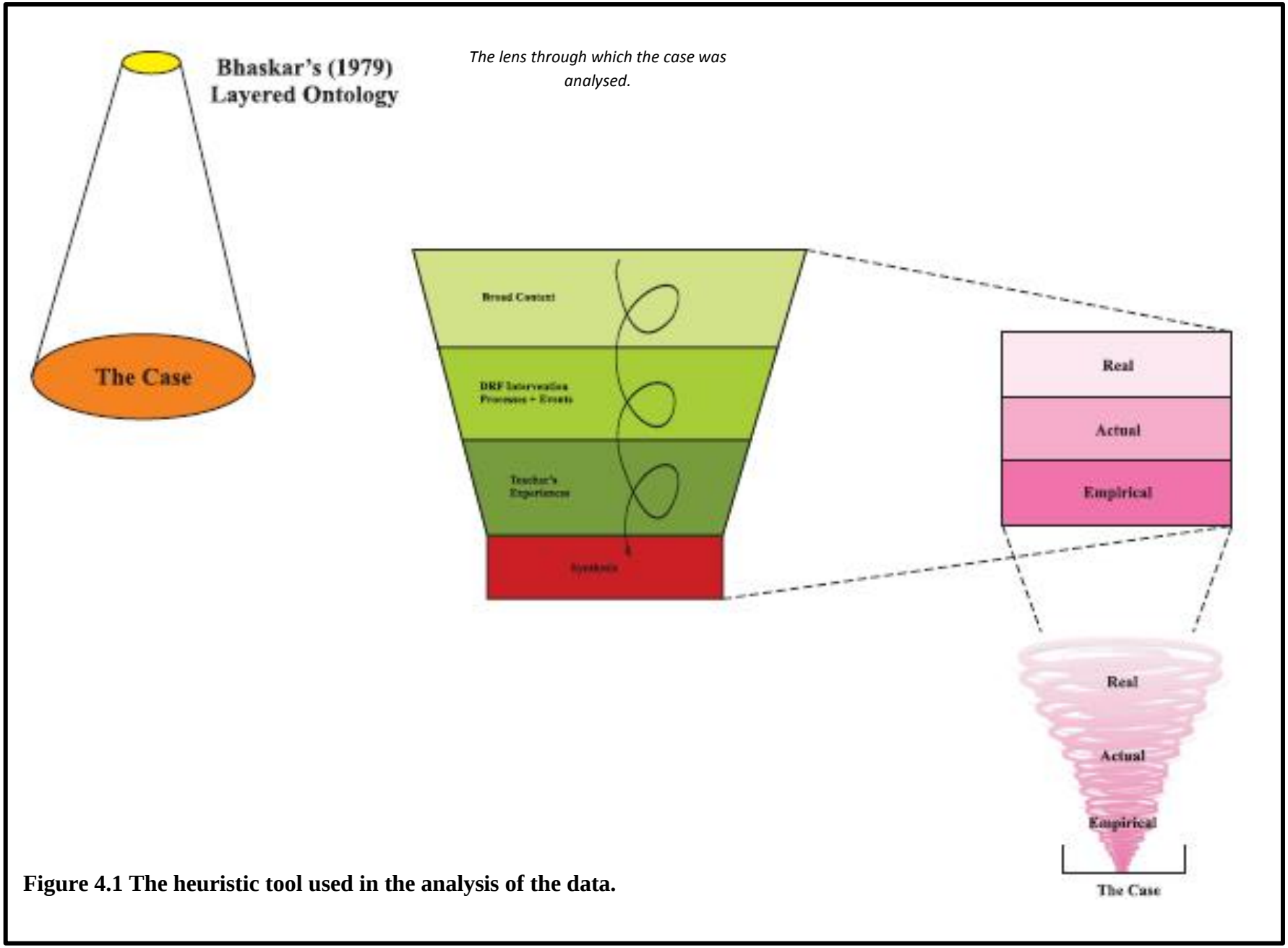


Figure 4.1 The heuristic tool used in the analysis of the data.

4.3.1.1 An explanation of the heuristic tool

4.3.1.1.1 The case analysed

In order to structure the process of analysing my data, I developed a heuristic tool, as represented in Figure 4.1. The figure highlights how Bhaskar's (1979) critical realist philosophy provided a lens through which the entire case study was analysed. This is reflected in the "three-dimensional lens-like" sketch in the upper left-hand corner of the diagram.

4.3.1.1.2 An integrated and layered analysis

Section 4.8 of this chapter accounts for the three-phased approach adopted in this study. Phase I, which took place from May-October 2011 (see Figure 1.1), involved fieldwork in which I conducted a number of interviews and collected various documents pertaining to the DRF and its school-based intervention project. Upon returning to Johannesburg, I began the process of interpreting the interviews and the documents. I refer to this within this chapter (Section 4.8.1.1) as Analytical Activity 1. Through my analysis of data during Phase I of the research, three distinct themes emerged repeatedly;

- the broader context (Layer 1)
- actions and interventions (Layer 2), and
- human dimensions (Layer 3) .

Each of these three themes is represented in the pyramid-type structure depicted in Figure 4.1. As outlined in this chapter and in Chapter 1, the study has adopted a *layered* approach to both the data collection and analysis process, and hence in Figure 4.1 three distinct layers are discernible. The layered model was developed to enable me to interpret my findings in genuine depth. I selected a pyramid shape to represent the three layers because this best represents the process of research design, analysis and interpretation. The investigation starts broadly and widely, considering a number of factors, before narrowing to a focus on teachers. The pyramid is supported by a solid 'foundation' representative of the final phase of the research process, which I refer to as the synthesis.

- **Layer 1: The broad context (*light green layer at the top of the pyramid*)**

The 'broad context' emerged as a large and complex theme during my first analytical activity. This is why Layer 1 of the pyramid segment is the largest. I identified environmental factors relating to immediate aspects of community life such as access to basic needs, family structure and home life. I also identified environmental factors of a broader nature, relating to cultural and tribal practices and beliefs, socio-political influences and global pressures. This layer is directly associated with Bhaskar's (1979) domain of the Real, strongly influenced by a number of "structures, powers, mechanisms and tendencies" (Bhaskar & Lawson, 1998, p. 5).

- **Layer 2: The DRF intervention: processes and events (*mid- green layer at the centre of the pyramid)***

Within Layer 2 of the heuristic framework, the focus of the study becomes narrower, as reflected in the smaller and slightly tapered segment of the pyramid. The second layer of this pyramid was used in the analysis of the emergent material relating to what I have classified as 'events or processes'. Layer 2 corresponds with what Bhaskar (1979) identified as the domain of the Actual, which involves all events, whether directly experienced or not (Houston, 2010). In this layer I attempted to document and understand the DRF's school-based intervention strategy from its inception to its current position, where it is still working towards achieving a number of goals.

- **Layer 3: Teachers' experiences *(dark green layer at the bottom of the pyramid)***

Layer 3 is the last layer or inner segment within the pyramid structure, and pertains to the human dimensions of my research. I have placed the human dimension layer at the bottom of the pyramid as I believe it to be the inner core or final layer of the research analysis. In order to get to this inner core, I need to have worked through the upper layers of context and actions/ interventions.

Layer 3, the innermost layer, is the world as experienced by the individual, so it is classified as that of the Human Dimensions within Bhaskar's Empirical domain. At this point I started to analyse and interpret the stories of the teachers and community members who shared their experiences and understanding of the intervention and the change it has catalysed in interviews and focus group discussions. This layer of analysis gave me insight into the worlds of the individuals, into their perceptions and understanding of the processes at work. Prior

analysis of the broader aspects within the Real and Actual domains helped me to understand why the individuals concerned were interpreting and understanding their environment and community, i.e. their world, as they did.

- **The downward spiral arrow**

The downward spiral arrow is representative of the complex and repetitive nature of the process of change resulting from the DRF's school-based intervention. This arrow indicates how the three layers are integrally linked within the process.

Each school is firmly rooted within a particular context, within which events occur and humans operate. While the representation of the heuristic framework portrays separate layers, the spiral arrow is indicative of the inter-relationship and association of the layers through the process of change.

The arrow meets the support base of the pyramid, the red area in the diagram, which I designate the "synthesis layer". The synthesis layer represents Phase III of the study, in which the various aspects of the DRF's intervention are brought together to enable its interpretation *as a whole*. Pre-existing mechanisms and structures are scrutinised to enhance understanding of the experience of teachers involved in the intervention and associated change processes. Systems and complexity theory are drawn upon as theoretical perspectives supporting the emergence of key findings (see Chapter 9).

- **The critical realism "vortex"**

This study makes no claims to develop Bhaskar's theory (1979, 1989, 2011) per se; rather, the tiered ontology postulated by critical realism has been used to develop an analytical tool, and the tool has enabled me to delve deeper into the philosophical perspectives underlying the findings and ask probing questions with regard to the complexity of causal factors and relationships involved. With reference to Figure 4.1, the pink vortex structure is a representation of:

  - the complex nature of the study and case itself; and
  - the interconnected "messiness" of Bhaskar's (1979) tiered ontology of critical realism applied to this research.

I initially attempted to separate the overall interpretation into distinct layers, but soon realised the interpretive weakness of such compartmentalising. The vortex assists in communicating the fluid nature of the study, and highlights the interaction of the various components of the

research in practice. Such an interpretation would be supported by Maxwell (2012, p. 72), who insists that research designs and processes are "real phenomena" that must be "constructed" rather than simply implemented (Maxwell, 2012, p. 77).

4.3.2 Using critical realism as an analytical tool in the context of this research

Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) conceptualisation of 'critical realism' is prominent within the social sciences paradigm (Maxwell, 2012, p. 4). It is increasingly invoked in South Africa in the context of a general shift towards emancipatory perspectives in research in education and other social science domains.[9] Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) view of reality is 'critical' in that it encompasses a concern for social justice and equality (Boughey & Niven, 2012, p. 643). Oliver (2012, p. 375) observes that "critical realism describes a social world in which there are multiple opportunities for intervention and change", while Cohen et al. (2011, p. 31) point out that the purpose of critical theory is not merely to understand a phenomenon but to work towards changing it. Oliver (2012, p. 375) argues strongly for the emancipatory nature of critical realism, noting how it enables the surface appearances and prevailing understandings of phenomena to be challenged through examination of the "structures which generate them".

In exploring the critical tradition of social science, Babbie and Mouton (2011, pp. 35-36) reflect on the work of Brian Fay (1970s-1980s) regarding the emancipatory and transformative nature of critical theory. According to Fay (1975, p. 94):

> critical social science is one that recognises that a great many of the actions people perform are caused by social conditions over which they have no control and that a great deal of what people do to one another is not the result of *conscious knowledge* and choice. In other words, a critical social science is one which seeks to *uncover* those systems of social relationships which determine the actions of individuals and the unanticipated, though not accidental, consequences of these actions. (emphasis added)

The concept of 'critical realism' did not originate with Bhaskar; it was used by other philosophers with different meanings (Groff, 2007, p. 4). Maxwell (2012, p. 4) notes how the 'critical' element of critical realism has been known to cause confusion, with Campbell (1988), for example, seeing criticism as something that scientists apply towards each other, a view which Pawson (2006) concurs with. Such a perspective is vastly different from the

[9] In 2012, the Rhodes University Sociology and Education departments jointly hosted the annual conference of the International Association for Critical Realism. Both Roy Bhaskar and Margaret Archer were in attendance at the conference.

emancipatory meaning ascribed to Bhaskarian philosophy, which seeks to identify and understand the oppressive aspects of the social condition and those responsible for it.

Maxwell (2012) provides a refreshing and broader outlook on critical realism. His work draws on several strands of realism, all of which share an ontology in agreeing that there "is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions", while accepting a form of epistemological constructivism in allowing that our understanding of the world is a construction of our own views and perceptions.

Using critical realism as an analytical tool in this study has enabled exploration of the deeper elements contributing to the "social conditions over which people have no control" (Fay, 1975, p. 94). It has provided for an "excavation" (Boughey & Niven, 2012, p. 643) of the underlying "systems of social relationships" in the layer of the 'Real'. As Oliver (2012, p. 376) puts it, "critical realism supports a programme of action that goes beyond the surface tinkering to tackle the deeper roots of needs and false beliefs".

My research investigated the structures and powers impacting upon the development of rural education within the Umzinyathi district municipality (see Chapter 2, which reviews the complex nature of rural schooling in South Africa). Using critical realism as a tool helped me to understand the experience of the teachers involved more fully, by revealing how and to what extent their experience had been shaped by these structures and powers.

4.4 Case study method

According to Cohen et al. (2011, p. 129) the purpose of a case study method is to:

- portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts
- to catch the complexity and situatedness of behaviours
- to contribute to action and intervention; and
- to present and represent reality – to give a sense of being there.

This description neatly captures the purpose and intention of this research. When the study was conceptualised in February 2011, the main objective was to explore and understand the roles and experiences of teachers within the DRF's school-based intervention. In order fully to understand and appreciate these roles and experiences, it was necessary for me to immerse myself in the context. This enabled me to interact with 'real individuals' and develop an

understanding of the 'situatedness' of their experience. It was hoped that through the research process I would be able to provide an accurate and realistic account of the situation within the Umzinyathi community schools.

A case study method was chosen because it allowed for depth of investigation within a particular context and real community. Yin (2003, p. 14) draws on the work of Stoecker (1991) in noting that the case study method is a "comprehensive research strategy". Furthermore, Yin (2003, p. 14) suggests that a case study research method comprises an "all-encompassing method – covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis". Anderson, Crabtree, Steele and McDaniel (2005, p. 681) concur, noting that a "case study approach moves us one step closer to being able to study a phenomena as an integrated whole".

Punch (2009, p. 119) cites the work of Stake (1994) in distinguishing three main types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. This research comprises an intrinsic type of case study in that my intention was to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular case. In addition, a "single-case design" (Yin, 2003, p. 39) was deemed appropriate in that the DRF's school-based intervention was best construed as a single case: "one rationale for a single case is when it represents the *critical case* in testing a well-formulated theory" (Yin, 2003, p. 40).

A case study design was appropriate since I sought to better understand a "multi-layered" reality (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 27) within a highly specific context: as Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 319) point out, case studies are set "in temporal, geographical, organisational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case". Schooling over the past two decades in the rural Umzinyathi district municipality in KwaZulu-Natal represents just such a context.

4.4.1 Case archive and case record

In order to increase the reliability of the information in a case study, a chain of evidence is required (Yin, 2003, p. 105). Huberman and Miles (1994, p. 430) note the importance of an effective storage and retrieval system in order to keep track of the data collected. To this end, I developed a case archive of evidence collected over the course of the three year research period. The case archive consisted of an organised and systematic arrangement of documentation for easy reference.

The case archive consisted of two components;

- Data File 1 – which pertained to Phase I of the research, and
- Data File 2 – which pertained mainly to Phase II.

Data File 1 consists of five separate document files [DOCS 1-5] in hard copy. Within each separate document were a number of individualised items, for example the interview transcripts are coded as follows:

- Date File 1
- Document 3
- Folder D

Therefore the code utilised describing the location of the interview transcripts pertaining to Phase I of the research would read as follows: [DF 1:DOC 3D].

In addition a DVD containing **electronic files** was included in Data File 1. Electronic files were stored in a main data base which I called "Document Analysis" and which was further divided into a series of smaller files in accordance with the type of document stored. An electronic data base was created because many of the documents I received from the DRF were electronic (see DVD Archive in Appendix B).
The coding system used for electronic files was as follows:
The DVD formed part of Data File 1, and therefore the code used is:

- DF1:DVD (document code)

Data File 2 consists of 3 separate document files [DOC1-3] in hard copy. The data within this file pertained mainly to the findings and material gathered during Phase II of the research. The same coding system was used as described above.

Tables 4.2-4 (see Section 4.7) provide an inventory of the various documents stored in each of the Data Files as well as on the electronic DVD. In order to guarantee the authenticity of my data, a data file audit was conducted by one of my colleagues. The colleague who conducted the audit remained a complete 'outsider' to the research in that he in no way participated or involved himself in the collection and analysis of data. An audit certificate is included and available for view in Appendix G.

4.5 The research process

Maxwell (2012, p. 76) speaks of the ongoing and interactive processes involved in research design when conducting qualitative research. "Design in qualitative research is an ongoing process that involves 'tacking' back and forth between the different components of the design" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 77). Figure 1.1 in Section 1.4.1 represents the interactive model of research design employed in this research. The study consisted of three distinct yet interrelated phases which unfolded over the duration of three years (2011-2013). Each phase was informed and grew out of the former, illustrating Maxwell's (2012) description of the ongoing and interactive processes involved in qualitative research.

Phase I of the research took place during 2011 and Phase II in 2012. The final phase (Phase III) of the research took place from January-October 2013. Key features of the research process are summarised in Figure 1.2 (see Section 1.4.2).

Figure 1.2 illustrates the three distinct phases of the research process. The major differences in each of the phases relates to:

- chronology, and
- data gathering techniques used.

Phase I of the research process might best be described as the descriptive period. It involved my exploring and describing the background and context of rural education in South Africa generally and in the Umzinyathi district municipality specifically. This was done through reading and document analysis. Thereafter, I sought to provide a historical overview of the development of the DRF and understand the various interventions the DRF has initiated at the various schools within the area (see Sections 7.4.2 – 7.4.4). During this descriptive phase, I spent time in various schools observing and interacting with teachers on an informal basis. I conducted semi-structured one-on-one interviews with members of the DRF and other community members (non-teachers), which assisted me in trying to develop a picture of the DRF and the role that the organisation plays within the community. Phase I of my research provided me with a platform from which to launch the second phase of my research.

Phase I enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of education both globally and in the context of rural South Africa, illuminating what Bhaskar (1979) refers to as the intransitive elements of the 'real' (see Chapter 2 and Section 7.3.2). Through my

observation and interviews I obtained greater clarity regarding the specific learning and teaching environment within the rural school context. I saw the various infrastructural improvements in the schools the DRF has funded and been involved with, and came to recognise some of the less obvious 'human' changes within the community and teaching fraternity. These interactions and observations allowed me access into what Bhaskar (1979) refers to as the 'actual' layer.

From the stance of the 'actual' I was able to move into the final stages of my research process which involved accessing the inner layer of Bhaskar's (1979) ontology, namely that of the 'empirical'. Having developed a rich description and understanding of the environment in which I was conducting my research, as well as being enlightened regarding the various change initiatives in operation or envisaged by the DRF, I was able to move into the in-depth part of my research process.

As mentioned above, Phase II of the research was integrally linked with the Phase I. At this point I was concerned with focussing on the second goal of my research, which was to discover how teachers understood change by examining their lived experiences within the various change processes at work (see Section 8.5).

I used the information that I had gathered during Phase I of the research to inform the questions I asked teachers and principals in their one-on-one interviews, as well as the questions posed for discussion during the teacher focus-group discussions (see Section 4.6).

Phase III of the research process was characterised by synthesis of the findings emerging from the three analytical activities which took place in Phases I and II. During this phase the data was analysed, drawing on both systems and complexity theory as theoretical frameworks. Morrison (2008, p. 22) notes that with respect to educational research, complexity theory suggests the utility of a case study methodology and qualitative research, premised on interactionist and interpretative accounts. But in Chapter 9 I argue that complexity theory is less appropriate than systems theory as a source for a suitable theoretical framework within which to synthesis the DRF's school-based intervention.

4.6 Fieldwork

4.6.1 Clarification of my role as a researcher and participation in the research process

My involvement with schools and teachers within the Umzinyathi Municipality stems from 2009, when I undertook a field trip with Grade 10 learners to the Battlefields area. One of the activities on the field trip was a visit to a traditional homestead within the area. Of all the exercises and activities the pupils engaged in during the weeklong visit, their actions and reflections indicated that this direct engagement with the community was what they found most rewarding. As a result I reconsidered my planning for future fieldtrips. Through a parent at the school where I was formerly employed, I made contact with Mr Ben Henderson at the DRF. It was through Henderson that I arranged for the pupils to spend a day at one of the local schools within the Umzinyathi community. And so began my involvement with the local schools and teachers.

Thereafter I went on to organise two teacher development workshops with local teachers and my former teacher colleagues within the Umzinyathi rural community schools. On both occasions over 50 local teachers and principals attended. My passion and interest in this rural school community grew to the point where I commenced my research into the DRF's school-based intervention.

Adler and Adler (1987, p. 12) note that in order to acquire valid data, fieldworkers need to gain the confidence of local community members. Through my involvement with teachers and participation in the workshops, I became a familiar face and a person whom teachers could eventually trust: "Researchers should let members of the setting gradually get to know them as they hang around in this manner, so that people realise the non-threatening nature of their research intentions" (Becker, 1963, cited in Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 12).

According to Junker (1960) the type of role that researchers assume within their research context is dependent on various factors. "Fieldworkers' abilities, identities, theoretical orientations, self-understandings, demographic characteristics" and a number of other personal factors may have an influence on the membership roles they will seek and eventually gain (cited in Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 14). I relied upon the fact that I too was a teacher to establish common ground with the Umzinyathi educational community.

Whilst my initial involvement with the community stemmed from the DRF, I made it clear from the beginning that I did not work for the DRF. Teachers learned to view me as a familiar and trustworthy face and were always happy to share and communicate with me. My involvement can be classified as non-participatory in that I was not personally involved in the changes and intervention strategies the DRF and local schools were working towards. I was merely an outsider observing and reporting on my findings.

4.6.2 Selection of research participants

Lofland and Lofland (1995, p. 16) speak of the importance of collecting meaningful and rich data:

> Your goal is to collect the richest possible data. Rich data means, ideally, a wide and diverse range of information collected over a relatively prolonged period of time. Again, ideally, you achieve this through direct, face-to-face contact with, and prolonged immersion in some social location or circumstance.

In order to collect rich data and begin to understand the complexities associated with the rural school environment, I purposively selected a variety of community members, DRF staff and teachers to become involved in my study. Whilst my core field research took place during the period 2011-2012, my involvement with this community spans over five years and has permitted me to develop an understanding of the complex challenges many of these schools and communities face.

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 143) note that frequently in the case of qualitative research, purposive samples are taken. But such a sample can be so unique as to be no "sample" at all:

> In much qualitative research the emphasis is placed on the uniqueness, the idiographic and exclusive distinctness of the phenomenon, group or individuals in question, i.e. they only represent themselves, and nothing or nobody else. In such cases it is perhaps unwise to talk about a 'sample', and more fitting to talk about a group, or individuals (*ibid*, p. 161).

In Phase I of my research process, participants were purposively selected according to the individual and specific roles they played within the establishment, development and running of the DRF. Other participants were purposively selected because of their involvement as Umzinyathi community members. Babbie and Mouton (2011, p. 166) agree that it is

sometimes appropriate for one to select one's own sample based on one's knowledge of the people concerned and the nature of the research and its intended outcomes.

The question of sample size always comes into qualitative research. As a result, questions arise with respect to the validity of the research and the accuracy of its findings when a small group of people participate in the research and data collection process. In the case of the first phase of my data collection, the representative nature of the wider population was irrelevant to my study. I was concerned with gathering specific and detailed information about the historical development of the DRF. Cohen et al.'s (2011, p. 161) concept of "fitness for purpose" might be invoked to provide further justification for my purposive sampling techniques in phase one.

In the second phase of my data collection, a larger population sample was selected, namely that of teachers, principals and volunteers working within the schools. In this instance, both purposive and partly random sampling techniques were utilised. Purposive techniques were used in the case of principals and volunteer workers. There are a total of four volunteer workers living within the local communities and assisting in various schools within the district. I arranged a focus group discussion with these volunteers to gain insight into their experiences of working with the schools and to delve into their perceptions and understanding of how teachers are involved and coping with intervention strategies (see [DF2:DOC2D:FG#1]).

The principals were expressly selected because of their involvement with the DRF and its various interventions.

I conducted two focus group discussions. Focus group number one consisted of 15 teachers [DF2:DOC2D:FG#2] and focus group number two of 6 teachers [DF2:DOC2D:FG#3]. These teachers were a random sample representative of the general teacher population working in the schools within the Umzinyathi district municipality. The sample consisted of both primary and secondary school teachers with a wide range of qualifications and number of years of teaching experience. Involvement in the teacher focus group discussions was voluntary, via an invitation extended to all schools in the area [see DF 2: DOC2B].

4.6.3 Field assistance

I was assisted in the field by two community members working in the Umzinyathi region.

- Mr Henderson, the CEO of the DRF, has been an asset to me from my earliest days of involvement with this community. Henderson introduced me to key community members, principals and teachers working towards school upliftment through intervention. Henderson is a respected community member and knows the area very well. Through his guidance I established contacts at the various schools and was able to engage with both teachers and community members.

- The principal at Siyanda Senior Secondary School. He is also a respected community member and educator who has assisted me in a number of ways over the past few years. He has been an important conduit for communication between myself (living in Johannesburg) and the teachers and schools in the local community. He has provided me with vital information concerning DoE workshops and meetings and the availability of teachers and principals for interviews and focus group discussions. He has also assisted me with the arrangement and organisation of the focus group discussions, which I hosted at his school. See [DF 2: DOC 3C].

4.7 Data sources and collection

Patton (2002, p.4) maintains that qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: in-depth open-ended interviews, direct observation and written documents (see also Maxwell, 2012, p. 94). I employed all three data collection processes in order to gather sufficient evidence to provide for a rich understanding of the context and people involved in the case study.

4.7.1 Documents

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 212) define documents as "written texts which relate to some aspect of the social world". De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2008, p. 325) note that the utilisation of document analysis enables the researcher to investigate "people, events and systems in depth" through the analysis of authentic material. This analysis can be daunting: as Cohen et al. (2007, p. 475) observe, one of the most "enduring problems of qualitative data analysis is the reduction of copious amounts of written data to manageable and comprehensible proportions".

I began by conducting an informal interview with the CEO of the DRF. From information gleaned in this interview I was able to identify the sorts of documentation that were available to me and with which I could build up a picture and start to contextualise the historical development of the DRF. This initial interview led me to documents which dealt with the history of the establishment of the DRF and other documents such as minutes of meetings, workshop material and information relevant to the various intervention strategies.

Table 4.2 provides an inventory of the documents which were analysed.

Table 4.2: A summary of documents (*hard copies*) used in the generation of data for the study

GENERATED BY	NAME/DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT	PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY	DATA SOURCE
DATA FILE #1			
DRF	DRF School Evaluation (2008)	To gain insight into the problems faced by schools, as well as to develop an understanding of the role and work of the DRF within local community schools. These evaluation documents gave me insight into the finer details of the DRF's school-based intervention and the unfolding and development thereof.	DF 1: DOC 1
Together Schools	Together Schools Concept Document	This document provided insight into the realities of school quality in South Africa. JET provides a useful classification of schools in this document.	DF1: DOC 1A
Delta Environmental Centre	Report: Umzinyathi Project Schools (2008)	This document provided more information with respect to the state of Umzinyathi Schools. I gained insight into key priority areas the DRF's school-based intervention was working towards targeting.	DF1:DOC1B
MiET Africa	Siyanakekela Baseline Study Report (2010)	This document was useful in providing information relating to the socio-economic status of the area of study. This report highlighted key areas of pupil vulnerability within the Umzinyathi district municipality.	DF1: DOC 2
KZN DoE, MiET Africa & DRF	Siyanakekela: School Communities Caring for Children.	This document provided a summary of the school survey data for each school.	DF1:DOC2A
KZN DoE, MiET Africa & DRF	Partnership Project Presentation	This series of slides provided information with respect to the Siyanakekele Project and the various partnerships created.	DF1: DOC2B
DRF	DRF School Survey Report and Recommendations	This document provided information around the DRF-MiET Africa partnership. It provided information about 14 schools within the Umzinyathi area. Key focus areas of the DRF's school-based intervention were summarised in this document.	DF1:DOC2C
DRF	DRF Strategic Plan (2009)	This document provided an overview of the establishment of the DRF. They key objectives of the NGO are elaborated upon in this document.	DF1:DOC4A

According to Bailey (1994, p. 294), the documents listed in Table 4.2 should be classified as "official documents". Official documents relate to documentation compiled and maintained on a regular basis by a particular organisation (in this case the DRF).

All secondary documentation being analysed must be viewed critically (de Vos et al., 2008, p. 321). Dale, Arber and Procter (1988, pp. 20-27) and Stewart (1984, pp. 23-24) suggest that it is important to establish the purpose of the document as well as who was responsible for sourcing the information it contains, while Cohen et al. (2007, p. 202) attach particular importance to the context of the document. For the purposes of my research it was very important for me to take cognisance of the following:

- the reason or underlying causes for the creation of the document;
- the political and social contexts surrounding the document; and
- the intended use of the document.

I spent time sourcing documents and classifying them into a range of categories. Weber (1990, p. 15) speaks of a process by which "many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories". Henderson from the DRF was helpful in this regard, allowing me access to a variety of documents dating back to 2004 through which I could trace the historical development of the DRF. Many documents were available in electronic format, making it easier to copy and categorise material (see the DVD Archive in Appendix B). An open coding system was put in place to make for easy reference to various documents in my analysis and discussion of findings. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the documents I was able to source and gain access to from the DRF. These documents are available in electronic format; a copy of a DVD has been placed in the thesis for referral.

Table 4.3: A summary of documents (*electronic copies*) used in the generation of data for the study

GENERATED BY	NAME/DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT	PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY	DATA SOURCE
DATA FILE # 1: DVD			
David Rattray	Early Minutes 18/08/2004 05/05/2005 26/04/2006 16/08/2006 29/11/2006	Copies of the early minutes generated by Rattray himself provided insights into some of the earlier work done by the Rattrays within the local Umzinyathi community. Essentially these efforts paved the way for the development of the DRF.	DF1:DVD MM1 MM2 MM3 MM4 MM5
GENERATED BY	**NAME/DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT**	**PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY**	**DATA SOURCE**
Ben Henderson	DRF Minutes 13/03/2007	I gained access to several copies of minutes, however I really only drew on information from one set (13/03/2007) which provided insight into the formal establishment of the DRF.	DF1: DVD: Recent documents: DRFM1
DRF	Education Development Plan documents: DRF EDP checklist (Excel doc) MoU with Schools DRF EDP	These documents provide information with respect to the main goals outlined by the DRF as far as their school-intervention strategy is concerned.	DF1:DVD EDP
Ben Henderson Education training consultant	News letter [NL#1] Training document [TD] March 2009	This newsletter provided information with respect to some of the DRF's successful interventions to date. This training document provided information with respect to the teacher curriculum training and school management teams training.	DF1:DVD: Recent documents

Once documents had been coded, I compiled a series of analytical memos (DF 1: DOC3D; DF 2:DOC1B; DOC2D) which assisted me in extracting relevant and appropriate information from the various documents. As I analysed the various documents a number of themes began to emerge, adding to the richness and depth of my findings. A detailed analysis and discussion of these themes follows in Section 4.8. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 476) indicate that content analysis "takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into a summary

form through the use of pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to test or generate a theory".

4.7.2 Interviews

Babbie and Mouton (2011) regard the role of the interviewer as indispensable to the research process, as data collection is one of the most critical components of the study. An interview differs from a normal conversation in that the interview experience is specifically about obtaining information based on a set of questions. Through an interview the research trajectory shifts towards the generation of meaningful knowledge through conversation. Kvale (1996, p. 14) observes that

> an interview between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasises the social situatedness of research data.

These authors' views on the very personal nature of an interview speak to a realist's research objective, which is to account for and understand what happens within a particular society or group of people. Through conducting interviews I arrived at a clearer understanding of people's roles within the school communities under investigation, and began to recognise the logic of the social reality created by community members.

The interviews conducted in my study were semi-structured in nature. Gillham (2000) emphasises the importance of the flexibility of the semi-structured interviewing technique. It is nevertheless essential that the interview be carefully planned, structured, developed and practised in order to ensure that sufficiently rich information is collected. Patton (2002, p. 341) stresses the importance of the interviewer being sufficiently prepared, in that the quality of the information obtained is directly dependent on the interviewer. Kelly (1999, p .387) cautions researchers with respect to interviews which may involve participants sharing personal experiences and reflections, in that often the interview will take on a "life of its own" despite having planned questions and a set structure. Kelly (1999) further emphasises that the interviewer needs to ensure that the interviewee is comfortable with the level of exploration and discussion.

Russell & Mugyenyi (1997, p. 20) speak specifically about social survey techniques within an African context and note that interviews are generally time-consuming, in that the limited,

purposive and impersonal nature of a traditional Western research interview is foreign to the social world within a rural African context. Russell & Mugyenyi (1997) emphasise the importance of establishing a good rapport with interviewees because the success of the research project rests (at least to some extent) upon this. Peshkin (1984, p. 257) maintains that if researchers appear "good, honest and decent" they will be rewarded with trust. If researchers are trusted by the community in which they are working they should have easy access to meetings, interviews and documentation pertaining to their research.

The literature cited above offered me sound advice in regard to the numerous and varied interview processes which I engaged in during my study. I was an outsider, in that I reside in Johannesburg and have had no experience of teaching in a rural Africa context (membership roles are explored in Section 4.6.1 of this chapter). However, due to my previous involvement with the schools through school visits and teacher workshops I was known to the teachers and community members and was not viewed as a threat. This worked in my favour, enabling me to set up interviews with relative ease. I made my research intentions very clear at the outset and always ensured that interviewees were given a written transcript thereafter.

Various participants were interviewed. Participants from the DRF, the Dundee DoE District Office, schools and the local community were purposively selected according to their official roles, status, assumed knowledge, experience and influence on the issues at hand (Creswell 2003, pp. 188-90). During Phase I of the research process, trustees and other people directly involved with the DRF were interviewed with the aim of trying to develop a historical overview of the Foundation and the rationale behind the establishment of the organisation and the work done to date [see DF1:DOC3C]. This initial research formed part of a 'scoping' of the context and environment which assisted me in identifying major stakeholders and main interest groups involved in the interventions. It also gave me some indication of possible issues or obstacles I might face on my return to interview teachers in the local schools and staff at the DoE District office in Dundee (in Phase II of the research process) (Kelly, 1999, p. 385).

Table 4.4 outlines the individuals whom I interviewed in both Phase I and Phase II of the research. Names have been excluded so as to maintain the anonymity of persons involved.

Table 4.4: Summary of one-on-one interviews

ORGANISATION	PARTICIPANTS	PURPOSE	DATA SOURCE
DATA FILE # 1			
David Rattray Foundation	• 2 Trustee Members • On site CEO • Independent Consultant involved at the outset conducting research on school feeding schemes • MiEt Africa Consultant	To elicit an understanding of the development and establishment of the DRF and their school-based intervention. To gain insight into school community issues and the work being done.	DF 1:DOC 3C InI #1 IT # 1-4,6
Tribal Headquarters	• Tribal Chief	To develop an understanding of the role and involvement of the community within the DRF's school-based intervention. To explore and understanding leadership and power-structures within the community. To better understand the context of the research and typical challenges faced.	DF 1: DOC 3C IT#5
DATA FILE # 2			
Department of Education District Office in Dundee	• Circuit manager	To gain an understanding of the work conducted by the local district office. Gain insight into the working relationship-partnership between the district office and the DRF.	DF 2: DOC 1 IT #7
Principals within local rural schools in the Umzinyathi Municipality.	• 3 school principals [High school, Intermediate school and a Primary school]	To explore the role and participation of teachers within the DRF's school-based intervention.	DF 2: DOC 1 IT #8-10

Pilot interviews [DF 1: DOC 3C, DOC 3D, IT#4] were conducted at the outset of the research to reveal any gaps, misinterpretations or other concerns pertaining to the questions and interview process. This was a very useful exercise, and I was even able to use one of the pilot interviews as part of the data collection process. Minor modifications were made to the semi-structured interview questions as a result of my experiences at the pilot stage. All the interviews were recorded using an electronic dictaphone which was tested prior to each interview. Babbie and Mouton (2011, p. 253) emphasise the importance of recording respondents' exact verbal responses to questions: "No attempt should be made to paraphrase, summarise or correct bad grammar".

Once I had conducted the interviews, I was able to download the audio-recordings onto my computer. I personally transcribed each of the interviews word for word and sent them to participants for checking. All the participants were happy for me to use the information generated from their interviews in the analysis and discussion of my results.

There are however certain shortcomings associated with transcribed data. Kvale (1996, p. 167) notes that a transcript simply becomes an "opaque screen between the researcher and the original live interview situation". Cohen et al. (2011, p. 426) describe transcripts as "frozen" in that they are "decontextualised, abstracted from time and space, from the dynamics of the situation, from the live form, and from the social, interactive, dynamic and fluid dimensions of their source". While to a certain extent I agree with Kvale (1996) and Cohen et al. (2011), I did find the process of transcribing my interviews valuable. Listening to the interview over and over triggered thoughts, ideas and associations in my brain, and in essence the process of transcribing provided the initial platform for my data analysis and thematic identification. While my transcriptions remain as clinical data files, my rich descriptions and critical reflections in my research journal have allowed me to keep the social and interactive setting of the interview 'alive' to a certain extent.

4.7.3 Focus group discussions

Interviewing individuals provided me with useful information based on personal and subjective experiences (see Section 4.6.2 of this chapter and Chapter 8). But interviews do have limitations, including those arising from the mood or emotional investment of the interviewee at the time (Zurcher, 1977, cited in Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 20). It is also a fact that society is complex and that the rural schooling environment in which I conducted my research (see Section 7.3.2) is implicitly shaped by various hierarchical structures and cultural divides. People may present different 'fronts' to non-members of their community (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 21). I needed to take cognisance of this during the interviewing process and thereafter during the interpretation and analysis of the discussions.

To balance out the possibility of 'fronts' being presented to disguise certain information, I felt it was necessary to make use of a further data collection method, namely focus group discussions. A focus group is defined as "a group of people who share a similar type of experience, but that is not 'naturally' constituted as an existing social group" (Kelly, 1999, p. 388). I used focus group discussions as a means of data gathering with the teachers and American volunteer workers from the local schools. Kelly (1999, p. 388) notes that group discussions can provide the researcher with inter-subjective information related to experiences shared by the community. Babbie and Mouton (2011, p. 292) suggest that part of the value of focus groups is that they allow participants to generate meaning themselves. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 432) draw on the work of Watts and Ebbut (1987) ,who suggest that a focus group interview is useful in that it generates a wider range of responses than a one-on-

one interview. In this situation, teachers felt more confident to share, and discussion triggered further ideas, thoughts and points of interest.

Teachers were invited to participate in focus group discussions. Due to the interest and enthusiasm they evinced, two focus group discussions were held, each one lasting for about around an hour. In each case, I facilitated the discussions, which were held in succession. Initially teachers were reticent, but as the discussion progressed the atmosphere relaxed and they responded to the non-threatening nature of the conversation. Valuable, rich and meaningful experiences and reflections were shared.

Focus group discussions also have limitations, particularly when dominant voices and characters take control of the conversation and effectively silence quieter or more anxious group members. Morgan (1997, pp. 8-10) indicates that focus groups are limited in the sense that they provide less depth and insight than interviews into the opinions and experiences of each given participant. In the case of my focus group discussions the following observations were noted.

- There were some teachers who said nothing at all and merely observed. Despite teachers indicating they were comfortable that the discussion was conducted in English, I did feel that language may have been a barrier. Some teachers also appeared shy or perhaps apprehensive, especially when I tried to draw them into the discussion.

- I did notice examples of dominant voices who spoke regularly. However many of these teachers encouraged others to participate and were valuable in catalysing further discussion. I did not feel that the dominant voices posed a threat to other potential speakers in the group, nor did I feel they were swaying the discussion in any obvious way.

Table 4.5 provides a summary of the three focus group discussions in the research process.

Table 4.5: Summary of the focus group discussions

PARTICIPANTS	PURPOSE	DATA SOURCE
DATA FILE # 2		
Volunteers working in local community schools.	To elicit an understanding of an 'outsider' living within the community's understanding of : • issues within local rural schools • the DRF's school based-intervention • processes of change	DF 2:DOC 2D FG#1
School teachers – group 1.	To develop an understanding of the work being done by teachers and the challenges encountered in schools and the broader rural-school community. To gain insight into the roles and participation of teachers within school-based interventions.	DF 2: DOC 2D FG#2
School teachers – group 2.	As above	DF 2: DOC 2D FG#3

4.7.4 Observations

Cohen et al. (2007) note that observation is a particularly useful method of data collection in that it allows the researcher to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Simpson and Tuson (2003, p. 2) indicate that observation is more involved and complex than just looking. It involves the systematic noting of "people, events, behaviours, routines and so forth". The sort of observation which I was involved in was perhaps less systematic than what these authors describe. I opted for an unstructured and open-ended approach, continuously reflecting on my experiences and observations in my research journal. My observations and reflections are based on the local school environments in which I spent time, as well as on my interviews and focus group discussions, where body language and other aspects of interaction were noted and reflected upon. Moyles (2002) indicates that observational data are sensitive to contexts and demonstrate a strong ecological validity. My observational experiences made an important contribution to data collection and enabled me to make more informed decisions during the process of data analysis. Observation also assisted in developing my understanding of and empathy towards the teachers working towards change within their unique school contexts.

I kept a **research journal** [DF 1, RJ] throughout the research and used it to record ideas and strategies for each step in the process. My research journal was a small leather-bound book in which I made hand-written notes, comments and reflections throughout the research process. The journal proved to be especially valuable in terms of recording reflections and comments after interviews and focus group discussions. I frequently referred to these notes and reflections during the transcription of the interviews and subsequent analysis of the transcripts. The journal entries made the interviews come alive once more and provided a certain contextual atmosphere that is always lost in a transcript. Observational data and insights were also recorded in my research journal. Extracts from some of my journal entries are inserted in Box 4.1 below.

Box 4.1

3 May 2011

The pilot interview went well this evening [DF 1: DOC3D; IT#4]. Emma was very helpful and willing to participate in the research project where she was able to. There is no doubt she is passionate about educational reform in South Africa. We discussed the interview questions afterwards. Emma spoke openly and honestly about the process and gave me some valuable input with regards to the type of responses that I might expect from the various people I intend interviewing.

11 May 2011

Today I visited School X. From the outside I had a hunch that this school was problematic. The school grounds were poorly kept, there was a lot of litter on the ground and goats were seen ambling around what was apparently the school kitchen. The school was not fenced. I did arrive at break time and met the principal and three other teachers at the school. The teachers were quite friendly and keen to see me, the principal less so. I got the feeling she was a little nervous of my presence. I walked around the school property and noted that there was a half-built toilet block that the DoE had not yet finished (See Figure 3.8). I asked the principal about this, to which she clearly knew little about, and appeared quite disinterested. It saddened me that she appeared so apathetic. From my observations I got the feeling that learning and teaching was poor at this school.

This personal observation concurs with the material I had read and engaged with relating to the context and complexities associated with rural schooling in South Africa. This is discussed in Section 2.5.

7 February 2012

Today I have scheduled the focus group discussions [DF2: DOC 2D; FG#1-3] at one of the secondary schools in the area. I am incredibly apprehensive to the point of having had no sleep last night! I am apprehensive because I am unsure of exactly how many teachers will show up for the focus group discussions and also nervous as to how they will run. Despite me sending formal invites to local schools in the area [DF2:DOC2B] as well as contacting teachers and principals via SMS text messages, the process of teachers responding was complex. Even although teachers may have responded positively they may still not attend! I am also aware of the transport issues in the area (the complexities of transport in this area are discussed in Section 2.5.4 and Section 8.4.2).

4.8 Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative data analysis is a complex procedure requiring organisation, justification of the data in terms of the participants' interpretations of situations or factors; as well as the noting of patterns, themes and categories (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 537). While Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009, p. 251) speak of the "back-and-forth" process of data analysis, Cohen et al. (2011, p. 537) concede that there is no single correct way or method of interpreting qualitative data; rather, one should aim for "fitness of purpose". Given the vagueness of these parameters, I found the data interpretation process understandably difficult, complex and time consuming.

4.8.1 Analytical activities

Figure 1.2 illustrates how this study consisted of three distinct phases. Within each phase a distinct analytical activity took place. In this section I provide a chronological account of the processes leading up to each analytical activity. I then describe and explain what took place within each activity, before exploring the relationships between each activity and how the data analysis process unfolded as a whole. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the analysis process followed in this research.

4.8.1.1 Analytical activity 1: Phase I

The first analytical activity took place during Phase I of the research process. During Phase I, data was generated through the conducting of one-on-one interviews with people involved with the DRF (see Table 4.4 for the full list of interviewees) and extensive document analysis (see Table 4.2 for a list of the documents). The interview transcriptions were analysed first, using a process of coding. "Coding is the ascription of a category label to a piece of data that has been collected" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 559). No specific code categories were imposed *on* the data, as I allowed key codes or common themes to emerge *from* the data. This is known as "open-coding", an open code being a new label that is attached to a piece of data or information to describe or categorise it (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 561). Thereafter documents were read and coded according to the themes that had emerged from the interview transcripts. The process of coding took place line by line, using various coloured pens to underline statements or phrases which pertained to a particular code. Codes were applied consistently to interview transcripts and documents. Once the initial coding process had taken place, I began to look at the frequency of codes and the amount of information which pertained to each code.

During *Analytical activity 1*, **three** distinct themes emerged from the interviews and documents. These are as follows (in no particular order):

- the broader context;
- actions and interventions associated with the DRF; and
- human dimensions.

At this point I started to think about the emergent themes in relation to the critical realist perspective used as an analytical framework in this study. Towards the end of the first analytical activity, I started to conceptualise how Bhaskar's (1979) three-tiered ontology could assist me in the further analysis of my data. This conceptualisation process resulted in my designing an original heuristic tool (see Figure 4.1). The structure, purpose and application of this tool was described and explained in Section 4.3.1.1. At the end of Phase I of the research process I had begun to develop the basis of the "story line" (*the descriptive overview of the main phenomenon being described and analysed, and its salient features*) within my data analysis and interpretation process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 117).

4.8.1.2 Analytical activity 2: Phase II

The second analytical activity took place in Phase II of the research process (refer to Figure 1.1). Phase II of the research process was scaffolded upon the findings that emerged out of the first analytical activity during Phase I of the research process. Questions forming part of the interview schedules for both the one-on-one interviews as well as the focus group discussions emerged from the findings of Phase I.

Change theory and theories relating to the field of organisational development [OD] (see Section 5.2) formed part of the theoretical framework in this study. Theoretical insights were also interwoven into the questions within the various interview schedules. Questions underpinned by theory assisted me later on in analysing the DRF's school-based intervention with respect to the body of knowledge on change theory and OD. Examples of key questions which I used in Phase II are summarised below:

- What assumptions have been made with respect to change?
- Who are the driving forces behind the changes/intervention strategies?

- Who are the agents of change and why?
- Are there are any barriers to change and if so, what are they?
- How are changes decided upon and implemented?
- How are schools and teachers responding to change?
- Is change sustainable within the context of the schools forming part of my research?

The actual interview schedules are available (refer to [DF 1:DOC 3C; DF 2:DOC 1A, DOC 2B]).

Once the interviews and focus group discussions had been conducted, the second analytical activity could commence. Once more, interview transcripts were carefully read and coded. In the second phase of the study, a selective coding procedure was chosen. Selective coding involves the identification of core categories (three emergent themes during Phase I) which are used to integrate data and allow for conclusions to be made (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 562). Consequently the three emergent themes from Phase I were used to selectively code the transcripts during Phase II of the research process.

Once transcripts had been coded, the heuristic tool (see Figure 4.1) was used to analyse the findings that emerged during this phase of the study. Section 4.3.1.1 provides an in-depth interpretative discussion of the data analysis using the heuristic tool. Additionally, the theoretical framework provided by change theory and principles related to OD are used as a lens through which the data was analysed and interpreted.

4.8.1.3 Analytical activity 3: Phase II

The third and final analytical activity took place in the latter stages of Phase II of the research process, from June 2012 onwards. Unlike the first two analytical activities, this activity did not involve further data collection and analysis. Rather it was a concept-driven analytic process. Figure 4.1 illustrates this holistic and in-depth process of analysis. During the final analytical activity, Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) philosophy of critical realism provided a lens through which the entire case was viewed. During this final stage, the complexity of the rural school context became apparent as the 'Real, 'Actual' and 'Empirical' domains were explored in relation to teachers' individual experiences and participation within the DRF's school-based intervention.

4.8.1.4 Phase III

Phase III involved a **synthesis** of the data generated during the three analytical cycles that took place during Phases I and II of the research. To this end I drew on the theoretical framework of complexity and systems theory (refer to Sections 5.3 and 5.4) to gain greater insight into the processes involved in the DRF's school-based intervention. Complexity and system theory added clarity and depth to my understanding of the processes driving the intervention forward as well as of the barriers to its efficacy (see Chapter 9).

This section has described the three distinct analytical activities which took place in the course of the study. It has revealed the integrated and continuous nature of the analysis process. Ezzy (2002, p. 60) emphasises how an integrated and recursive approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation allows for greater sophistication and depth of insight into the data. The case record provides a full record of the data and analytical memos produced and used in the analysis and interpretation of the case study.

4.9 Issues associated with a case study method

"Research in education inevitably carries ethical issues, because it involves collecting data from people and about people" (Punch, 2009, p. 49). The following section explores the ethical aspects of qualitative research, as well as issues pertaining to the validity and quality of the findings of the study.

An effective case study researcher is defined by Cohen et al. (2011, p. 296) as someone who has the ability to "collate and synthesise data from a variety of sources, to make inferences and interpretations based on evidence, to know how to test inferences and conclusions (and how to test them against rival explanations)". A case study researcher often works within the context of the case study and may be privy to confidential or personal information. Therefore the researcher must be clear about ethical considerations relating to the research process, about the quality and rigour of the data, as well as the generalisability of the findings.

4.9.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues arise out of any interactions with other people, particularly when there may be a conflict of interests (Babbie & Mouton, 2011, p. 520). Ethical issues are complex and concern how the researcher deals with the participants in the study, the selected site of

research, the management of data and the overall presentation of evidence in the final report (Creswell 2003, pp. 63-67 and Cohen et al., 2007, pp. 71-75). A researcher has the right to establish the truth, but not if this would involve compromising the rights of an individual or a community. It is important to consider that different communities or groups of people have different codes of conduct and ideas of ethical behaviour. It was necessary for me to make these issues explicit and to reach agreement with the community up front concerning appropriate conduct within the enquiry process.

During my research I worked largely with an unfamiliar group of teachers within an African rural context which is relatively unfamiliar to me. Kelly (1999, p. 384) speaks of the "politics of consent". He emphasises the importance of establishing trust in the researcher. This requires a thorough understanding of power relationships and cultural complexities within the context in which the research is conducted (see Section 7.3.2. for further discussion of cultural complexities and Section 8.2.2-3 on community leadership structures).

In order for me to conduct my research in an ethical manner, it was necessary for me to seek permission from a variety of stakeholders. Firstly, I sought permission from the DRF [DRF: DOC3A] and the DoE District Office in Dundee to conduct the research in the area as well as to gain access to the variety of documents required for investigative purposes. I made contact with the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department and used the documentation relating to the Procedures and Guidelines around conducting research in state education institutions [DF 1:DOC3A]. I obtained a copy of the Research Permission application form and submitted it to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. I received confirmation of receipt of the documentation and follow up questions regarding the names of the schools in the district where I was to conduct my research. Thereafter I had no further communication from the KwaZulu-Natal DoE regarding my research, and had to make the assumption that all was in order.

The informed consent of all the participants was sought (*copies of consent forms inserted together with interview/focus group transcripts*, see DF1:DOC3C; DF2:DOC1B; DOC2C). See Appendix D for an example of the consent documentation used in this study. A copy of the informed consent form is inserted in Appendix D. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 77) refer to the work of Howe and Moses (1999), who note that "informed consent is a cornerstone of ethical behaviour, as it respects the rights of individuals to exert control over their lives and to take decisions for themselves". This was done through my providing each participant with a letter

explaining my research as well as via a conversation with each participant and/or focus group in which I explained my intentions and overall research aims. All the participants were invited to ask questions to clarify any concerns they may have had. I made it very clear to all of them that they could withdraw from the study at any point and that their anonymity was guaranteed.

Findings were shared with the DRF and the schools and teachers concerned. I also submitted a copy of my study to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education as per the regulations outlined in their Procedures and Guidelines document.

Furthermore, to strengthen the authenticity of the data, the case record was audited (refer to the Appendix for a copy of the audit certificate).

4.9.2 Validity and rigour

The question of the validity of data, Winter (2000, p. 1) suggests, may be addressed in a variety of ways. These include "honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher". From doing qualitative research I have come to realise that threats to validity and reliability can never be completely erased. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 179) refer to the work of Gronlund (1981), who maintains that validity should be seen as a matter of "degree rather than as an absolute state". Therefore I needed to ensure that I identified as many possible threats to the validity of my data as I could and minimised these wherever possible. But Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Maxwell (1992) argue that one should steer away from positivist notions of validity when conducting qualitative research and rather ensure that the research process is authentic. Mishler (1990) and Maxwell (1992) advocate that "understanding" is a more suitable term than "validity" when conducting qualitative research. I concur with these views, to the extent that I had throughout sought to obtain rich and thick description, and authentic and valuable data. When conducting my analysis, I worked hard to ensure that a level of deep understanding was achieved.

- Prolonged field experience

In order to gain a rich understanding of and mature perspective on the context of the case, prolonged field experience was required. During the three-year research process, I embarked on two field excursions (May 2011, and February 2012), on each trip spending several days in the Umzinyathi rural school community. Prolonged engagement in the field is useful in

that rich and sufficient data can be gathered, contributing to the overall validity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, pp. 239-46; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, pp. 295-97). During this time I interacted with a vast number of community members, teachers and people involved with the DRF. I spent many hours within schools and was able to make informal observations. Despite being a non-community member I became familiar to people in the area, a trusted and respected face. My time spent in the field was crucial to the contextualisation of the case.

- Audit trail

Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, pp. 239-46; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, pp. 295-97, set out several steps researchers can take to assure the validity of qualitative data. One of their suggestions is an audit trail. An audit trail consists of "documentation and records used in the study which could include: raw data; records of analysis and reduction; reconstructions and syntheses of data . . ." (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, pp. 239-46). In order to make this study transparent, an effort was made to make visible the raw data as well as the data generation and interpretation processes. As a result a detailed audit trail was kept. Throughout the research an effort was made to cross reference the data source, which can be found in the data files (refer to Section 4.4.1 for an explanation on the case archive). The detailed data files and cross referencing helped guarantee the authenticity of the research. As an additional audit check, one of my colleagues at the Wits School of Education spent time meticulously checking the various documents pertaining to the study, conducting a case audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 379; Bassey, 1999, p. 90). My colleague was external and not involved in the research (see the case audit certificate in Appendix G).

- Member checking

To prevent researcher bias Lather (1986) emphasises the importance of "face-validity" or member checking in establishing data credibility. Accordingly, interview transcripts were given to research participants for inspection and further validation. All transcripts were positively received by participants and no changes were made to the data. In fact I received positive affirmation and further reflection from many of my participants in their responses to my transcriptions. Patton (2002, p. 560) notes that researchers can gain insight into the "accuracy, completeness, fairness and perceived validity" of their work by having people involved or described in the study analyse the transcriptions and conclusions thereof. In order further to enhance the trustworthiness of my data, I also made use of peer-review

opportunities, in terms of which colleagues operating as critical friends in the field of education provided me with valuable feedback [DF2:DOC3D]. Through the sharing of my findings it was my intention to provide opportunities for critical engagement and feedback, so as to establish whether the emergent themes and trends in my research were in fact credible.

- Triangulation

Triangulation was utilised as a means to strengthen the quality and validity of data. Patton (2002) emphasises how triangulation is used to strengthen qualitative studies by combining various methods of data collection. "By combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources, researchers can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single study theories" (Denzin, 1989, cited in Patton, 2002). I used a variety of data collection methods in my study, including document analysis, non-participant observation, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The findings from the various methods provided me with a wide variety of rich data, sometimes contrasting, which helped to make me more confident about my research.

4.9.3 Generalisation of the case study

Robson (2002, p. 183) and Yin (2009, p. 15) suggest that case study research is appropriate for specific analysis, in contrast to the generalisability of work based on statistical data. The strength of case study research is that it is only representative of the particular case. Therefore as Yin (2009, p. 15) notes, with respect to analytical generalisation, that within case study research the concern is not so much with a "representative sample", but rather with the ability of the case study research to contribute to the expansion of knowledge and generalisation of theory; Yin makes the point that case studies can help to generalise towards a "broader theory" (2009, pp. 38-39).

This research has focussed on the case of the DRF working within the rural school community of Umzinyathi, KwaZulu-Natal. The observations, lessons learnt and conclusions drawn from the study have contributed to the overall body of knowledge of NGOs working towards school intervention strategies within a rural South African context. The insights gained from this research will contribute to the extant body of knowledge concerning the complexities associated with organisational change in rural schools.

4.10 Conclusion

The overall aim of this research was to provide insights necessary for a deep understanding of the DRF's school-based intervention within the rural context of the Umzinyathi district municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. My realising the significance of the context of this research led to a shift from a relativist to a realist ontology. More specifically, the adoption of Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) philosophy of critical realism as an analytical framework enabled a layered analysis of the case and assisted in its interpretation.

Methodological decisions determine the ways in which the results are analysed and presented. The analysis of the case through a complex and integrated series of analytical activities has enabled the generation of rich and descriptive data, which is fundamental to the qualitative nature of the study. The methodological combination of ontological realism and epistemological constructivism proved useful in understanding the fallibility of knowledge and the subjective nature of my own and others' interpretation and understanding of both the context and the intervention.

The following chapter details theories of change and organisation development strategies that formed part of the theoretical underpinning of this study.

CHAPTER 5

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Change is ubiquitous and relentless, forcing itself on us at every turn.
The secret of growth and development is learning how to contend with the forces of change.
(Fullan, 1993, p.vii)

5.1 Introduction

A key goal of this research was to describe and analyse the approach to change adopted by the DRF school-based intervention in rural KwaZulu-Natal (see Section 1.4). This chapter contains a review of the international literature on organisational development and change relevant to the study. More specifically it compares theoretical perspectives relevant to the research. These include schools as organisations and organisational development (OD) theories, systems theory, complexity theory, selected change theories, and approaches to leadership and management. These helped me to understand the schools' organisational practices and functioning, and their interaction, relationship to and collaboration with other organisations within the context of the research.

A premise of the argument developed in this chapter is that the schools that participated in the DRF intervention are located in a specific context characterised by a particular culture. In the first part of the chapter, I explain how the ideas of Hofstede (1991) and the work of Schein (2010) can help in the understanding of organisational culture, while Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) shed specific light on the organisational culture within schools. The second part of the chapter describes how systems and complexity theory helped to provide insights for understanding not only how the schools function as organisations but also how these organisations cope with change. I show how systems and complexity theoretical perspectives enabled me to move beyond an OD approach to a more sophisticated and in-depth analysis of the complexity and non-linear nature of organisational function and change. In the third section of the chapter, I explain how various change theory perspectives helped me to respond to the question of how organisations change, and how they cope with change. Lastly, the discussion shifts to the different approaches to leadership and management.

5.2 Organisational development

5.2.1 Perspectives

We are currently living in what is referred to as the 'knowledge era', characterised by a competitive landscape driven by the forces of globalisation, technology, deregulation and democratisation (Halal & Taylor, 1999). This connected world has also been referred to as the 'connectionist era' (Halal, 1998; Miles 1998; Hogue & Lord, 2007, comment at length on connectionist theory). The post-industrial era requires organisations to become and remain flexible and adaptable, and this has meant they have become more complex too (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007).

Organisations are social entities operating within a particular context or environment (French & Bell, 1999, p. 1). Within the domain of the human sciences, organisations and organisational development have been analysed since the late 1950s (French & Bell, 1999, p. 1). The aim has been to solve problems confronting organisations and understand how organisations cope with change, an important feature of the knowledge era.

Schools, the DRF (a NGO), and the KZN DoE comprise the key organisations in this research study. These organisations are embedded in specific micro- and macro-contexts that are interrelated and interdependent. The micro-context is the rural Umzinyathi district municipality district in Kwa-Zulu Natal, whilst the macro-context is the socio-political landscape of South Africa as a whole (see Chapter 2).

The knowledge era has created a number of challenges for organisations across a variety of contexts (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 300). In the present context the challenges have been further complicated by the fact that modern western neo-liberal approaches to development and school improvement have been superimposed on organisations which retain a traditional, hierarchical value system. (See Section 2.4.4 for discussion of Harley & Mattson's work, 2002, regarding the integration of modern discourses with traditional contexts, and the resultant tensions. The effects and consequences of these tensions are analysed and discussed in Section 7.3.2.)

The pace and complexity of change within the 21st century are placing pressure on teachers and pupils to ensure South Africa remains globally competitive. Teachers are required to shift their mindsets, attitudes and actions in order to cope with a complex and changing landscape.

The importance of schools participating in organisational development is informed by our understanding of change. Often change is viewed on a superficial level, in terms – for example – of small changes to lesson plans, and new technology or resources being utilised in lessons. But while change of this sort remains relevant, it can be argued that of much greater significance are the larger and deeper changes in the context of the school and its immediate environment that will ultimately enable or hinder teachers from making or assimilating such changes and furthering their development as professionals.

The DRF's school-based intervention strategy is holistic and complex, requiring small-scale changes such as minor adjustments to infrastructure, but also larger changes at a deeper level, requiring shifts in the mindsets of the teachers, principals and community members. Appendix C contains a copy of the DRF's Education Development Plan (EDP). An analysis of the intervention can be found in Section 7.4.

In this research, organisational development theories have been explored and drawn upon in order to better understand the functioning of schools. Drawing on the body of knowledge relating to OD has assisted in the conceptual understanding and analysis of the change processes taking place within the schools in the case study. Bennis, Benne and Chin (1969, p. 2) defines organisational development [OD] as follows;

> It is a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structures of organisations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1995, p. 36) view OD as a "normative re-educative strategy for managing change, which is aimed at facilitating development of people and the organisation as a whole for the purposes of optimising human fulfillment and increasing organisational capacity".

5.2.2 Organisational development models

Various organisational development models have been suggested over the years to explain how organisations function and ultimately cope with change. Van de Ven and Poole (1995) conducted an interdisciplinary literature review identifying different theories used to explain the processes of change. The social, biological and physical science domains were drawn upon for their research (p. 512). Over 20 different process theories were explored and

subsequently grouped into four basic schools of thought: lifecycle, teleology, dialectical and evolutionary theories. These theories provide relatively consistent accounts of change processes taking place within organisational entities (Shaukat, 2010, p. 509). Poole, Van de Ven, Dooley and Holmes (2000, p. 57) refer to these theories of change as the "four ideal types". Other influential OD models include Weisbord's (1976) "six-box model", a diagnostic framework for identifying problem areas within organisations. The Porras and Robertson model (1992) recommends OD interventions to alter features of a work environment in order to change individuals' behaviour, which is supposed to lead in turn to organisational improvements.

Within the context of this particular research, the work of French and Bell (1999) has been useful in better understanding the various organisations involved within the case, as well as the collaborative nature of the organisations and the leadership structures in place necessary for the school-based intervention to take shape. French and Bell (1999, p. 29) provide an overview of the elements which they believe are important for OD. They identify the following characteristics of OD:

- OD focuses on culture and processes.
- It encourages collaboration and teaming between organisational leaders and members.
- Teams of all kinds are important for accomplishing tasks and reaching goals.
- Participation and involvement in problem solving and decision making by all levels of the organisation.
- OD focuses on the human and social side of an organisation, though it may also intervene in the structural and technological side if required.
- OD focuses on total change and views organisations as complex social systems.
- It takes on a developmental view and seeks the betterment of both the individuals and the organisation as a whole.

Trying to comprehend culture and the complexity thereof is relevant and important within this research, particularly since the case is embedded within the Umzinyathi rural community (Section 7.3.2 explores the specific role of culture within the context of this study). The study also considers the efficacy of collaboration and partnerships between civil society, the local community and the DBE in working towards change. Collaboration and partnerships are explored in Section 8.2.1 of the thesis. Drawing on the theory of OD has assisted me in recognising the complexity of organisations and change processes, whilst complexity theory

has proved a useful theoretical tool in the analysis of the case. According to Cilliers (1998, p. 2):

> a complex system is not constituted merely by the sum of its components, but also by the intricate relationships between these components. In 'cutting up' a system, the analytical method destroys what it seeks to understand.

The view of complexity theory that organisations are organic, dynamic and living social systems (Capra, 2002) has helped me understand and appreciate the difficult nature of change the DRF has encountered when implementing the school-based intervention within the Umzinyathi schools.

5.2.3 Schools as organisations

Schools are organisations with unique characteristics and goals centred on effective teaching and learning. Changes in the South African curriculum since 1995, coupled with new global trends in education, have forced us to rethink teaching and learning practices and, in the process, face the question of how schools function as organisations.

Marishane and Botha (2011, pp. 72-73) note that we need to consider organisations from three different, but inter-related angles: first, from the perspective of the various features or elements which make up an organisation; secondly, in terms of the systematic arrangement of these elements; and lastly, in terms of how organisations work, that is, how the various elements function in effective operation. At the same time it is essential to consider the "sociology of the school" (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997, p. 19) – the role, in this case, of the South African social and educational systems.

5.2.4 The organisational culture of a school

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, p. 18) place 'culture' at the centre of the organisational life of a school. The culture of a school diffuses its attributes and characteristics into every corner of the school day and life of the organisation. According to these researchers, therefore, culture should be viewed as the central factor when considering whole school development interventions.

Culture is difficult to define and conceptualise, yet it cannot be avoided or escaped. It influences and affects the life of a school in ways that people seldom come to notice.

According to Moloi (2005, p. 22) the core culture of a school relates to our perceptions, various belief systems, as well as certain values and expectations created by our own perceptions. A more in-depth discussion of the broader meaning of culture within the context of OD is offered in Section 5.2.5. Here I review the work of Hofstede (1991) and Schein (2010) in relation to this case study.

5.2.5. Understanding culture in general

The understanding of culture is continuously evolving as attempts to document this complex and dynamic phenomenon are made. Schein (2010, pp. 2-3) notes that culture is constantly created and reinforced through our interactions with others as well as through our own behaviour. Culture also implies a certain sense of stability and rigidity within an organisation or society, in that it dictates how individuals are to "act, feel or behave" (Schein, 2010, p. 3) within a given context. These so called rules of "social order" make it possible for humans to get along with one another and to find meaning in and through events and interactions.

Schein (2010, pp. 13-14) argues that too often the concept of culture is explored and applied superficially. Laymen use the concept of culture to indicate sophistication, while anthropologists use it when referring to particular customs or rituals within a particular community or society. Researchers and managers may use culture as a way of describing certain norms or practices that develop within organisations. Managers may speak of developing the "right kind of culture" or a "service culture".

Schein (2010) suggests that these are assumptions that speak more to the "climate" of a particular organisation. Culture, on the other hand, is an abstract and complex concept, and cultural forces are especially powerful in that they frequently operate outside of our awareness. Schein (2010, p. 18) defines culture in the following way:

> The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it is solving its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

The above definition suggests that culture is a means of social control. As a result it can be used to manipulate the way people think and behave in certain environments. This is relevant in the context of South Africa's apartheid history, when the ideology and practice of segregation was used to control people's thinking, beliefs and behaviour. Such control played

a role in teacher training and development through the use of fundamental pedagogics as a training philosophy. This approach towards teacher education developed a particular 'culture' of teachers with similar ways of thinking and behaviour (see Section 6.4).

Schein (2010) and Hofstede (1991) suggest there are various categories of culture which operate at different levels. For example "macro and micro cultures" (Schein 2010) and Hofstede's (1991) "layers of culture", e.g. at national level and at the level of a specific organisation. In modern society these levels often conflict with each other, which can confuse people and make it difficult to anticipate their behaviour in a new situation. One can begin to understand why a process of reform will often provoke opposition and in some instances result in conflict. This may not be as a result of the change process or initiative per se, but rather as a result of cultural differences or misunderstandings between people due to the various cultural layers or groupings to which they belong. Within the context of this research, the people living in the Umzinyathi community have a particular culture unique to the amaZulu people and the rural region in which they reside, a region where traditional leadership is still prevalent. Thus in this case study a traditional culture and value system exists alongside a modern, Western culture and a democratic value system. This clearly complicates any change resulting from large-scale national transformation in education, as well as some of the localised interventions on the part of the DRF. The role of culture in this study is analysed and discussed in Section 7.3.2 (also see Section 2.4.4 which explores some of the pertinent literature in this regard).

A review of Schein's (1980, 2009, 2010) work suggests that at the broadest level we get macro-cultures relating to large social units, for example ethnic or religious groups of people. Macro-cultures can also pertain to a specific occupational group, such as teachers. For example, if there has been strong socialisation during the education and training period, and if the beliefs and values learned during this time remain stable and taken for granted, then occupations will have cultures. Such macro-cultures can influence how certain occupations are defined or practiced within a particular region or country (Schein, 2010, p. 21). Within this broad classification, various organisational cultures operate. And within organisational cultures various subcultures exist, for example the administration staff which see to the smooth running of the day-to-day life of the school. Even smaller micro-cultures operate within or outside of an organisation.

Hofstede (1991, p. 10) introduces the concept of "layers of culture". He argues that almost everyone belongs to a number of different groups, categories or communities of people at the same time. As a result, people unavoidably carry several layers of mental programming within themselves, corresponding to different levels of culture, for example:

- national level
- regional/ethnic/religious/language affiliation
- gender level
- generation level
- social class level
- organisational/corporate level.

Both Schein with his "categories of culture" and Hofstede with the "layers of culture" idea have attempted to break up the concept of culture into smaller pieces in an effort to better understand its complex nature. Schein's categories are more clinically defined in that he appears not to consider the fact that people could be operating at a number of different levels within an organisation, whereas Hofstede's work does suggest the multi-operation of the individual at various levels. But his work is located very much at the macro level and does not consider smaller micro-cultural factors at play.

When trying to understand the role of culture within an organisation it is necessary to take into account the different categories of culture which may be operational. In addition, Schein's research has revealed the importance of analysing culture from three levels:

- *Artefacts:* these relate to one's observations of an organisation and in many respects may describe the 'climate' of the group or organisation.
- *Espoused beliefs and values:* analysis at this level involves social validation, where certain beliefs and values will only be confirmed through social experience with the particular group concerned.
- *Basic underlying assumptions:* these relate to the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values.

(2010, pp. 23-32)

In exploring the culture of an organisation, it is also necessary to consider the individual and the role he or she plays in each of the various levels of culture in operation. Individuals carry with them patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting which have been learnt

throughout their lifetime. Many of these elements have been acquired in early childhood as this is when humans are the most susceptible to learning and assimilating. According to Hofstede (1991, p. 5), culture is a collective phenomenon, because it is partly shared with other people who live or lived within the same social environment where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another. Hofstede (1991) places values at the deepest level of culture. Values represent our moral fibre and are learnt quickly by children through their interactions with family members, peers and school teachers. Developmental psychologists believe that by the age of 10 years most children have their basic value system in place. Due to the fact that values are learnt and assimilated so young in life, it becomes more difficult to change values in later life. Values remain unconscious to those who hold them and are rather demonstrated in the manner in which they make decisions, and interact with others and with their environment. Sergiovanni (1992) and Fullan (2003) speak strongly about the moral commitments required by people and communities when working towards reform in education. This may require a shift in our value system and therefore, to a certain extent, our culture. Alterations to our value system and culture constitute deep change, which is difficult to achieve and will take a long period of time. Schein (2010, p. 28) notes that to learn something new within this realm requires us to "resurrect, re-examine and possibly change some of the more stable portions of our cognitive structure". Such learning and behavioural change is intrinsically very difficult. However for change to be effective and sustainable it needs to take place at this level.

Hofstede (1991) is well known for his work on the various "dimensions of culture". A "dimension" is an aspect of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures. Challenges relating to shifts in values and culture as briefly mentioned in the preceding paragraph correspond to the following dimensions:

- power-distance (from small to large)
- collectivism vs. individualism
- femininity vs. masculinity
- uncertainty avoidance

Together these dimensions form a four-dimensional model that can be used to determine and understand differences among national cultures. This becomes important when working towards educational reform, particularly in this investigation, which is set within a rural

educational context in a largely traditional Zulu community. The area of cultural dimensions with specific reference to the case is explored and analysed in Section 7.3.2.

The dimension of power-distance relationships has emerged as particularly relevant to this case study, and has been used to account for some of the cultural tensions observed in an analysis of the broader context. In the section below I explore Hofstede's (1991) concept of power-distance relationship from a South African perspective.

- Power-distance relationships

The various studies conducted by Hofstede (1991) suggest that on the whole, working class families traditionally have larger power-distance relationships. In large power-distance situations children are expected to be obedient towards their parents. Independent behaviour on the part of the child is not encouraged. Respect for parents and elders is seen as a basic virtue and there is a pattern of dependence on seniors. In large power-distance situations within schools, the parent-child inequality is mirrored by teacher-pupil inequality which caters to the need for dependence well established in the pupil's mind. The educational process is teacher centred, with the teacher identified as the expert. Strict order prevails within the classroom environment, where the teacher initiates all action and communication. Corporal punishment is more acceptable in schools with a large power-distance culture.

While I accept that Hofstede's model includes certain sweeping generalisations, his description of a large power-distance relationship in many ways typifies an African rural context. There is widespread evidence that corporal punishment and belittling from teachers still takes place across South Africa, particularly within rural schools (NMF, 2005 pp. 61-62). The following quotation taken from the NMF Rural Education Report indicates the low sense of self-esteem shared by many pupils within school contexts that exhibit larger power-distance relationships:

> This I will never forget…I remember my teacher saying how bad I am. She also said that I would never succeed because all of my relatives whom she knew never succeeded…. (NMF, 2005, p. 61)

Corporal punishment is a contentious issue within such schools. Despite this form of punishment being against South African law, many principals, teachers and parents still view

corporal punishment as an appropriate and acceptable disciplinary method (NMF, 2005, p. 92). The following quotation speaks to the continuing reality of corporal punishment:

> Many teachers have sticks in their classrooms. Some use them to threaten children into obedience, while others use them regularly…. Essays written by Grade 6 learners at a rural school in KwaZulu-Natal reveal a deep revulsion on the part of the children at the persistent and excessive violence that some of their teachers use regularly. As one learner from the school indicated, "In my opinion, for the school to be better, teachers must stop using corporal punishment. Mr X must stop beating us like there is no tomorrow". (NMF, 2005, pp. 92-93)

Large power-distance relationships are in direct opposition to the ideals and just environment outlined by contemporary education policy. This has created tensions for teachers who subscribe to a traditional cultural-value system that is not aligned with democratic Western educational philosophy. This tension is discussed in Section 7.3.2. Power-distance relationships are also closely aligned with teacher identity issues, examined in Section 6.5.

Apartheid ideology is strongly aligned with large power-distance relationships. Hartshorne (1992, p. 60) notes that South African education has had a "particular kind of style; it has been authoritarian, teacher-dominated, content-orientated and knowledge based". Hartshorne (1992, p. 61) observes that while such relationships and approach to education are synonymous with the ideals of Christian National Education (CNE) and the influence of the Afrikaner, the British school traditions of prefects, houses, games, a powerful headmaster and monastic education have also contributed to larger power-distance relationships within school systems in this country.

Consequently South African teachers who are part of the cultural group constituted by generations trained during the apartheid years would have been exposed to the doctrine of fundamental pedagogics and associated CNE. Fundamental pedagogics was associated during the apartheid years with the Department of Education and the University of South Africa, by far the largest provider of training for teachers. Furthermore it was supported by several other Afrikaans and former homeland teacher training institutions. Fundamental pedagogics is based on an essentially authoritarian premise, i.e. a large power-distance relationship in which the teacher is viewed as the 'knowing adult'. Taylor and Vinjevold (1999, p. 132) draw

on the work of Enslin (1990), Hartshorne (1992), Hofmeyr (1993) and Chisholm (1993), who all agree that fundamental pedagogics has had a detrimental impact upon teachers' thinking and practice. It is possible that the generations of teachers trained and taught within this system have a specific set of values and associated culture. Educational reform in South Africa is seeking to challenge and change these values and the associated culture, and this is proving to be both challenging and time consuming. This aspect of teachers' culture is explored in greater detail in Section 6.4.

In order for processes of change and innovation to take place successfully within a school organisation, its culture needs to be recognised and understood, in that it is ultimately various elements of the school culture that will operate in moving the process of transformation ahead (or in some cases provide the greatest hindrance to this). In addition to the importance of culture within the school organisation, the unique political situation which South Africa finds itself in, with an educational system emerging from years of oppression, makes for even greater challenges with respect to the process of change.

5.3 Systems theory

Initially when conceptualising this research, I viewed school organisations as functioning systems and was hence immediately attracted to the literature concerning systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1956; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985). At the outset I saw how schools as organisations could lend themselves to a systems theory approach. Organisations such as schools are open systems, consisting of "input-throughput-output mechanisms" (French & Bell, 1999, p. 82). A school takes inputs from the environment in the form of parental involvement, funding, resources and so forth. The school community will do something to these inputs via 'throughput, conversation or transformation' processes that alter the inputs. Here the internal school environment becomes significant in that the school's mission, vision, leadership and management style, etc., will impact upon these inputs and determine how the inputs eventually change into outputs. Each of these three system processes must function coherently and appropriately if the system is to function effectively, survive and progress.

As I continued on my research path and gained greater insight into the various schools and the operations of the DRF, I began to realise that a school organisation is not a *simple* input-throughput-output process. It is far more complex and non-linear and consists of a variety of

relationships and partnerships beyond the boundaries of the immediate organisation. Schein (2010, p. 371) emphasises the importance of understanding organisations as interconnected, complex and non-linear in their daily functioning. The external environment in which schools operate has also become increasingly complicated, uncertain and challenging. Moloi (2005, p. 3) notes that within the context of South African schools, these uncertainties and challenges are largely a result of the changing educational legal framework; of, for example, the *South African Schools Act*, 1996, which sought to control and regulate how schools function.

Against this background, schools cannot function in isolation from other sub-systems (Slabbert & De Villiers, 2003). Furthermore Swanepoel (1996, p. 29) maintains that schools cannot exist in isolation as they have to "mediate their preferences, and their perceived environmental threats, opportunities and constraints". In my view some schools do function in relative isolation, whilst elements making up the very nature of a school such as teachers or individual classrooms may also operate as units relatively independent of the so-called 'school system'. This is where Weick's (1976) theory of "loose coupling" is useful in trying to understand schools as inter-related systems retaining isolated elements.

According to Orton & Weick (1990, p. 204) "loose coupling suggests that any location in an organisation (top, middle or bottom) contains interdependent elements that vary in the number and strength of their interdependencies". The fact that there are links between various elements operating in a school – for example, that while the classroom is viewed as an independent learning space, what is happening in the classroom is linked to the curriculum, the school value system and so forth – is captured by the word "coupled" in the phrase "loosely coupled". The fact that the classroom and what happens within a classroom are subject to spontaneous changes and preserve a degree of independence is captured by the word "loosely" (Orton & Weick, 1990, p. 204). The resulting image of a school is thus that of an open system, but one with a degree of closed system elements too.

Contemporary thinking about the functioning of organisations within a knowledge era suggests the need to move beyond the systems theory approach to a more appropriate and relevant way for the 21st century. Manson (2001, p. 406) is critical of systems theory, noting that it favours "simplification and parameterisation of flows and stock, a process that assumes that the system exists in equilibrium and therefore negates the need to examine changing relationships between system elements". In his paper entitled "Simplifying complexity: A

review of complexity theory", Manson (2001, pp. 405-14) provides an overview of complexity theory, suggesting it may be an "outgrowth of previous work and of general systems theory in particular" (p. 406). This paper alerted me to the role that complexity theory might play in conducing to an understanding of the functioning of the DRF schools as organisational entities.

My fieldwork experiences and immersion within the Umzinyathi context would later result in my questioning the applicability of complexity theory to the context of this study (see Section 9.3.1). From a realist perspective, the localised context of this study is embedded within a complex, sophisticated broader environment, which could be considered to be a part of what has been called the 'knowledge era'. Therefore both systems and complexity theory add value to this study and assist in documenting the rich and diverse interactions and changes taking place. Chapter 9 explores the DRF's intervention as a whole, and considers the intervention in the light of systems theory and more contemporary thinking regarding complexity theory.

5.4 Complexity theory

Kuhn (2008, p.182) argues that complexity and education may be brought together, since within the "language of complexity, such human cultural settings, productions and institutions as educational endeavour are complex and dynamic". Various individuals (pupils, teachers, principals and administrators) comprising the numerous organisations (classrooms, schools, district offices etc.) are multi-dimensional, non-linear, integrated and changeable. Adopting complexity theory as one of the underlying theoretical frameworks for this study has enabled investigation of the DRF's school-based intervention from an integrated and complex perspective consonant with its realist ontology.

A case study methodology was selected for the purposes of this research since it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the case and context thereof. According to Yin (2003, p. 14), a case study method provides an integrated and holistic approach to the research process. A case study research design in combination with complexity theory provides a useful strategy for the exploration of organisations (Crabtree, Miller, & Stange, 2001; Yin, 1994; and Stake, 1995). Anderson, Crabtree, Steele and McDaniel (2005, p. 681) emphasise how complexity theory is a useful companion to case study research, since together they foster an attitude of attention to "emerging patterns, dynamism, and comprehensiveness while focusing attention on defined system properties". Complexity theory recognises the relationships and

interactions among the system's agents and offers a way of envisaging and working with complex and dynamic phenomena.

From a philosophical perspective, complexity theory recognises both the nature of the world and human sense-making thereof as dynamic and emergent (Kuhn, 2008, p. 182). From an ontological position, Kuhn (2008) notes how complexity depicts the world as "self-organising, non-linear, sensitive to initial conditions and influenced by many sets of rules", whilst from an epistemological perspective, human sense-making is very similar. I have found complexity theory particularly useful in that it appears to be compatible with the realist ontological position adopted in this study. Bhaskar envisages a reality which is "a complex, multilayered, multi-causal web of interacting forces" (Oliver, 2011, p. 372). It seems possible, then, that complexity theory can offer a useful approach to research, particularly when it is focused on social issues such as interventions within education. This is explored in greater detail in Section 5.4.1 of this chapter.

Waldrop (1992) and Mason (2008, p. 36) suggest that complexity theory developed out of chaos theory, since both are concerned with larger systems, complex environments and the relationships which exist between the various agents operating within a particular context. Complexity and chaos theory are synonymous with the term "non-linear dynamic systems" (Agar, 1999, p. 100), non-linearity referring to "multiple, densely connected, overlapping feedback loops that link and let go and link again" (Agar, 1999, p. 100). Kuhn (2008, p. 182) notes how complexity theory offers an alternative way of viewing the world from the more traditional, linear scientific and positivist accounts, while Morrison (2002, p. 6) describes complexity theory as a "theory of survival, evolution, development and adaptation".

In sum, complexity theory can be viewed as an appropriate theoretical framework for this research, concerned as it is with the broad and layered context of reality, the various agents acting within that context and the relationships among them.

5.4.1 Complexity and education

In recent years ideas from complexity science have increasingly being used and developed by researchers within the social science domain rather than that of natural science (Kuhn, 2008, p. 178). Morrison (2008, p. 28) notes how complexity theory offers leverage in developing an understanding of "societal, individual and institutional change". Complexity and education are compatible since human cultural settings, productions, and educational institutions are

complex, dynamic and interdependent (Morrison, 2008, p. 28). Lemke and Sabelli (2008) ask many pertinent questions regarding the links between complexity theory and education and draw our attention to the possibility of using complexity theory as a method of exploring and understanding changes within education.

On the other hand, Kuhn (2008, p. 183) draws attention to frequently made objections regarding the applicability and appropriateness of complexity theory within educational research. First, since complexity theory was originally formulated within the scientific domain, it draws on images and ideas from this discipline that are inappropriate for human orientated research, such as education. The second reservation is that within the fields of social sciences and philosophy, which can draw on constructivist, postmodernist and critical perspectives, there are several other more appropriate theoretical frameworks that can be utilised to address the insights claimed by complexity science. In addition Kuhn (2008, p. 187) points out that complexity theory is "descriptive", whilst education is "goal orientated", focusing on achieving certain targets and deliverable outcomes. This view of complexity theory is applicable to my research, since the DRF has a distinct education development plan with key focus areas and intended goals.

Davis and Sumara (2005, p. 318) write that "complexity science will not tell educators or educational researchers what to do in a prescriptive sense . . . but it can provide direct advice on how to focus efforts when preparing for teaching". Complexity focuses on emergent behaviours that result from interactions within and among self-organising and adaptive systems (Barlow & Waldorp, 1994; Richardson, 2005). Horn (2008, p. 133) concurs, noting how complexity is concerned with understanding emergent behaviours and behavioural pattern formations which result from the interaction of various agents within a system. For researchers within education, human behaviour and interactions are of concern, since education is concerned with human social systems.

In my own research I have come to understand how complexity theory may be of use as a theoretical framework within the sphere of education. Complexity theory breaks the simple 'cause and effect model', replacing it with a more holistic non-linear approach (Santonus, 1998, p. 3). By their very nature, schools and their communities are non-linear, dynamic systems involving numerous layers of complexity.

Bhaskar's (1979) critical realist philosophy has been useful in assisting me to uncover the complexity of the schools and the broad context in this case study. The study has revealed the

complexity of the rural context in which the case is embedded (refer to Chapters 2 and 3). This context has its own set of traditional values and belief systems further adding to the intricacy of the DRF's school-based intervention. The school-based intervention put forward by the DRF is itself a holistic and involved plan focusing on elements of the individual, infrastructure and the environment, academic and curriculum concerns, to list but a few (see EDP, Appendix C).

5.4.2 Types of complexity theory

This section provides an overview of the various theories concerned with complexity systems, all of which fall under the umbrella area of complexity research.

Manson (2001, p. 405) divides complexity research into three areas: *Algorithmic complexity*, relating to mathematical complexity and information theory; *Deterministic complexity* which deals with chaos and catastrophe theory; and lastly *Aggregate complexity*, which is concerned with how individual elements work to create systems with complex behaviour patterns.

Further to this, Espinosa and Porter (2011, pp. 54-72) offer insight into complexity management theories, namely the Complex Adaptive System (CAS) and the Viable Systems Model (VSM). These complexity management approaches work towards enhancing the functioning of organisations and their ability to adapt and become more resilient.

For the purposes of this research, Aggregate complexity and CAS have been selected as appropriate and applicable. Aggregate complexity is fitting since it aims to "access the holism and synergy resulting from the interaction of system components" (Manson, 2001, p. 409). From the perspective of this study, the impact of the DRF's school-based intervention is being evaluated with respect to the multiplicity of system components and agents within the Umzinyathi community, ultimately with a specific focus on teachers. Secondly, from a management perspective CAS is viewed as applicable since it recognises existing "conventional hierarchies" (Espinosa & Porter, 2011, p. 57) in place within school organisations as dictated by policy, as well as traditional hierarchies and management systems.

- **Aggregate complexity**

Manson (2001, p. 409) points out that at the core of aggregate complexity is the relationship between components. Applying this to the example of a school organisation, the relationships

would be among school management teams and teachers, teachers and pupils, parents and pupils, and so forth. Costanza, Wainger, Folke et al. (1993) allude to the complexity, variety and number of such relationships, suggesting that simple linear feedback systems of analysis are no longer suitable for understanding and predicating the function of such an organisation. There are several main attributes to aggregate theory that Manson (2001) explores in depth.

First, as mentioned above, aggregate complexity is about relationships, including relationships with the environment, defined as anything "outside of the system" (Manson, 2001, p. 410). A system is able to "remember", which plays a role in the way in which relationships between individual members and the environment unfold: in other words, a complex system "actively shapes, reacts and anticipates" (Manson, 2001, p. 410). The complex and dynamic relationship between individuals and the environment as envisaged by aggregate complexity is pertinent to this research and the documentation of the DRF's school-based intervention.

- **Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)**

CAS builds on the idea of complex relationships, a key characteristic of aggregate complexity. Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey (2007, p. 299) suggest that CAS provides a "basic unit for analysis in complexity science". Espinosa and Porter (2011, p. 58) note that linear frameworks and methodologies cannot capture the complex nature of organisations, hence the appropriateness of the CAS approach, which offers "permeability and exchange of information and feedback across all boundaries" (Scott, 1987, as cited by Espinosa & Porter, 2011, p. 58). CAS provides a model that aims to improve the adaptability of organisations to new circumstances. This is appropriate to my study, since the DRF's school-based intervention strategy has meant that the schools concerned are required to operate and function differently.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007, p. 302) draw on the work of Dooley (1996), noting that a CAS is an aggregate of interacting agents that behaves or evolves according to three principles;

- order is emergent as opposed to predetermined
- the system's history is irreversible; and
- the system's future is often unpredictable.

The schools and the DRF operating within the Umzinyathi rural community can undoubtedly be classified as a CAS: after the initial chaos and unsettling nature of change interventions an

‘emergent order’ is manifesting itself in the interface with the socio-political landscape and history of the area. But the future of the schools and the question of the sustainability of the DRF and their interventions are unknown and remain unpredictable.

5.5 System and process: why schools change slowly

When focusing specifically on the schools as organisations within their specific context, as argued in section 5.3, I believe that systems theory can still provide researchers with a way of understanding and accounting for processes of change within schools. Havelock in the 1970s used systems theory as way of explaining the slow change and limited progress with reform in schools. While this was over 30 years ago, I feel that that many of Havelock’s original claims remain applicable to my research (see Section 9.9).

I have selected a sample of Havelock’s suggested **input** factors which seem to be of particular relevance to any attempt to understand why schools find change so onerous. These include:

- Resistance to change from the environment:

The community at large will tend not to promote change within a school system, unless a crisis is detected. This attitude is often linked to a perception that pupils should not be victimised by being subjected to experimentation.

- Incompetence of outside agents:

Most parents and community members know little about teaching and learning, and therefore it is often unfair that these stakeholders should play such a major role in the decision-making processes of the school. Parental involvement is discussed in Section 8.4.3. of this thesis.

- Overcentralisation:

Most systems are large and centralised power is concentrated in the hands of a select few senior officials. This slows down the rate of change, and a large proportion of innovation initiatives tend to be filtered through bureaucratic processes as opposed to professional agencies. The role of the DBE and associated KZN District Office as an input factor into the effective functioning of schools as organisations is documented in Section 8.4.1.

- Teacher defensiveness:

Teachers frequently resent changes imposed upon them, particularly if they have not been involved from the initial stages, or alternatively if decisions concerning change and innovation are made by others who are not their direct superiors. In particular the 'outside change agent' is seen as a threat to the integrity of the system. The role of teachers within the school-based change interventions is explored in Section 8.5.

- Absence of a change agent or 'linking pin':

In a large majority of schools there is no recognised agent responsible for bringing and demonstrating new practices or innovations to the teacher or school administrator. An effective school leader is often 'absent', since school principals or leadership teams are more typically administrators, concerned with accountability and policy compliance. Frequently the person given the role of a 'change agent' comes from an outside organisation, such as an NGO or university, and who in the majority of cases has had infrequent contact with teachers; as a result, his or her advice is seldom valued or seen as necessary. The role of leadership and the act of driving the change process forward is discussed in Section 8.2.2.

- Professional invisibility:

Teaching and learning activities within a school largely take place out of sight of other adults and/or supervisors. As a result it is often very difficult to get accurate information as to whether teaching and learning is effective over and above analysing the results at the end of each school year. Pupils are seldom given the opportunity to comment on teacher efficiency, and the criteria for judging teacher performance usually depends upon the National Department.

Havelock (1971) also identifies a number of **throughput factors** which limit the spread and adoption of new ideas and innovations within a school system. Once more I have identified particularly pertinent throughput factors which appear to be impacting negatively upon change processes relevant to my study. These include:

- Separation of members and units:

Teachers tend to operate in isolation within their own classroom environments. There are very few examples of successful teacher collaboration and support leading to innovation.

- Lack of procedures for training and change:

To date there are very few examples of institutionalised procedures for teachers to learn about new teaching and learning practices together with their colleagues. Hence the contemporary argument put forward by Moloi (2005), Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur and Schley (2008) and Schein (2010) for schools to become effective learning organisations in which training and development are an aspect of the prevailing culture. Teacher training and development is discussed in Sections 6.4 and 8.5.

Various **output** factors may also provide barriers to change from within. Select outputs relevant to my study include:

- No rewards for innovating:

Few if any teachers are rewarded for initiating or carrying through innovations. Rather they are rewarded for stable, dependable behaviour. Promotions are usually made on the basis or seniority or professional upgrading at a tertiary institution.

- Uniformity of approach:

Schools are very diverse in their makeup, considering the demographics of both staff and pupils. Schools tend to cater to the needs of the majority group. Innovations aimed at minority groups are often resisted by one or more groups within the school organisation.

- School as a monopoly:

Since few schools have an economic motive and face little competition, they need be less concerned about the quality of the teaching and learning offered. Parents unhappy with the services offered by a school may chose to move their child, yet this seldom threatens the future operation of the school. This is especially relevant to the schools in this study, which are all classified as non-fee paying schools (see Section 2.5.2).

- Low technological and financial investment:

The amount of technology per staff member in schools is relatively low. Sussman (1971) notes that a school system that houses children in dilapidated, unsafe structures, that has limited resources and insufficient teachers, can hardly be expected to be innovative.

- Difficulty in diagnosing weakness:

Schools are defensive in the face of criticisms from their local environment, while teachers claim full autonomy in managing and running their classrooms. Therefore it is very unlikely that a school or a teacher will be rewarded or encouraged for admitting the changes that are needed.

- Focus on present commitments – accountability:

With increasing workloads and administrative functions, teachers have little time available to be innovative and creative.

- Low personnel development investment:

Little money is spent by school systems on the development of teachers. Continuing education is frequently regarded as a personal matter. Yet experience and research has shown that major innovations and change are only possible with investment in staff learning and development.

In Chapter 9 I return to systems and complexity theory, but from the point of view of the research and field investigations carried out in this study. I work with systems and complexity theory to analyse and interpret the DRF's school-based intervention in a holistic integrated manner. The theories are used to identify particular break-down points within the intervention which in my view can be classified as being barriers to change. Systems and complexity science thus provide a theoretical framework for recommendations made to the DRF regarding their school-based intervention.

5.6 Change theory perspectives

Whilst systems and complexity theory provide a theoretical framework for understanding the function of organisations, change is a central factor to be considered. Change in various forms is the ultimate goal of the DRF's school-based intervention. How change manifests itself within the school organisations and community at large will be explored and where possible, accounted for in this thesis. It seems appropriate therefore to consult some of the seminal work done in the field of change theory.

5.6.1 Change is time

While the first patent for a typewriter was created in Britain in 1714, it was only commercially available fifty years later (Toffler, 1970). Over the years, the length of time required to adopt and adapt to an innovation has shortened, leading to the rapidly advancing world we find ourselves in today. Huberman (1974, p. 33) points out that the innovation and implementation of change within education systems globally lags behind the progression and advancement within the fields of industry, agriculture and medicine. Miles (1964), as cited by Huberman (1974, p. 33), puts forward three likely reasons for this trend: "absence of valid scientific research findings; lack of change agents to promote new educational ideas and a lack of economic incentives to adopt innovations".

Fullan (2007, p. 20) maintains that the crux of understanding change lies in the question of how individuals come to grips with its reality. Fullan's (2007) view of change is in line with the theoretical underpinning of complexity theory, which is largely concerned with the interconnected and dynamic involvement of individuals within a system (see Section 5.3). Understanding individuals is complex and adds to the dynamics of a change process. Hargreaves and Fullan (2009, p. 5) note that education is entirely about change, and that effective change is concerned with learning and figuring out the most constructive way forward for the greatest good. Thus both the processes and the human agents involved in educational change need to be understood in terms of how they operate simultaneously to bring about innovation and progress in the field. Section 7.4 provides an analysis of the DRF's school-based intervention in terms of the processes of change involved, whilst Chapter 8 explores the human dimension of change and the complexities thereof.

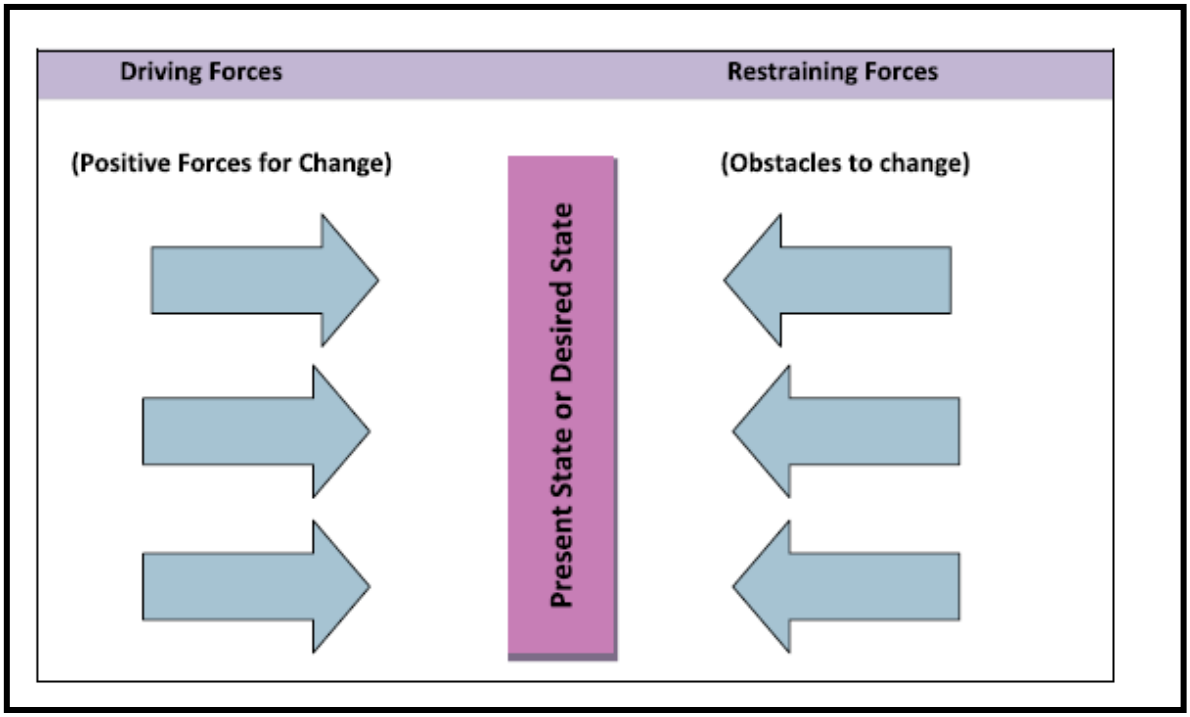
5.6.2 Seminal change theories

Shaukat (2010, p. 507) cites Connell and Kubisch (1998), who define change theory as a "systematic study of the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of the initiatives". Change theories are universal in nature and can be applied to a variety of organisations and environments. At a specific organisational level, languages, cultures and problems may be unique, but the process of change in many respects remains similar across a variety of settings. Theories of change all tend to characterise the process of change as comprising a series of steps or stages.

5.6.2.1 Kurt Lewin: Unfreeze-change-refreeze

Kurt Lewin's (1947) basic model of change involving unfreezing, changing, and refreezing is the primary model of change upon which several other more recent change theories are built. Lewin's initial work involved observation and experimentation within industrial settings. He quickly realised that thinking around patterns of institutionalised behaviour can be applied not only to industry, but also to other social organisations and work environments such as schools and hospitals (Benne & Birnham, 1969, p. 329).

Stage one of Lewin's change model known as *unfreezing* involves several processes which organisations will go through when preparing to change. It involves people within an organisation getting to a point of understanding that change is necessary and subsequently moving individuals beyond their comfort zones. In order for the process of *unfreezing* to occur and for organisations to move into the next stage, a process known as Force Field Analysis needs to occur. The process of Force Field analysis is illustrated in Figure 5.1.



Adapted from (Benne & Birnham, 1969, p. 329)

Figure 5.1: Lewin's Force Field Analysis

Using Lewin's approach to change as illustrated in Figure 5.1, change will take place when an imbalance occurs between the sum of driving forces and the sum of restraining forces.

Such an imbalance will *unfreeze* the pattern and motivate the change process. Change will continue to occur until the opposing forces are in equilibrium once more.

Stage two of Lewin's model is called *change*. During this stage an organisation will move towards making and adopting the desired changes. Lewin was aware that change is a process, which he refers to as a "transition". Of all the stages, this is the hardest one in that this is where individuals learn to change their ideas and adapt their ways of thinking; during this phase, too, they will make a lot of mistakes. Stage three is referred to as the *refreezing* phase, in which stability is maintained and a state of equilibrium is achieved. The changes and innovations have been accepted and become the norm. Contemporary thinking regarding this stage of Lewin's model is critical in that there is little time for this phase in the dynamic, evolving world of today (Schein, 2010). The rigidity of *refreezing* does not fit with modern thinking. However Lewin's concern in this final stage centres on the importance of reinforcing change, ensuring that the desired changes are accepted and implemented and that people do not simply revert to their "old ways".

5.6.2.2 Edgar Schein: Stages of learning and or change

Edgar Schein (1961) has elaborated and refined Lewin's *unfreeze-change-refreeze* model into a more comprehensive and dynamic model of change associated with unlearning, moving and relearning. Table 5.1 summarises Lewin and Scheins' three-stage approach to change.

Table 5.1: The Stages of Learning/ Change according to Lewin and Schein

Stages	Lewin (1947)	Schein (1961)
1	*Unfreezing*	Creating a motivation for change: Disconfirmation Creation of survival anxiety/guilt Creation of psychological safety to overcome anxiety
2	*Change*	Learning new concepts: cognitive Restructuring Imitation of and identification of role models Scanning for solutions and trial and error learning
3	*Refreezing*	Internalising new concepts, meanings and standards: Incorporation into self-concept and identity Incorporation into ongoing relationships

Adapted from Schein (2010, p. 300)

With reference to Table 5.1, for any change to take place, sufficient disequilibrium needs to exist to drive the organisation into a state of change. Lewin called such disequilibrium *unfreezing*, or creating a motivation for change. According to Schein (2010, p. 301), Stage 1

consists of three very different aspects, each of which should be present in sufficient amounts to develop motivation for change.

- There must be a certain amount of disconfirmation, where conditions within an organisation have led to dissatisfaction, discomfort and disequilibrium.
- Previous beliefs are now been seen as invalid or no longer appropriate, which creates a sense of anxiety or guilt. This will necessitate recognition of the need to change and develop new habits or ways of thinking; however, a lot of anxiety is produced along the way.
- The creation of psychological safety for organisational members undergoing transformational learning is crucial to the success and sustainability of the change process. With sufficient support, employees will see the possibility of solving a problem and learning something new without a loss of identity or integrity (Schein, 1980, 2009). Schein (2010, pp. 305-307) has identified eight activities that must be carried out almost simultaneously in order to create psychological safety in the workplace. These are listed below:
    1. A compelling positive vision.
    2. Formal training.
    3. Involvement of the learner.
    4. Informal training of relevant "family" groups and teams.
    5. Practice sessions, coaching and feedback.
    6. Positive role models.
    7. Support groups in which learning problems can be aired and discussed.
    8. Systems and structures that are consistent with the new way of thinking and working.

Once the organisation has been *unfrozen*, the change process proceeds along a number of different lines that reflect new learning via two possible means:

- imitation of role models; and/or
- through trial and error based on scanning the environment.

Schein (2010, p. 310) indicates that the imitation of role models works best in situations where there is clarity in regard to what the new way of working will be, and when the new concepts to be taught and learned are clear themselves. In this situation it is important for

leaders to "walk the talk" (2010, p. 310) and live out the changes, as it were. Other staff members who have adopted the newly learnt method or model can also be brought on board as role models to assist in the training and development of colleagues. The findings of this study reveal that teachers have changed and are on a transformational path; however discussion with teachers in focus groups revealed a reticence to share and be supportive of the change processes amongst the teacher community. Here I argue for schools and teachers to work towards becoming learning organisations (see Section 5.7.1).

However, the "imitation of role models" can be difficult since in certain instances the behaviour or change required does not suit the individual's personality or way of being, and the changes are therefore unlikely to be internalised. In this research, it has been revealed that a number of cultural tensions and identity issues have made it difficult for teachers to adopt and internalise certain school-based interventions (refer to Sections 6.4, 7.3.2 and 8.5).

Schein (2010, p. 310) emphasises the importance of scanning the environment and developing solutions that are unique to the particular situation and context. However in creating a unique set of changes for each individual, it is important that leaders within organisations are clear as to the goals or desired outcomes. "Involvement of the individual does not imply that he or she has a choice about the ultimate goals, but it does imply that he or she has a choice of the means to get there" (Schein, 2010, p. 310).

The final stage in the process of change is *refreezing*, by which Lewin meant that new learning will not stabilise until such time as it has been reinforced by actual results. If it so happens that the new and changed behaviour does not produce better results, another new change process may be launched. For example, school teachers might realise, through proper training and the correct implementation, that collaborative learning is satisfying and worthwhile. Through internalising this attitude and approach to teaching and learning, the new behaviour will be instilled and in time produce better results. However, if it turns out that this new approach to teaching and learning is not effective and does not improve results, this will be perceived as "disconfirming information" that will lead to the introduction of a new change process.

Schein (2010, p. 311) emphasises the fact that human systems are in perpetual flux, and that the more dynamic the environment, the more it may require an almost perpetual change and learning process, which is certainly a more fitting approach to change for 21st century

thinking. Hence the use of complexity theory in this research, as a way of trying to grapple with and understand the intricacy of organisational change.

The work of Schein (2010) together with the earlier ideas about change propounded by Lewin (1947) are applied in Section 8.3 of this study, to provide greater insight into the change processes at work within the DRF's schools as well as the community at large.

5.6.2.3 Chin and Benne: Meta-strategies of change

Chin and Benne outlined three meta-theories of change in 1984 that have been influential in change management strategies carried out over the subsequent decades (Miles, Thangaraj, Dawei & Huiqin, 2002, p. 1). Chin and Bennes' approach to change is classified as "planned change" (Argyris, 1970; Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1985). Planned change is conscious and deliberate and distinguished by "its focus on the development of broad systemic plans to address the dynamics of the change initiative" (Miles et al., 2002, p. 2). With reference to this study, a certain degree of planned change has occurred, largely driven by the goals set out by the DRF (refer to the EDP, Appendix C). Section 7.4 documents this "planned change" process.

Chin and Bennes' (1984) change framework is divided into three general strategies: empirical-rational, normative-re-educative, and power-coercive. The basic approaches to change assumed by each strategy are as follows.

- Empirical-rational strategy

This strategy builds on the assumption that people are rational. The underlying supposition of the approach is that if the arguments and logical data are presented, the group or organisation will support the change process since it is in their best interests. The information and logical data should be prepared by "expert professionals" and should reflect modern methodological protocols (Miles et al., 2002, p. 5).

- Normative-re-educative strategy

Chin & Bennes' (1984) second strategy differs from the empirical rational strategy in that the primary assumption of the approach is that intelligence is "social" rather than rational. In this approach human systems are active in their search for change, driven through their need for self-satisfaction and fulfilment. In this scenario, change is motivated through some form of dissatisfaction with the current situation.

- Power-coercive strategy

Miles et al. (2002, pp. 8-9) note that elements of power are reflected in almost all types of change. In the rational-empirical approach power is based on information and knowledge, i.e. those with the knowledge hold the power. In the normative-re-educative strategy power is embodied in the sharing of organisational power, through the active involvement of all the individuals within the organisation.

The power-coercive strategy places emphasis on the use of political and/or economic power to promote change. Political or positional power concerns policies, laws, directions and so forth that bring with them certain punitive strictures for those who do not comply. The threat of a penalty of some sort will force people within an organisation to comply and change. Under the economic power strategy for change, rewards or incentives may be offered for active implementation or performance. Economic incentives can also be withheld from non-compliers.

Each of the meta-strategies outlined presents a different approach to change, but few processes of change within an organisation will be restricted to one particular meta-strategy. Analysis of organisations over the decades has suggested that organisations may base their approach on one particular strategy, but then draw on and borrow tactics from other strategies (Miles et al., 2002, p. 9). This research has also brought me to a realisation of the complex and non-linear nature of a change process, which in many respects is contrary to the thinking of early theorists such as Lewin (1947), and Chin and Benne (1984). Change can also have unintended consequences that further complicate the process, as revealed in this study. While the work of Lewin and Chin and Benne was useful in understanding change up to a point, it became necessary to move beyond the almost 'linear' concept of the functioning of the school as an organisation and look to the broader context to explain the intricacy and reoccurring processes involved in change within this case study. From a philosophical point of view, Bhaskar's (1979) critical realism has been useful in helping me to see beyond the immediate context of the school organisation (see Sections 7.3.2 and 8.2); whilst the incorporation of complexity theory as a theoretical lens has made it possible to discern the interconnected web-like complexity of change.

5.6.2.4 Michael Fullan: Three-phase approach to change

Like Lewin (1947) and Schein (2010), Fullan (2007) recognises three main phases in a change process. Figure 5.2 provides an illustration of the three processes involved: initiation, implementation and institutionalisation.

According to Figure 5.2, Phase I of the change process is identified as the 'initiation' stage. This stage includes events, factors or decisions which lead to the adoption of change initiatives. Initiation can take on many forms from a single authority to a broad-based mandate (Fullan, 2007, p. 69). A variety of influencing factors are responsible for the initiation of a change process (adapted from Fullan, 2007, p. 70):

- Existence and quality of innovations
- Governmental pressure
- Teacher advocacy
- External change agents
- Community pressure
- New Policy
- Availability of funding (State, local, NGO)
- Problem solving
- Self-initiated

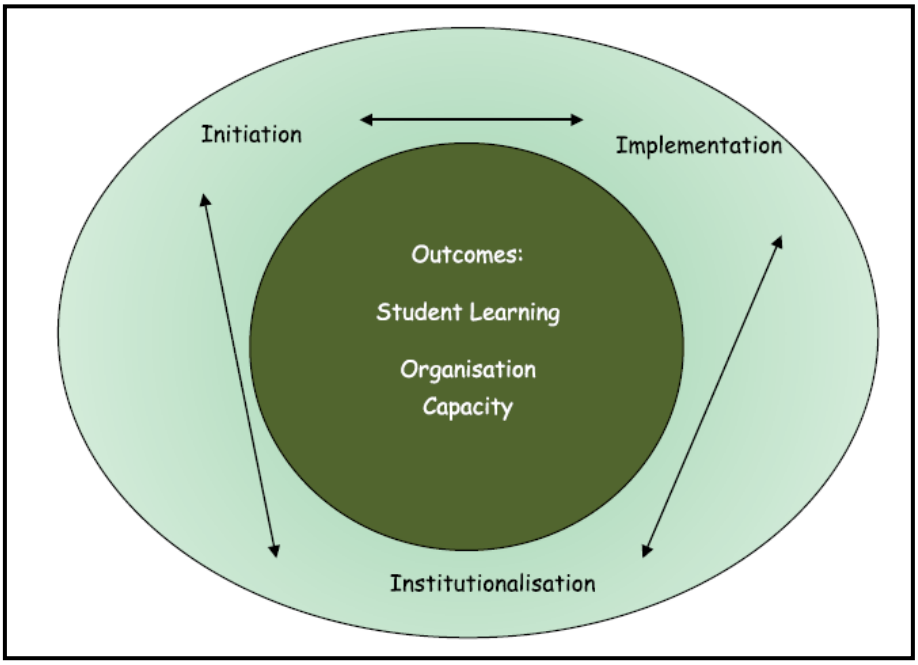


Figure 5.2: A simplified version of the change process (Fullan, 2007, p. 66).

Phase II in the process is characterised as the 'implementation' stage. According to Fullan (2007, p. 65) the implementation of ideas and initiatives can last between two and three years. Phase III is marked as the 'institutionalisation' element and refers to whether the change initiatives become sustainable, that is, become part of the operation and functioning of the organisation.

Fullan's contemporary thinking about the processes of change highlights the human element and interconnectivity involved in a change process. His model moves away from the linear, traditional approach advocated by the early pioneers in the field. Fullan's model also considers the complexity and broad array of external factors which may influence the change process, beyond the immediate boundaries of a school organisation. Fullan's model highlights the interdependent process of change within a system. This is in line with complexity thinking, which suggests that there may be more than one way for an organisation to be successful.

The following sub-section of this chapter builds on the idea of the interconnected and complex nature of change within organisations, and provides insight into the literature concerning the human element. Effective collaboration and teaming of individuals is thought to be an important part of the efficacy of a change process (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2009).

5.7 Organisational interactions, interrelationships and connections

This research works with both a systems theory and complexity theory approach to understanding educational organisations and their ability to adopt, and importantly, adapt to various interventions implemented by the DRF. Both systems and complexity thinking are associated with relationships, the distinction being that complexity science construes relationships in a less linear and reductive way. The section below explores the thinking around schools as learning organisations, which suggests the importance of relationship building and collaboration when working towards change. Senge (1990, p. 3) defines learning organisations as:

> organisations where people continually expand the capacity to produce the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

In my view there is a correlation between learning organisations and CAS in that agents – in this case, teachers – are in the majority of cases working towards a common goal or problem-solving action, and in doing so learning collaboratively. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007, p. 299) note how CAS are "neural-like networks of interacting, interdependent agents who are bonded in a cooperative dynamic by a common goal".

5.7.1 Learning organisations

Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth and Smith (1996, p. 6), describe a learning organisation as an establishment that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future and achieve its goals. These authors refer to new and broad patterns of thinking that are fostered within a learning organisation. According to Michael, 1985, 1991; Scharmer, 2007; Senge, Smith, Kruschwitz, Laur and Schley, 2008; and Kahane, 2010, learning organisations are the way of the future in order for organisations, their leaders and staff to cope with an increasingly competitive world. It therefore makes sense for schools to work towards becoming effective learning organisations.

This is especially relevant in the context of South African schools, where since 1994 there has been a dramatic shift in educational policy. My understanding and interpretation of policy sees the role of teachers as having shifted from largely passive, inflexible instructor-type role, to a role and set of responsibilities focussing on self-direction, professional development and innovation. Moloi (2005, p. 2) stresses the importance of South African schools becoming learning organisations in order to create empowering systems and processes to support and encourage these new learning and teaching habits. Learning organisations can assist teachers to acquire the skills to manage the demands posed by changes during this period of educational transformation in South Africa.

Exploring the literature on learning organisations within the context of this case study has been useful, since the study aims at examining teachers' experiences and participation in a process of change. Developing insight into the role and function of learning organisations within schools working towards change has assisted me to better understand the notion of teacher participation in this study. I argue the case for the schools in this study to adopt a "learning organisation approach" to foster support for teachers and move towards achieving greater progress and innovation as far as teaching and learning are concerned. Section 8.5.2 explores this argument.

Coetsee (2003, pp. 125-5) speaks of the relationship between learning and work, noting that they are inseparable in that "learning has become a matter of attaining a competitive advantage". Our competitive and dynamic world requires teachers who are highly informed, flexible, mentally agile, multi-skilled and innovative. Therefore it is important that teachers' efforts to learn, grow and develop as professionals are supported and valued through the role of the learning organisation.

Learning organisations can create supportive, non-threatening environments that provide opportunities for teachers and pupils wanting to learn about themselves and others. In a learning organisation 'learning' is the vehicle of change, and skills acquisition, positive attitudes and knowledge are valued and rewarded (Moloi, p. 12).

Despite each learning organisation being in some way unique, they do share select common features. These are summarised below, based on the writings of Watkins & Marsick (1993); Garvin (1994); Tan (1996); De Geus (1997); Hellriegel, Jackson and Slochum (1999) and Marquardt (1999):

- Learning organisations continuously assess their skills and learning capacity to adapt to a changing world.
- They reward performance and use flexible structures to motivate and inspire employees.
- They regularly use mixed function work teams in order to give people an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences and best practice.
- They encourage a culture of feedback and disclosure.

The learning organisation metaphor is seen as a strategic problem-solving tool that can be adopted if one is concerned with improving school performance (Twale & Kochan, 1999, p. 20). It can be an innovative and successful strategy that goes beyond the level of superficial change. The deep sense of commitment that it demands can provide the energy required for it to serve as a catalyst and as a sustaining force, driving the process of school interventions and change proactively and innovatively.

5.7.2 Collaboration and teaming

In exploring the DRF's approach to change, this study has revealed the role that partnerships and collaboration have played in the success of many of the school-based interventions (see

Section 8.2). In the developing world context, there are a number of collaborative partnerships working towards school upliftment. These partnerships differ in scale, scope and focus. On a global scale, UNESCO is working towards "Education for the 21st century" (UNESCO, 2013), in terms of which education is seen as a vehicle for building peace, eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. On a continental and regional scale, Distance Education and Teachers' Training in Africa (DETA) is working within the context of teacher education and development across the continent through partnering with various universities and NGOs. Nationally, organisations such as the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), the Centre for Education and Policy Development (CEPD), and the Joint Education Trust (JET) are involved in a variety of projects involving research, state support, teacher professional development and various educational upliftment projects.

This study focuses on a unique partnership between the DRF, the KZN Department of Education and the Umzinyathi community. The research has illuminated the distinctive nature of this partnership, in which action and change have been driven from within a community as opposed to through external involvement, which is the case in many of the examples mentioned above. Section 8.2 expands on the subject of this unique partnership.

There is ample evidence of the success of purposeful interaction or collaborative working cultures within schools and the implementation of change (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2006; Stoll, Bolam, McManon, Thomas, Wallace, Greenwood & Hawkley, 2006).

Sergiovanni (1992, p. 86) notes that "there is widespread agreement that collegiality among teachers is an important ingredient of promoting better working conditions, improving teaching practice and getting better results". The idea of collegiality is in line with Fullan's (2001) ideas of the importance of human relationships in knowledge creation and sharing through social interaction in the context of change. This is illustrated in the learning organisation metaphor discussed in the previous section. Collegiality refers to frequency of communication and mutual support. Large-scale and long-term institutional change consists of alterations in beliefs, teaching style, and materials which can only come about through a process of personal development within a social context (Fullan, 2001, p. 139).

The Mckinsey report (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010, p. 84) highlights the importance of collaborative practice in working towards change. Collaborative practice is about the effective working relationship between school leaders and teachers in order to develop

effective instructional practices, studying what works well in the classroom, and doing so both with rigorous attention to detail and with a commitment to improving not only one's own practice but that of others (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010, p. 84).

Team work or collaborative practice is referred to as the "means by which the school system 'hard wires' the values and belief systems into its day to day management and running" (Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010, p. 84). Research conducted by Rosenholtz (1989) as cited by Sergiovanni (1992, p. 86) found that collegiality is an important element in differentiating those schools we could classify as "learning enriched" from those that are "learning impoverished". Fostering the idea of developing a school into a "learning organisation", Haines (1995); Senge, et al. (1996), and Moloi (2005), offer rationale and opportunity to encourage the necessary collaboration and collegiality required within a school. Rosenholtz's (1989) work revealed that within learning-enriched schools, teachers and the school's management team work collaboratively in goal-setting activities and strategic planning. Such collaboration provided direction for teachers' improvement efforts.

Collaboration is strongly associated with continuous improvement and life-long learning. Rosenholtz (1989, as cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 141) found that teacher confidence and teacher commitment feed on each other and will continue to motivate and channel energy towards further growth and change. Collaboration with a sense of commitment and motivation towards change and positive breakthroughs in learning are what distinguishes a 'strong teacher community', while weak professional communities are often associated with teachers who disengage from their jobs and are ineffective in dealing with and sustaining change, being likely to conspire to reinforce bad ideas or negative attitudes (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

Fullan (2001, pp. 2-6) notes the importance of successful human relationships and interaction when one is working towards successful and sustained reform: "deep and sustained reform depends on many of us". If relationships are positive, things will improve. It is therefore important within schools that leaders foster good relationships amongst a diverse teaching staff, parental and pupil bodies.

Relationships and knowledge sharing go hand in hand, in that turning information into knowledge is a social process. Marris (1975) emphasises that change cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared. Ridley (1996, p. 175) notes that "co-operative groups thrive and selfish ones do not". Collaborative cultures can be effective and powerful if they are focused

in the right direction. French and Bell (1999, p. 87) speak about collaboration in terms of participation and empowerment, noting that "increased participation and empowerment have always been central goals and fundamental values" underpinning OD.

French and Bell (1999, p. 88) define the concept of empowerment in the following terms:

> [t]o give someone power, which is done by giving individuals authority to make decisions, to contribute their ideas, to exert influence, and to be responsible. Participation is an especially effective form of empowerment. Participation enhances empowerment, and empowerment in turn enhances performance and individual well being.

However, there are several barriers to effective collegiality and collaboration within the context of a school organisation. These barriers include both structural elements and attitudinal dimensions. Johnson (1990, p. 178) mentions "poorly designed schedules, inadequate time, random room assignments, or the absence of meaningful subunits within schools which can discourage new collegial ventures and undo existing ones". Collaboration, collegiality and school culture go hand in hand. In order for a school to become an effective learning organisation and foster a true sense of collegiality, the culture in the school needs to be open to this way of functioning. While this research demonstrates the success of collaboration and partnership at an organisation level, as far as teacher participation is concerned, the absence of effective sharing of knowledge and collaboration amongst teachers is a barrier to their development and engagement in change. This is explored in Section 8.5.

5.8 Leadership and management

The ability of schools to transform themselves into effective learning organisations with a strong sense of purpose and commitment is largely dependent on the quality of leadership and management operating within the school organisation. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) propound the importance of both leadership and management structures working coherently towards successful school reform. Marishane and Botha (2011, p. 1) concur, noting that "school improvement includes finding ways to strengthen the management and leadership capacities of those working in schools to ensure that learners are provided with learning opportunities of a high quality". This section of the chapter provides insight into the body of literature concerning leadership and management within organisations. Leadership and management are important elements in this study, since they are crucial to the ability to drive

change on behalf of the DRF and the community, and to adopt and manage the school-based interventions effectively.

In order for OD strategies to be successful, effective leadership and management are required (Kotter, 1990, cited by French & Bell, 1999, p. 272). Leadership and management comprise a broad area, therefore only those approaches to leadership identified as specific to the context of this case are explored in this chapter. An analysis of leadership roles and structure in the case study is provided in Section 8.2.2-3.

Leadership is seen as being important in maintaining momentum and continuous improvement efforts through OD (Fullan, 2001). According to Kotter (1990. pp. 4-5) management involves "organising and staffing, planning and budgeting, controlling and problem solving". In contrast, leadership involves "establishing direction, including developing a vision and strategies for getting there; aligning people, including the communication of the desired direction as well as securing co-operation, motivating and inspiring". Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, pp. 153-55) argue that good leadership and management involve far more than skill acquisition and the understanding of various processes and relationships. Both leadership and management are multi-dimensional and therefore require ongoing effort and commitment to the processes of self-understanding and understanding others. The challenge therefore is to build leadership and management capacity throughout the school community, which will mean involving both the parental body and pupils themselves. French and Bell (1999, p. 272) support this notion, suggesting that "leadership must be conceptualised as a highly interactive, shared process, with members of all teams developing skills in this shared process".

In South Africa schools have tended to operate with a strong emphasis on effective management rather than leadership (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997, p. 158). This approach to leadership had its roots in past educational philosophy and training, where leadership was autocratic and authoritarian in nature, a style strongly aligned to the ideology of apartheid at the time. Principals classified as 'good leaders' were more often bureaucrats who completed their administrative tasks punctually and who established highly effective structures ensuring the smooth running of the school. Such an approach has created rigid school systems that are struggling today with the notion of change and the challenges presented by the "bigger picture" (see Sections 8.2.2 and 8.4.1 for further elaboration on the 'rigid' nature of the school system).

Leadership and management should be viewed separately, as highlighted by the distinct differences pointed out by Kotter (1990) and Marishane and Botha (2011), as well as within their shared context (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997, p. 158). Leadership involves big picture thinking and therefore requires leaders to have a sense of direction for their organisation. Leaders need to have an understanding of their school as an organisation in relation to its immediate and broader context. Leadership responsibilities involve visionary thinking, strategies and planning. These tasks are collective in nature, and all the people within the organisation need to own and share this vision for it to be effective and long lasting. The management functions of the school organisation, on the other hand, can be regarded as the 'rock'. These structures are the supporting web of the school, "establishing certainty, confidence and security" (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997, p. 158), and helping the school pursue its vision.

5.8.1 Educational leadership

There has been a vast amount written about leadership and, in particular, leadership within an educational context. Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley and Beresford (2000, p. 7) refer to this as the "swamp of literature on leadership"! Leadership theorist Warren Bennis wrote in 1959 (p.259): "Of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for top nomination. Probably more has been written and less is known about leadership than any other topic in the behavioural sciences".

Leithwood and Duke (1999) conducted a review of the concepts of leadership, particularly in education literature from 1988-1995. In their review they found 121 articles on leadership out of a total of 716 articles (Stewart, 2006, p. 2). Stewart (2006, p. 2) observes that leadership has been and will continue to be a major area of focus, as education moves into a period of restructuring and increasing accountability.

Educational leadership is widely recognised as being complex and challenging (Shields, 2004, p. 109). It is an all-encompassing topic, making it difficult to define. Stewart (2008, p. 3) notes that the eclectism reflected in the domain of educational leadership has rendered the field "unfocused and without guiding purpose". In his book *Leading for change* (2001), Fullan states: "The more complex society gets, the more sophisticated leadership must become (p. ix). Fullan (2001) is of the opinion that effective leadership is in short supply; Mestry and Singh (2007, cited by Msila, 2011, p. 435) make a similar point about the situation in South Africa, noting that many serving principals have not received basic

leadership and management training before or after their entry into a leadership position. According to McLennan and Thurlow (2003, cited by Msila, 2011, p. 435), the recent educational reforms in South African school governance have resulted in the majority of school principals and school leaders being under-prepared for their new roles. It is this situation that the DRF aims to address through its commitment to the leadership and management training of school management teams (SMTs) (see Sections 7.4 and 8.5).

Foster and Young (2004, p. 29) note that when "goals are not met, people lose confidence in, and tend to blame those people believed to be responsible for leadership". In South Africa today our school system has become a major source of blame for the many ills that beset our society, such as crime, unemployment and poverty. The recent Limpopo textbook fiasco (May, 2012, ongoing), which resulted in calls for the resignation of the Minister of Education, is testament to the loss of faith in our education leadership on a national scale (refer to Section 2.5.6). Scholars, management professionals and education practitioners are searching for answers to the school leadership issue that education systems are currently facing (not only in South Africa but world-wide). We need to address questions such as these:

- What is the image of leadership that we as a country need to take us through this period of educational transformation and organisational change?
- What sort of school leadership across all levels of the system will lead us through this transition and into an unknown future?

5.8.2 Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT)

Section 5.2 of this chapter makes reference to the complex and dynamic society in which we currently live, commonly referred to as the 'knowledge era'. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007, p. 301) are critical of the many leadership theories which abound, both traditional and more contemporary. Drawing on the work of Gronn (1999), they argue that the majority of leadership theories remain grounded in a bureaucratic framework which is no longer appropriate for the needs and demands of the knowledge era. These thoughts are echoed in the thinking of both Sergiovanni (1992) and Moloi (2005), who believe that leadership belongs to everyone. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007, pp. 298-318) have developed a contemporary leadership theory grounded in complexity. I thought it appropriate to review their work, since I have drawn on complexity theory as a theoretical tool in this study (see Section 5.4 for a discussion of the theoretical framework).

The CLT approach aims to enable the learning, creating and adapting of systems fit for organisations such as schools working within a knowledge era. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007, pp. 298-318) propose a conceptual leadership framework that includes three inter-related leadership roles: *adaptive leadership, administrative leadership and enabling leadership*. These leadership roles are intended to reflect the dynamic relationship between the various functions of a complex adaptive system (CAS) (see Section 5.4.2).

Earlier in this chapter, I voiced some scepticism about the appropriateness of complexity theory in relation to this study, since in my view the specific context in which it is rooted is not marked by typical knowledge era characteristics (i.e. reflecting a complex, competitive world dominated by technological advancement and a knowledge based economy) (Hitt, 1998). I therefore decided to invoke a blend of systems and complexity theory to understand the organisation function unique to this study. CLT requires comparable scrutiny regarding its applicability to leadership structures and functions within the schools and community in this case study. This question is expanded upon in Section 8.2.4, but in brief, CLT might be appropriate since it offers a combination of contemporary thinking around the interactive nature of the leadership process together with existing hierarchical structures already in existence (Section 8.2.3 details leadership structures within the Umzinyathi community and local schools).

The overarching leadership framework proposed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) is outlined below. Three differing leadership functions are suggested:

- *Adaptive leadership*: this involves adaptive, creative learning interactions which immerge from the CAS. Such interactions strive to adjust tensions among staff members, in this case teachers. Adaptive activity is not an act of authority. Within the context of this research, an example of adaptive leadership would involve teachers grappling with the demands of the new curriculum and creating new lesson plans, approaches to teaching and learning and so forth.
- *Administrative leadership*: this refers to the actions of formal managers who plan and organise various activities to achieve certain goals and outcomes in an efficient and effective manner. This leadership function is prevalent within the schools forming part of this case study. Administrative leadership functions are carried out by the SGB and SMT, who work towards maintaining an effectively functioning school with good

academic results being achieved at the end of each school year. Administrative leadership therefore tends to be characterised by hierarchic and bureaucratic elements.

- *Enabling leadership*: works to provide opportunities such that adaptive and administrative leadership can function coherently.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007, p. 305) describe the relationship between adaptive and administrative leadership in terms of "entanglement" (Kontopoulos, 1993). Entanglement reflects the dynamic relationship between the formal top-down approach of administrative leadership and the informal, complex adaptive emergent forces of dynamic social systems. In school organisations, my experience, observations and reading suggest that administrative leadership is pre-eminent. But teachers and other members of the school organisation are interconnected and interact on a daily basis to contribute towards the effective running of the school. I see greater opportunities for enabling leadership, whereby appropriate organisational conditions are set in place to create effective leadership in areas of school life where innovation, change and adaptability are required. Enabling leadership is also required to facilitate the flow of knowledge and creativity from adaptive structures into administrative school structures (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 305). In short, adaptive leadership is required at all levels in a school, facilitating a complex and interactive system (hence the applicability of complexity theory to this research and the associated CLT). The applicability of the Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) CLT framework within the context of this research is analysed in Section 8.2.4.

5.8.3 Leadership in a learning organisation

There are many similarities between the CLT framework presented by Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) reviewed in the previous section, and the style of leadership envisaged within a learning organisation (Moloi, 2005) (the concept of a learning organisation is explored in Section 5.7.1). In this research I argue for greater integration and involvement of all members of the school organisation in working towards change and problem solving. This is where complexity theory has been useful in allowing me to envisage the possibilities for schools wanting to operate and function more effectively. The leadership style in CAS and within a learning organisation should be both enabling and proactive.

Moloi (2005) analyses leadership from the perspective of a learning organisation. Here she introduces the term "leading learning". Moloi (2005, p. 97) speaks about the concept of smart organisations. She notes that smart organisations are learning organisations which are able to "process their experiences with customers, learners, parents and suppliers in ways that allow

them to create environments in which they can be successful". Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) as cited by Moloi (2005) note that within smart organisations it is leadership that makes learning happen effectively. Ivancevich & Matteson (1999) speak of "leading learning" which provides a very different perspective on leadership. They advocate that in many respects leaders have to "unlearn" much of what they know about traditional leadership. A combination of strategic, visionary and transformational school leadership is needed for an understanding of when environmental changes imply a need for organisational change and when they do not (cf. the concept of adaptive leadership as advanced by Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Leading learning is a proactive approach to change and therefore leadership. It involves the use of creative and innovative thinking to account for the present state, unfreeze it, redefine and change it and then refreeze the newly learnt behaviour (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1961). The leading learning approach to leadership is capable of perceiving the changes taking place within the school organisation and beyond, in the broader educational context. It involves regular experiments and transcends the mere management of what already exists (Moloi, 2005, p. 97).

5.8.4 Instructional and transformational leadership

Stewart (2006. p. 4) cites the work of Heck and Hallinger (1999), who note that instructional and transformational leadership have emerged as two of the most regularly studied models of school leadership. The instructional leadership model emerged in the 1980s and focused on the ways in which leadership improved educational outcomes (Stewart, 2006, p. 4). Transformational leadership grew out of the shortcomings of the instructional approach to school leadership, and focused more on the accountability of leaders and the overall improvement of school conditions (Stewart, 2006, pp. 4-7).

The instructional leadership style is goal driven, focusing on the curriculum, instruction and the general school environment. Dimmock (1995, p. 295) asserts that this approach to school management is too prescriptive and top-down, and is out of step with contemporary trends in leadership. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) would concur, in that the success of schools ultimately lies in its social assets, i.e. its learning capacity, far more than in its physical assets (Zohar, 1997; McKelvey, 2001; Quinn, Anderson & Finkelstein, 2002). Within a localised context, the instructional leadership style can be likened to what Sayed (2001, p. 193) refers to as "the technical skills approach to education management development (EMD)". Sayed describes this approach as distinguished by a respect for hierarchy and concerned with the 'training' of

school leaders with respect to laws, rules, regulations and technical processes. This would be classified as administrative leadership in the Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) model.

Seeking to eschew a non-participatory, instructional approach to education, contemporary initiatives in South African leadership and management have moved towards greater participation, democracy and the creation of an active civil society – a model known as the "governance and management model" (National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), 1992). This participatory approach can be aligned with transformational leadership which is concerned with greater capacity and the continued improvement of an organisation. Such an approach to leadership may be exercised by members other than the formal leader of the organisation, including teachers and parents.

However, the participatory approach to leadership as outlined by contemporary educational policy does not sit well across South Africa as a whole. Christie, Lessem and Mbigi (1994) and Sayed (2001) note that current leadership and management policies in South Africa do not take into consideration African philosophies and make no reference to indigenous management approaches. This has created numerous tensions in the leadership and management of schools in our country. Section 7.3.2 explores some of these tensions with respect to rural areas in South Africa, while Section 2.4.4 highlights evidence to support the claims made by Christie et al. (1994) and Sayed (2001).

5.8.4.1 Transformative leadership

Despite various approaches to educational leadership and school reform, Shields (2004) claims that to date there has been little success as far as school leadership is concerned, and calls on school leaders to critically reflect on the reasons for the lack of success of current approaches. Shields (2004) introduces the concept of transformative leadership, suggesting that changes need to go beyond "institutional and organisational arrangements" (p. 113). Transformative leadership takes seriously Burns's (1978, p. 20) belief that "transcending leadership is leadership engaged" and echoes the thinking of Freire (1998, p. 37) "that education is not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it transformation cannot occur". Transformative leadership links educational leadership with the wider social context of reality in which it is embedded (Shields, 2008, p. 2). This approach to leadership has a strong moral element, calling on leaders' sense of responsibility to raise questions about justice and democracy in working towards educational change. This approach to leadership goes beyond addressing pupil behaviour and teaching strategies and looks to leaders'

understanding of the broader historic and societal influences on the school context. This sort of leadership was advocated by Foster (1986), who observed that "good leadership requires careful and consistent attention to the needs of the community in which one serves and understanding both the conditions in which we live and how to change them" (cited by Shields, 2008, p. 10). Henderson and Mazibuko have been identified as exhibiting characteristics of the transformative leadership style within the context of this case (see Section 8.2.3).

5.8.4.2 Moral Leadership

Sergiovanni (1992) offers a perspective on leadership that is very different from some of our traditional beliefs and earlier work in the domain. His work focuses on the "moral dimension of leadership" (p. xiii). In doing so he notes that leaders will be called to reinvent the concept of leadership: "common, taken for granted notions will have to be challenged and changed". This dimension of leadership involves understanding the attitudes and values that inform our leadership practice; it is about visions, including coming to terms with our own views and the views of others; and, importantly, seeing leadership as belonging to everyone (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 1). This approach to leadership represents the "voice of practice, a voice largely neglected in previous school-based leadership literature" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 1). Reading the work of Sergiovanni (1992) and Fullan (2003) regarding the moral dimensions of leadership challenged me to think about the leadership of the people in this case study. In many respects the driving force behind the work of the DRF is a moral one, in that David Rattray's legacy of commitment to the upliftment of the community informs the various school-based interventions being analysed in this research. Elements of Sergiovanni's moral leadership model have been identified in the leadership approaches of both Henderson and Mazibuko, amplifying their transformational leadership characteristics. The moral dimension of their leadership approach is explored in Section 8.2.3.

Sergiovanni (1992, pp. 3-9) speaks about the "hand, head and heart of leadership". The hand of leadership involves our actions and our behaviour. Many traditional leadership models tend to be one dimensional in focusing only on the "hand" element. Sergiovanni notes that in order to truly understand each other, our actions and our behaviour, we need to explore the "heart" and "head" elements of the leadership process. The "heart" of leadership involves one's "interior world" which includes one's values, dreams, beliefs and so forth. Essentially this is the foundation of one's reality (p. 7). The "head" of leadership has to do with our

mindscapes, or various theories of practice which will have developed over time. Sergiovanni's (1992) "head" of leadership is aligned to Senge's (1990) "mental models", which are "deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting" (Senge, 1990, p. 8). Reflection is an important element within the "head" of leadership. Sergiovanni represents the relationship between the "hand-head-heart" in the following diagram:

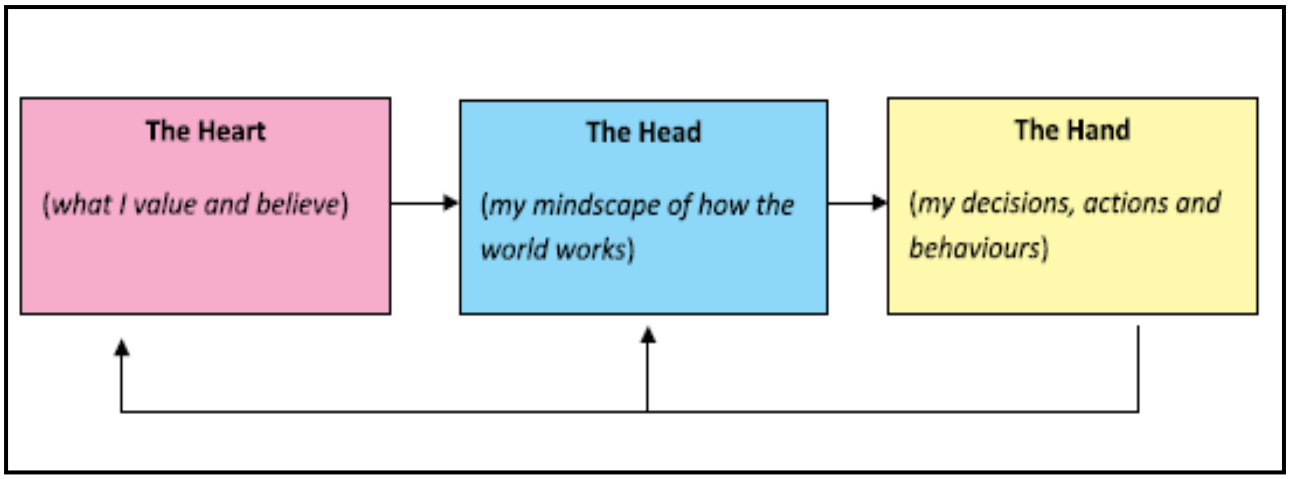


Figure 5.3: Moral Leadership, the "hand-head-heart" approach (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 8)

The head of leadership is shaped and influenced by the heart, and both drive the hand. In turn, reflections and decisions will affirm or reshape the heart and head. Sergiovanni's approach emphasises the relationship between these three elements within the leadership domain, noting that if the head and heart are separated from the hand, "the leader's actions, decisions and behaviour will never be entirely understood" (p. 7).

Fullan (2003) argues that in order for successful reform to take place we need major advances in moral commitment on the part of people and societies as well as greater knowledge about change and development. According to Fullan (2001, p. 13), moral purpose in education is about making a difference in the lives of school pupils. He argues that in order for reform to take place we need to alter our social and moral environment. Only if the social environment improves will the conditions for the continuous and sustainable improvement of schools be created. According to Fullan (2003, p. 18), if we are to have any chance of achieving large-scale educational reform, the following need to be addressed and recognised:

1. Moral purpose: making a difference in the lives of students – a critical motivator for addressing reform. Passion and higher order purpose are required – because the efforts required are huge therefore the changes need to be morally worth doing.
2. Moral purpose will not add up if left at an individual level.
3. Reducing the gaps between high and low performers at all levels – classroom, school, district and state. This is the key to system break through.
4. Focusing on the gap is the moral responsibility of all teachers – they need to understand the bigger picture and reach out beyond themselves.
5. Ultimately a tri-level solution is necessary (school, district and state).
6. Reducing the gap – key to greater societal and economic development.

Fullan's (2003) list of key areas to address when attempting educational reform can fruitfully be analysed in relation to the DRF's EDP (see Appendix C). A number of similarities can be drawn. Analysis of the DRF's EDP is provided in Section 7.4.

Fullan (2001, p. 26) emphasises that a moral purpose is critical to the sustained performance of any organisation. Boleman and Deal (2000, p. 185) predict that "culture and core values will be increasingly recognised as the vital social glue that infuses an organisation with passion and purpose. Successful reform is about people having buy-in and being able to identify their contributions as significant. People want to know if what they have done has made a difference and has in effect 'counted'. Anthony Alvarado, a District superintendant who has lead a number of successful educational reform strategies in the United States, has been particularly interested in getting into the 'hearts and minds of principals' and in so doing developing a culture in the school that gets people to understand what they can do together to help students (cited in Fullan, 2001, pp. 60-62). In his approach to reform, Alvarado notes the importance of change being steady, expressing a striving for ever-deepening improvement through moral and intellectual attention. Bensin and Alvarado demonstrate the importance of tough empathy in a change process. They recognise that principals and teachers will only be mobilised by caring and respect, by talented people working together and developing a shared expertise (cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 63).

5.8.5 Organisations and leadership: an integrated summary

Fullan (2001, p. 1) argues that it is in times of flux and crisis that we come up with innovative ideas that enable us to progress and move forward. Fullan (2001) proposes a contemporary and holistic leadership model which draws on many of the principles discussed in this chapter

with respect to change, organisational development and leadership. While Fullan (2001) has titled his model a "Framework for Leadership", in my view it is more than that. I believe that it offers an integrated approach to OD in that it focuses on many of the attributes of OD. In Section 5.2, I reviewed the work of French and Bell (1999) who suggest that OD focuses on the human element of organisations, emphasising problem solving through the participation of both leaders and members. OD sees all members of an organisation working towards results. In Figure 5.4 Fullan (2001) illustrates the processes involved in OD, whereby leaders and members work towards the betterment of the organisation as a whole, i.e. that "more good things happen and fewer bad things happen".

Fullan's (2001) model can be interpreted as commencing with developing an understanding of the change process and in doing so identifying the common goals that the organisation intends working towards. This approach is synonymous with what is referred to as a "planned change process" (Argyris, 1970; Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1985). In a planned change process the motivation to bring about change is conscious and deliberate, as presented in Figure 5.4. This is relevant since the DRF's school-based intervention is a "planned change" process, even although some of the changes may have been unintended consequences. An analysis of the DRF's school intervention is provided in Chapter 7.

Fullan (2001) has incorporated the importance of human relationships into his model, focusing, for example, on relationship building, so as to involve the whole organisational community in creating a vision for innovation and change (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997; French & Bell, 1999; Uhl-Bien et al., 2011); and on knowledge sharing, through the creation of learning organisations which foster the philosophy of "learning through leading" (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1999; Moloi, 2005).

Fullan (2001) also believes that change should be driven by leaders and individuals who have a strong moral purpose, which is in line with Sergiovanni's (1992) emphasis on the importance of values and attitudes when one is working towards change. This is echoed in the thinking of Goleman (1996), who calls on us to heed our "emotional intelligence" when embarking upon a journey of change, since change is invariably associated with a range of emotional experiences (such as excitement, fear, and irritation) that underpin our values and attitudes. Fullan's (2001) model insists on the positive attitudes of "enthusiasm, hope and energy" as requisite for driving an intervention forward.

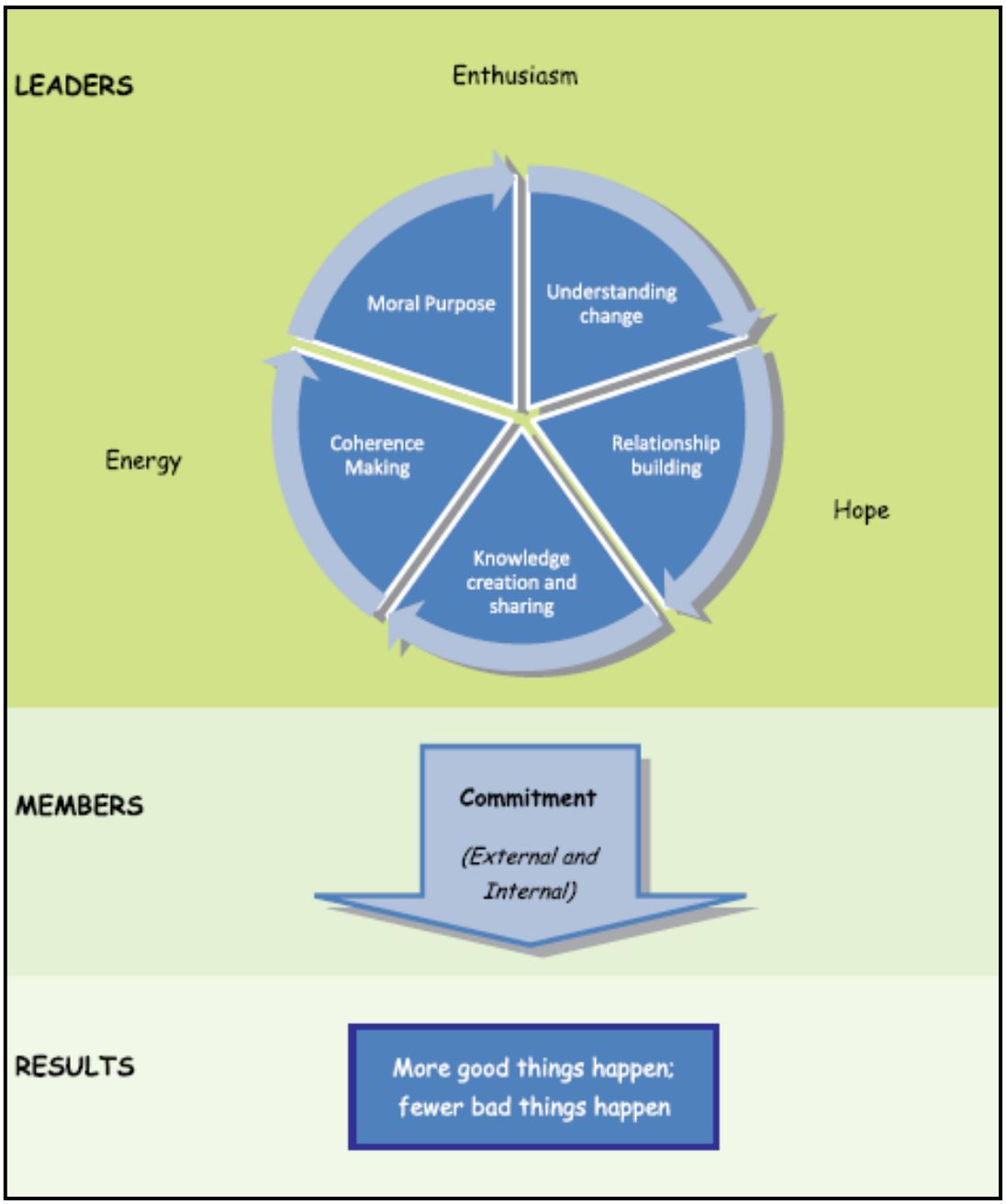


Figure 5.4: A Framework for Leadership (Fullan, 2001, p. 4)

5.9 Conclusion

The way in which schools function as organisations has to change in order to keep up with trends and demands in present-day South Africa. Change presents particular challenges for schools like those showcased in this case study, which are relatively isolated rural community schools. The research has revealed both the linear and structured nature of these schools.

Systems theory has been useful in accounting for the basic functioning of a typical rural school, which models the linear "input-throughput-output" process (French & Bell 1999, p. 82). In this chapter it is argued that organisations like schools are not as straightforward as systems theory suggests. For this reason, complexity theory is drawn upon as second framework to support an in-depth analysis of the schools as functioning organisations. Complexity theory has allowed me to delve into the dynamic interactions and connections between various system components, both within the immediate school context and beyond.

Exploring school systems reveals how they have to adapt and change in order to survive. Their capacity to adapt, change and innovate tends to be influenced by the type of leadership they have, and the extent to which there is collaboration both within the organisation and with the community of which it is part. This study has revealed a partnership between the KZN DoE, the DRF and the Umzinyathi community. What is noteworthy is the importance of action emanating from within the community as opposed to being imposed by an external agent.

Chapter Six shifts towards the context of education in South Africa, with a specific focus on change and the role of teachers in educational transformation in our country.

CHAPTER 6

POSITIONING TEACHERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The successful teacher remains a student; she has that fundamental quality of the true scholar: humility in the face of what still has to be achieved.
(Hartshorne, 1995, p. 4)

6.1 Introduction

This case study focused on the DRF's school-based intervention and the experiences and roles of teachers within select rural schools in the Umzinyathi district municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. In this chapter I review the literature pertaining specifically to teachers in the context of the changing educational landscape in South Africa. The discussion commences with an overview of educational transformation in South Africa. Policy formulation is the catalyst in the transformation process, but the implementation of policy is largely the responsibility of teachers. The central argument in this chapter is that teacher agency has been constrained in the new reform context. Possible reasons for this are sought in the socio-historical and cultural factors that have shaped teacher education and training in our country to date. These factors are explored with a view to understanding the role and position of teachers in the context of this study.

6.2 An overview of educational transformation in South Africa

South Africa is a society that has undergone large-scale changes. It has moved from an authoritarian, undemocratic, racially segregated society (Sayed, 2001, p. 271) to a more open, inclusive and nominally democratic society underpinned by the Constitution (RSA. 1996b) as the supreme law of the Republic, and the Bill of Rights, being the corner stone of the country's democracy. Section 29 of the Constitution states that every South African has the right to education. In order to redress the results of previous racially discriminatory laws and policies, large-scale educational reform has been required as a matter of urgency.

The new government came into power in South Africa in 1994 with a clear mandate to create an equal and fair society. Huge challenges faced the government: having to build a

democracy, develop a globally competitive economy and shift the values of society to embrace the principles of equality and dignity for all. The new Department of Education radically shifted the direction and vision of education post-1994 with a series of new laws and policies. Education policies have been "wide-ranging and comprehensive" (Sayed, 2001, p. 188), and include the restructuring of the curriculum in the form of Curriculum 2005, a move towards outcomes-based learning, the integration of education and training through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), as well as the restructuring of higher education through the Higher Education Act. Overall, the government's approach to education and training since 1994 has shown a commitment in two key areas: the provision of equitable access to education for all and the improvement of the quality of provision (Diphofa, Vinjevold & Taylor, 1999, p. 2). In the following section, I provide a route map of the chapter that illustrates the key changes in the educational landscape in South Africa and the role and responsibility of teachers in the transformation process.

6.3 Route map of the chapter – the "change cycle"

Change is a central theme of this study, particularly since the goal of the research is to describe and analyse an approach to change and examine teachers' experiences and participation in a process of change. This chapter explores a change cycle (see Figure 6.1), with respect to the educational transformation process in South Africa. It examines the various ways in which organisations and individuals are involved, with a particular focus on teachers.

Figure 6.1 is a diagrammatic representation of the discussion that unfolds in this chapter and hence I have referred to it as a "route map". At the heart of the diagram is policy, which refers to the educational policy documents that have constituted a catalyst for transformation. Policy documents have been formulated according to international trends and local needs in an effort to move away from the segregated and unequal education system associated with apartheid South Africa. Key areas of policy have included a commitment towards quality education underpinned by democratic principles, the professional development and training of teachers, school governance and organisation, aspects pertaining to the school curriculum and the notion of inclusivity. Section 6.3.1 of this chapter highlights key policy documents (see Table 6.1) which have paved the way for transformation.

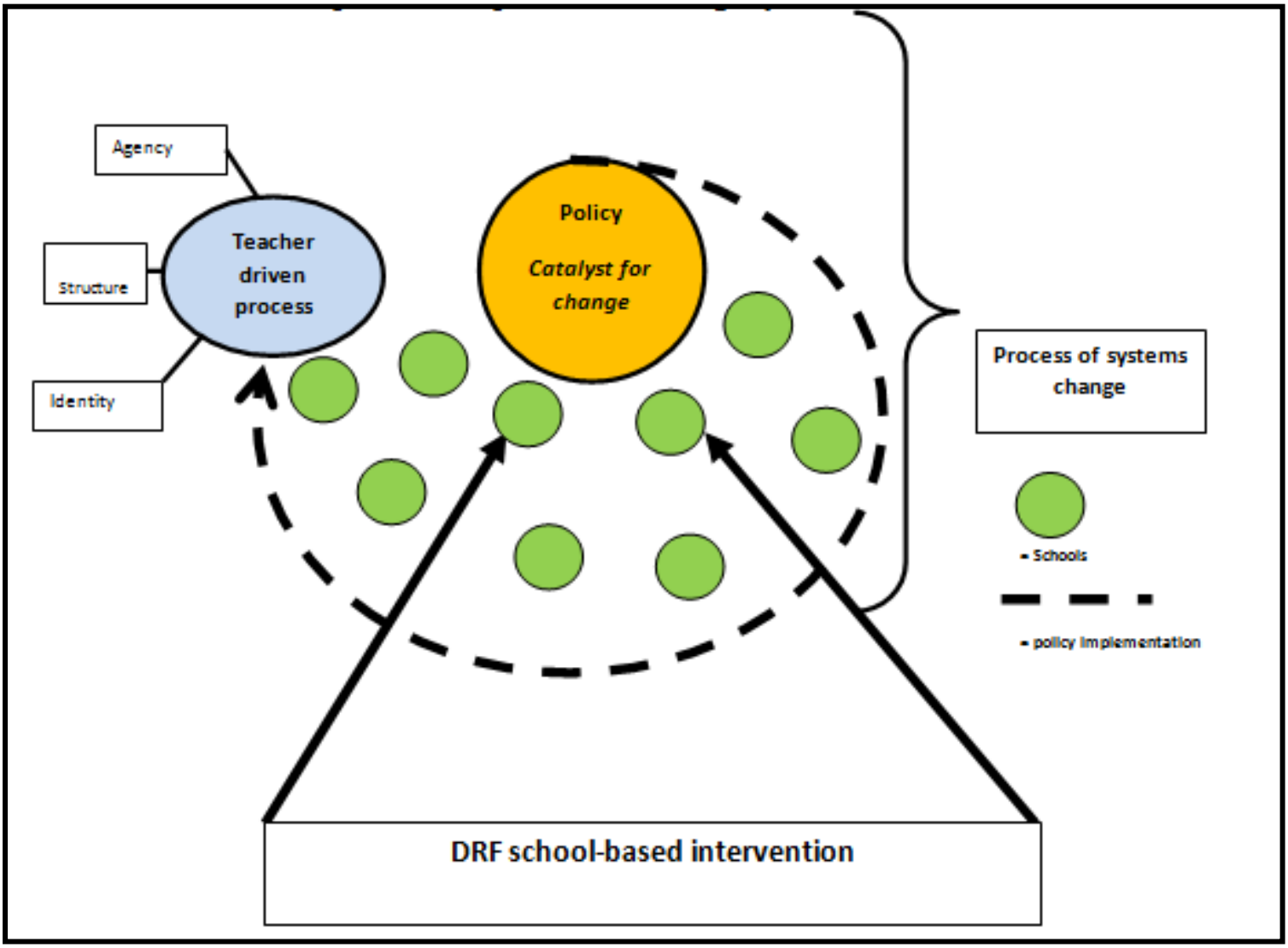


Figure 6.1 A diagrammatic representation of the "change cycle" put forward in this chapter.

The dotted arrow in Figure 6.1 is representative of the policy implementation process. This necessarily simplified diagram makes the implementation process look straightforward and linear. In reality the implementation process has been complex and challenging and remains an area of contention. Section 6.3.2 talks to the complexity of policy implementation.

Policy implementation is intended to be a teacher-driven process, since it relies on teachers to interpret and act on policy in the ways in which lessons are delivered, pupils are treated and schools organised. The literature points to repeated breakdown in the policy implementation process. The rigidity of policy has resulted in many teachers feeling restrained or 'locked in' (Sayed, 2001). This chapter explores teachers as agents of change and looks at how structure and identity have played a significant part in affecting how they are able to interpret and implement policy. Sections 6.4-7 are devoted to the situation and experience of teachers within the context of this 'change cycle'.

The DRF has identified major breakdowns in the efficacy of policy adoption and implementation within the schools it supports, which are the reason for its intervention and involvement at a school level. This is reflected by the solid arrows in Figure 6.1. Through conducting several baseline studies (refer to Section 7.4), the DRF has identified key areas of support and assistance in terms of schools and teachers. This has paved the way for the development of the DRF's Education Development Plan (EDP) (see Appendix C). The DRF's EDP is closely aligned with educational policy in working towards creating effective and efficiently functioning schools. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the DRF as the case study in this research, whilst Chapter 7 provides a critical analysis of the DRF's school-based intervention. In the context of this research, the DRF can be identified as a change enabler, "*unfreezing*" (Lewin, 1947) the situation to motivate a cycle of change. Evidence of this "*unfreezing*" process is explored in Section 8.3.

6.3.1 Policy formulation – the catalyst for change

During the first five years of South Africa's democracy (1995-1999), the National and Provincial Departments of Education focused the school reform process on two central areas:

- The development and implementation of a policy framework which would provide for the redress of past inequalities and ensure the provision of equitable, high quality and relevant education.

- The amalgamation of 17 different education departments and the consequent redeployment and organisation of teachers and education officials. (Diphofa, Vinjevold & Taylor, 1999, p. 2)

The creation of a unified education system was no easy task, requiring the establishment of several new structures and the employment of new officials. These new officials and managers experienced huge difficulties, largely, it would seem, because they lacked the skills and experience required to run such a complex system. At the same time, many white teachers, school managers and department staff were encouraged to take a retrenchment package to make way for change, meaning that highly experienced education staff exited the system. Furthermore the usual budgetary constraints and pressures placed limitations on the transformation process.

According to the National and Provincial DoE's school reform plan, the five-year period from 1995-99 was suppose to see the redress of past inequalities and a focus on high quality education (Sayed, 2001). Schools remained sub-standard structures, many lacking basic amenities such as running water, the majority of them classified as under-performing in terms of teaching and learning. The failure of the DoE to deliver change and support to schools essentially paved the way for the commencement of the DRF's school-based intervention strategy. As noted in Chapter 2, the formal work of the DRF commenced in 2007, eight years after the DoE's national school reform plan. Not only did the state fail large numbers of schools, teachers, pupils and parents during the five-year period 1995-99, a further eight years down the line large numbers of pupils across South African remained recipients of a sub-standard education.

My single case study investigation points to the failure of both of the National and Provincial Departments of Basic Education (DBE) to work towards change. Hence arose the need for other organisations and members of civil society to intervene and support change if large scale reform and upliftment is to become a reality for all schools in our country. This is also explored in Section 8.4.1.

The period 1995-99 was one of restructuring focused on large-scale policy change; for Sayed (2001, p. 189) it was characterised by a "flurry of policy commissions"! Table 6.1 provides a summary of the various policy and legislative documents that provided a framework for the renewal and reform of education in our country.

Table 6.1 A summary of initial policy and legislative documents informing and paving the way for educational renewal in South Africa.

Date	Policy document
1995	***First White Paper on Education*** • this act was significant in that it paved the way for the National Education Policy Act (1996).
1995b	***The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act*** • provides for a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which forms the scaffolding for a national learning system integrating education and training at all levels. SAQA is the main education quality assurance body for the country.
1995c	***Labour relations Act*** • the registration, professional development and conduct of teachers is the responsibility of the South African Council for Educators (SACE). SACE has its own Act of 2000.
1996	***The National Education Policy Act*** • outlined the basic principles of education under the new government, including commitments to democracy, equality, redress, desegregation, accountability and transparency.
1996a	***The South African Schools Act*** • aims to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools.
1997	***The Higher Education Act of 1997*** • provides for a single, nationally co-ordinated system of higher education, overseen and quality assured by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).
1998	***The Employment of Educators Act*** • provides for the employment of educators by the State for the regulation of conditions of service.
2000d	***The Adult Basic Education and Training Act*** • provides for the establishment, governance and quality of both public and private adult education centres.
2001a	***White Paper 6*** • looks at inclusive education and the implementation of facilities and training in schools to better assist vulnerable learners.
2002	***The Revised National Curriculum Statement*** • aims to develop the full potential of all learners living in a democratic country. This curriculum was gradually phased in over a number of years, with the first new National Senior Certificate being awarded to Grade 12 learners in 2008.
2006	***The Further Education and Training Colleges Act*** • supersedes the Further Education and Training Act of 1998. This Act aims to regulate further education and training.

6.3.2 Policy implementation

Once the complex process of policy reformulation had taken place, the State was faced with the task of ensuring the policy was correctly and appropriately implemented by schools and education bodies across the country. The process of implementation has been criticised on a large scale by provincial education departments, school management bodies and teachers themselves. Samoff (1997) described the implementation of policy as "symbolic" as opposed to actual, meaning accompanied by proper action and deep understanding. Samoff's description is applicable since little practical advice and applicable examples were provided to teachers with respect to how policy should translate at the level of a classroom (de Clerq, 1997; Jansen, 2000).

In response to some of the challenges experienced within schools and other educational institutions, the Ministry of Education put forward a plan of action (1998-99) aimed at ensuring the successful implementation and institutionalisation of educational policies. The challenge during this phase was to "translate the symbolic intentions of policy which emerged from the educational restructuring phase into more concrete and visible beneficial outcomes in all classrooms" (Sayed, 2001, p. 190).

Despite efforts made by the education ministry, focus group interviews with teachers and members of school management in this research suggested that teachers are struggling to truly engage with and understand policy, and to translate the demands of policy onto the practical level of the classroom (see Section 8.5). The World Economic Forum (2005) sees teachers as the most important element in education reform, yet notes how teachers continue to be ignored in policy dialogue, monitoring and the implementation process. This perspective is further supported by other studies (Lewin & Stuart, 2003; Mulkeen, Chapman, Dejaegghere & Leu 2007; Mpokosa & Ndaruhutse, 2008; Lewin, 2011). With reference to the "change cycle" diagram (Figure 6.1), one begins to gain an understanding of the sense of powerlessness that teachers are feeling within this period of transformation.

Furthermore, the new policy in South Africa, based as it is on democratic principles and underpinned largely by Western ideals and values, conflicts with the values and nature of thinking of the rural community on which this case study is focussed. The problems and challenges that emerge when policy rooted in democratic ideals is imposed in a traditional rural context are explored in Sections 2.5.1 and 7.3.2. Policy remains challenging, confusing and for many teachers a source of frustration, since it is not always relevant or applicable to

the needs and demands of the particular school context, particularly the school curriculum. Further analysis of the confusions and tensions created by policy features in Chapter 7.

The implementation of new educational policy has required huge expenditure, which South Africa has met by increasing its national budget for education. South Africa spends a high proportion of its annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education in comparison to other developing and developed countries globally. In the 2006/7 financial year, South African education departments spent almost R93 billion on education, which amounts to 5.3% of the country's annual GDP (OECD report, 2008, p. 41). The recent 2012 National Budget report published by the National Treasury revealed education as receiving the largest share in the annual budget allocation, a staggering R207.3 billion. Yet despite this, and despite all the policies aimed at various forms of school reform, South Africa's global competitiveness rankings within the educational sector have continued to plummet. These rankings are a matter of concern, particularly when they are compared with those of fellow African states who spend a smaller slice of their annual budgets on education. The annual World Economic Forum Global Competiveness Report (2011-12) revealed the following statistics on the state of the South African education system.

Table 6.2: A sample of global education rankings

(*A total of 139 countries around the world formed part of this study*).

Country	Quality of Primary Education /139	Quality of Education system as a whole /139	Quality of Mathematics and Science /139
South Africa	*125*	*130*	*137*
Swaziland	59	101	91
Zimbabwe	85	46	76
Kenya	61	32	63
Uganda	102	72	102

Source: World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report, 2011-12.

South Africa consistently ranks lowest among the African countries shown. Of huge concern is that we are very close to the bottom rankings globally, especially in our mathematics and science teaching and results.

It would appear that the meaningful translation of policy into action and results has simply failed to occur, in spite of enormous budgetary allocations. In the case of the schools that are

the subject of this research, there is little sign of increased funding: many of the monetary promises and undertakings made by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial DoE have not come to fruition, and this has contributed to the growing frustration of teachers and school management teams. Inefficiency and poor delivery on the part of the DoE are analysed in Section 8.4.1.

- **Leadership and management policy implementation**

Organisational leadership and management have been viewed as important elements in this research. Relevant aspects of leadership and management theory are reviewed in Section 5.8. When seeking to understand the development and role of school leadership and management in the South African educational reform process, one should begin with the administrative and management system that was inherited in 1994. The educational governance system that the new Ministry of Education took over was not only fragmented and divided, but also characterised by a top-down authoritarian culture and marked disparities in race and gender (Sayed, 2001, p. 190). The system was characterised by undemocratic, secretive and hierarchical patterns of management and administration (NEPI, 1992).

Despite the large range of new educational policies and legislation (as reflected in Table 6.1), by 1996 little planning and thought had gone into educational management in South Africa and how it might deliver the desired changes. Training to date had been sporadic and small in relation to the need. In response to this situation and to the recommendations made by the Hunter Commission (Hunter, 1995) and other national policy documents, the then Minister of Education appointed a task team to investigate ways of institutionalising strategies for educational management in South Africa. Thus the Task Team on Education Management Development (TTEMD) was announced in February 1996 (RSA. DoE, 1996c, p. 12).

Research conducted by the TTEMD revealed the following management and school governance shortcomings:

- dysfunctional structures
- a mix of old and new styles of management and work ethos
- insufficient appropriately skilled people
- absence of an appropriate work ethos and management vision to drive integration and delivery
- a lack of school leadership, and school self management

- insufficient clarity with regard to roles and responsibilities within and between levels of management
- inadequate systems and procedures
- poor co-ordination of resources
- inefficient and ineffective delegation
- crisis management.

The TTEMD's research revealed a number of governance challenges that are broadly applicable to South African schools in general. Analysing the findings of this team in relation to the DRF's schools reveals similar challenges. A baseline study conducted by the DRF and MiET Africa in 2009 revealed that there were three dominating school management and governing structures in place at the majority of the DRF-supported schools. These included a representative council of learners (RCL), school governing bodies (SGBs) and school management teams (SMTs) (see [DF1: DOC#2C]). Findings from the research suggests that the function of these bodies varied a great deal, as did the frequency and content of meetings; but attendance was generally good and the minutes of meetings suggest that these structures were essentially functional. But it became necessary to question the meaning of the concept of '*functional governance*'. Does regular attendance and minute-taking guarantee a functioning school management team? Are the minutes accurate, or is there a degree of window dressing occurring to please the district office and ensure the correct boxes for policy implementation are being ticked? The DRF has recognised that school management needs to be a priority in working towards more efficiently functioning school organisations. To this end the DRF has embarked on a SMT training programme focussing on the following key areas:

- Effective school leadership and management
- SGB roles & responsibilities; establishment of SGB sub-committees to involve parents
- Parental involvement in supporting the education of their children
- Discipline, safety and security policy
- RCL roles and responsibilities; code of conduct; learners' rights & responsibilities
- School infrastructure maintenance

[see DF1: DVD: Recent document: TD March 2009]

The training and support offered by the DRF is perceived as effective by teachers and school management, since it has been in depth and focussed over a period of time (minimum 6 weeks), with regular visits from the facilitator and progress monitoring. Teachers commented positively on their ability to participate and engage with one another as well as with the facilitator [DF1: DOC#2A, p. 7].

The new approach to education management in South Africa reflects the democratic principles outlined in the new legislation. School managers need to take cognisance of this legislation in building relationships within the school communities in which they operate. Community engagement and partnership has been embedded into the DRF's SMT training programme under the broader remit of the Siyanakekela Project, which aims to create schools and communities that provide and care for their children [DF1: DOC#2B, p. 2]. But this approach has also encountered a series of challenges and tensions, particularly within rural contexts, where traditional tribal authorities continue to maintain power (see Section 2.4.4). A notable omission in the education management development (EMD) process was any consideration of African philosophies and management styles. No attempt to understand or incorporate indigenous management approaches was made, which helps to account for some of the tensions and issues that certain schools grapple with when it comes to implementing policy underpinned by democratic principles (Christie et al., 1994).

A number of practical and conceptual difficulties have emerged during the transformation period, impacting upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the change process. These have been discussed earlier in this section, as well as in Section 2.4. The greatest difficulty, as identified by Sayed (2001, p. 196), is that the discourse has "not shifted beyond the symbolic imaging level". Jansen (2000, p. 43) speaks of this period as characterised by the "symbolism of policy production" rather than working towards developing an understanding of policy and how to implement it at a practical level. It is evident that new approaches and policy frameworks have not been much assessed in terms of how they would impact upon the school and the system as a whole. "A consistent feature of educational policy development is that symbolic commitments to overcome the legacy of apartheid inequalities are not always realised in the crucible of practice" (Sayed, 2001, p. 196).

The successful implementation of policy is reliant on skilled and efficient human resources. In this regard there have been many challenges and frustrations among teachers and school management teams, especially since new policy training has been partial and limited. This

was emphasised by one of the teachers in attendance during a focus group discussion. Her frustration centred on the fact that trainers and facilitators themselves appeared not to be very confident or familiar with the policy:

> *"I am just commenting on the development of educators to implement the change, I am confused as to whether the facilitators of the change are quite clear themselves of what they are saying*". [FG#2, 2012, p. 1]

This research has revealed that the key role players within the policy and school transformation process are teachers. The remainder of Chapter 6 is devoted to a discussion of the literature pertaining to teachers and change within a South African context.

6.4 Teachers' roles and position in a change process

6.4.1 Teacher agency

Increasingly, teachers are being required to act as agents of change. Human agency is a much debated construct (Priestley, Edwards, Priestley & Miller, 2012, p. 194), framed by a variety of theories. But in brief, agency is the ability of actors to "critically shape their responses to problematic situations" (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p. 5). Biesta & Tedder (2006, p. 11) go on to cite Calhoun's statement that agency is the "capacity for autonomous action . . . [independent] of the determining constraints of social structure". Such views have been rightly criticised for their simplicity and neglect of the influence of societal structure and human culture on agency (Usher & Edwards, 1994; Archer 1996, 2000; Priestley et al., 2012, p. 185). Through the adoption of a realist ontology, this study has illuminated the influence of wider socio-cultural factors on teacher agency (Chapter 8 explores this through the analysis of findings). Paechter (1995, p. 47) cites Popkewitz, who emphasised that "the wants, values and priorities of decision making are determined by the structural and historical conditions of our institutions".

Building on their earlier work, Biesta and Tedder (2007) have put forward what I believe to be a useful and more realistic view of agency:

> This concept of agency highlights that actors always act *by means* of their environment rather than simply *in* their environment . . . the achievement of agency will always result in the *interplay* of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations. (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p.137) [emphasis added]

The notion suggests that individuals all have some form of capacity to act, however, their ability to achieve agency is dependent upon the interaction between these capacities and various ecological conditions. There is also a temporal aspect, since individuals may exercise more or less agency depending on the setting and particular context.

Viewing agency from the perspective of the interplay of various factors helps us to understand the capacity (or lack thereof) of teachers to cope with and implement various changes in their classrooms. Understanding the broader environmental context and socio-political landscape shows us how teachers are constrained or enabled by their social and material environments. According to Archer (2000), the capacity for agency emerges as individuals interact with the social, practical and natural worlds. Individuals' potential for agency changes as a result of accrued encounters over the course of their lives, as they accumulate experiences and as their social and material conditions evolve (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 197; see also Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

The following sections of this chapter explore the historical context in which many of the teachers in this study received their own education and initial teacher training. I argue that the historical and socio-political context has played a decisive role in shaping teachers' identities and sense of agency. Their ability to play a role in change is shaped by the complex dynamics of structural and cultural features of society. Hall and McGinty (1997) put it this way: "each decision teachers make, each action they take, is simultaneously a consequence of past action and present context and a condition shaping the context for further action" (cited by Lasky, 2005, p. 900).

6.4.2 A brief history of teacher education

When considering the role of teachers in the context of educational transformation, it is necessary to consider not just the individual and his or her perspective, but also the relationship between the individual and the state. A teacher operates within a complex socio-economic, political and institutional context, where various conditions and geographies shaped by different histories constrain and enable parameters of choice, decision-making and

change (Chisholm, 2009, p. xi). Exploring the history of teacher education is necessary since it sheds light on the complex issues teachers continue to grapple with during this period of educational transformation and policy implementation. Schäfer and Wilmot (2012, p. 2) draw on the work of Popkewitz (2001) in noting the importance of considering the "historicity" of the transformational process. This involves understanding the "overarching time/space/place framework" or macro-context of this research. Exploring and developing an understanding of the macro-context was a necessary component of my research, since the research methodology extended beyond that of a traditional interpretative paradigm. A critical realist ontology was useful in illuminating the complexity of this macro-context (see Sections 4.3 and 7.3-4).

6.4.3 Teacher education pre-1994

During apartheid, education governance and policy in South Africa was relatively straightforward. The state maintained tight control of education policy, creating a "bureaucratically centralised, racially exclusive and politically authoritarian system" (Jansen, 2000, p. 42). This pattern of tight control was firmly established in 1948 with the National Party's electoral victory and continued until 1990, when significant moves were made towards the first democratic elections in 1994.

Chisholm (2009, p. 9) reveals how teacher education institutions developed in an unsystematic way out of missions schools, universities and various other local and regional initiatives. From the 1960s, however, institutions were more forcefully planned and segregated according to race and ethnicity.

Several teacher training colleges were set up from the 1960s onwards, as the apartheid state sought to "control and divert African aspirations and advancement from urban areas by locating higher education institutions in the former homelands" (Chisholm, 2009, p. 9). Research carried out by Edupoll in 1996 revealed that there were 78 teacher training facilities located across South Africa's various former homeland areas, catering for some 30 000 students (Kallaway, 2008). High enrolment rates in education colleges during the apartheid years were largely due to the fact that there were limited opportunities within the formal economy, particularly for black citizens, and these colleges offered the possibility of some higher education (Crouch & Lewin, 2002; Sayed, 2004, cited by Chisholm, 2009, p. 9).

During this period, universities continued to offer teacher training. Universities believed their training equipped young teachers with a "strong knowledge base"; the colleges, on the other hand, focused on sustained practice (CHE Review, 2010, p. 8).

At the height of apartheid the qualification status of teachers in black and coloured schools was poor. Up until democracy it remained possible for students within the black sector to qualify for entrance into a teacher training facility with only a 'Standard Eight' leaving certificate.[10] The following statement from a 1979 report by the Taylor Commission of Enquiry into Education, established by the homeland government of the Transkei, is illustrative of the problems in the homeland education system:

> With all the physical facilities available, teacher supply in the Transkei leaves much to be desired in both quality and quantity of the teaching force. For instance, of the 11 931 primary school teachers in service in 1977, only 749 (6.3%) had matriculation or an equivalent qualification; 11 182 (93.7%) had qualifications lower than matric. Of the 1 193 post-primary teachers, only 280 (23.5%) had bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications, 60.4% had a senior certificate and 16.1% had a junior certificate. (Horrell, 1980, p. 257, cited in the CHE Review, 2010, p. 9)

Teacher training pre-1994 is relevant to this study since a fair number of teachers still employed within the DRF schools would have received their initial teacher training during this period. The initial school survey conducted by representatives from the DoE, DRF and Together Schools (TS) in July 2008 revealed that teacher ratings were low and that teacher expertise was an area of concern (further information regarding baseline studies is presented in Section 7.4). In the summary report produced from this audit process teachers identified the following areas of weakness with respect to their own practice:

- inadequate training
- lack of specialist subject knowledge
- low motivation
- limited knowledge and understanding of how to cater for different learning styles, or for those pupils as identified as having learning difficulties

[DF1: DOC#1]

[10] Standard Eight is equivalent to Grade 10 within the current education system in South Africa. Grade 10 is no longer recognised as a school exit point. This is now awarded at the end of the General Education and Training (GET) phase, which is at the conclusion of the Grade 9 year; unless the pupil continues into the Further Education and Training (FET) phase and completes the National Senior Certificate examinations which equate to the former matriculation certificate.

These factors, identified by teachers themselves, are undermining their ability to cope with policy and curriculum changes. Section 8.4 of this thesis looks at the consequences of poor teacher training as an obstacle to change in the greater context of educational transformation as well as in the localised context of the Umzinyathi municipal district.

6.4.4 Teacher education post-1994

In 1994 the system of teacher education was faced with numerous issues stemming from a fragmented training system in which qualifications and standards varied enormously. Jansen (2000, pp. 42-43) describes the period of the mid 1990s as "the race for policy frameworks". During 1994-1999 emphasis was placed on establishing an "overarching legal and policy canopy under which education would be conducted in the new democracy" (Samoff, 1996; Rensburg, 1998; RSA. DoE, 1999, cited by Jansen, 2000, pp. 42-43). The new government introduced fundamental changes to both the governance and curricula of teacher education. Shifts in qualification structures and their requirements took place, largely due to the need to achieve "equity and efficiency in teacher education", but partly also to "prepare teachers to implement the new school curriculum" (CHE Review, 2010, p. 9). The development of teachers is widely viewed as a key factor in transforming the education system in South Africa (Janse van Rensburg & Lotz-Sistika, 2000; DBSA, 2008; OECD, 2008; Wilmot, 2004, 2005, 2009).

One of the first initiatives under taken by the government was the presentation of the *White Paper on Education and Training* in 1995. Amongst other things, this paper highlighted the need for an audit of teacher education, including aspects relating to teacher supply and demand, and utilisation costs. This led to the first comprehensive National Teacher Education Audit (NTEA) in 1995 (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995), which paved the way for future decision making and the direction of teacher education in South Africa. The audit revealed that in 1995 there were 281 institutions of varying forms offering teacher training. In this report Hofmeyr & Hall (cited in the CHE Review, 2001, p. 11) noted that the most pressing problems facing teacher education were:

- the poor quality of training programmes in place;
- the fact that the teacher education system was not cost effective; and
- policies for the supply, utilisation and development of teachers were driven by the wrong incentives.

The recommendations made by this report led to the complete restructuring of the training system. The NTEA findings fed into the work of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) 1996, which made the recommendation that teacher training colleges be integrated into the university system. This decision was concretised by South Africa's Constitution, as the White Paper clarifies:

> In terms of the constitutional provision that tertiary education is an exclusive national competence (Schedule 4 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act No. 108 of 1996), the Minister is advised that all higher education colleges fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. They will be planned, governed and funded as part of the single coordinated higher education system. (RSA, DoE, 1995a)

By 2000, the number of teacher training colleges had reduced significantly from 120 with around 80 000 students, to 50 institutions with an estimated 15 000 students (Jansen, 2003, cited in CHE Review, 2001). Welch and Gultig (2002, p. 10) noted that this rationalisation had reduced the number of teacher education providers and led to a decline in the number of student-teachers in pre-service programmes across the country. The implications of this appeared greatest in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape provinces (Welch and Gultig, 2002, p. 10). Consequently, the closure of many training facilities and/or their amalgamation with universities has meant that the majority of teacher education facilities are concentrated in South Africa's richest provinces. The more remote rural areas are thus the most adversely affected by this restructuring programme.

Wilmot (2009, p. 106) has explored the role of partnerships between teachers in schools and higher education bodies, which in her view can be enriching, particularly if a participatory approach is adopted. The geographical isolation of the schools and community in this case study renders regular participation and engagement with higher educational institutions extremely difficult. It has also made further study for teachers complicated. A small sample of the teachers in this case study are enrolled with the University of South Africa (UNISA), as UNISA provides long-distance learning opportunities. But from interacting with these teachers, I gathered that distance learning does not offer the level of support that they require, nor the kind of engagement that on-site learning and participation makes available. Whilst the closure or amalgamation of teacher training facilities may have created a more streamlined, effective and gainful system, this has been to the overall detriment of teachers in the country's isolated regions, who are so obviously in need of further development and training.

Concerns regarding teacher training and development are not unique to the South African context. The MUSTER project is a well-known study conducted by the University of Sussex which explored the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes within the developing world context (Lewin & Stuart, 2003). The policy concerns identified by the MUSTER project speak to the issues faced in the South African context:

- the lack of coherent national policies towards teacher education, particularly in relation to changing demographic trends;
- the weakness of budgetary systems, including the excessive costs and accommodation related costs;
- the limited co-ordination between pre-service and in-service providers; and
- the unwillingness to consider financing through non-governmental sources.

(cited in Anamuah-Mensah, Banks, Moon, & Wolfenden, 2013, pp. 202-203)

This research has revealed gaps in teacher expertise linked broadly to poor teacher training under the Bantu Education system. Consequently the ability of teachers to engage and participate in a change process remains superficial (see Section 8.5). Parameters for new models of teacher training and development are explored in Section 8.5.

Returning to the South African context, Welch & Gultig (2003, cited in the CHE Review, 2010, p. 15) suggest that shifts in the philosophical underpinning of education created a new conception of the "role and identity" of a teacher. These changes were largely driven by the DoE's *Norms and Standards for Educators* (RSA. DoE, 2000a) which lists seven well-defined roles for teachers, each of which is broken down into three "applied competencies" (practical, foundational and reflexive); and within these, broken down further more into 141 "discrete competencies" (RSA. DoE, 2000a, cited by Jansen, 2002, p. 124). The roles envisaged by the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (RSA, DoE, 2000a, pp. 4-5) include: learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; assessor; community, citizenship and pastoral role; and the overarching role into which all other roles are integrated, learning area and phase specialist. Although it is understood that the reconceptualisation of teacher identity is an important step towards creating a professional identity for teachers and their accountability as professionals, the fact that the teacher is seen to have so many different

identities and roles is in my view contributing to the inability of teachers to deal with change effectively.

6.5 Teacher identities in South African classrooms

Within the South African school context teachers have found themselves increasingly frustrated and confused with respect to their role in the classroom. Le Roux (2011, p. 303) notes how teachers are having to "continuously re-enter into a conversation with the way they perceive themselves as teachers". The field of teacher identity is a complex one, with many debates around the meaning of identity. Danielewicz (2001, p. 10) usefully defines identity as "our understanding of who we are and of who we think other people are"; importantly, it extends also to "other people's understanding of themselves and others (which includes us)" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 10).

One's identity may not always be immediately obvious, since it is not a tangible and visible factor that one sees and interacts with on a daily basis. Reflecting on my identity as a teacher, I don't think I ever stopped to look back at who I was, nor considered my relations with others around me. I simply got on with the challenges and daily demands of the profession. Within the context of this particular study, it is unlikely that identity per se is something that teachers are overtly aware of in their daily responsibilities at school and in the classroom. But in my view, teachers are nevertheless unconsciously grappling with and constantly challenged by the consequences of their identity. The realist ontological perspective of this research enables an understanding of identity as something wider and more systemic than the viewpoint of the individual, though that viewpoint remains crucial. Maxwell (2012, p. vii) effectively summarises my intentions in exploring teacher identity thus:

> Critical realists in the social sciences treat the ideas and meanings held by individuals – their concepts, beliefs, feelings, intentions, and so on – as equally real to physical objects and processes.

In trying to elucidate and understand teacher identity in this research, I hope to be able to give an accurate account of the role that teachers have played in the DRF school-based intervention.

The literature points to identity as being dynamic, in that it shifts over time and over a range of factors, both internal to the individual, and external, such as job and life experiences within

particular contexts (Danielewicz, 2001; Sachs, 2005; Flores & Day, 2006; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). In Section 6.2-3, above, educational reform in South Africa was described. Key policy changes were identified and their implications for teachers outlined. Hargreaves (1998) and Sayed & Jansen (2001) have pointed to the consequent disjunction between policy visions and practical realities within the classroom situation; Jansen (2001, p. 242) notes a tension between "policy images and [the] personal identities of teachers".

Jansen thus pursues a relatively new line of inquiry, suggesting that "policy images of teachers make demands that conflict with their personal identities as practitioners, and that identity conflict might lie at the heart of the implementation dilemma in education" (Jansen, 2001, p. 242). Education policy contains powerful images and descriptions of the idealised teacher (refer to the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, RSA. DoE, 2000a). Such images have been conveyed through major conceptual shifts in the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, without actually addressing the practitioner directly (Jansen, 2001, p. 242). Consequently many South African teachers are thought to be facing an identity crisis.

6.5.1 Teacher identity: the impact of Christian National Education and Fundamental Pedagogics

Section 6.3 of this chapter provides an overview of the history of teacher education in South Africa. Under the apartheid regime teacher education was fragmented and characterised by a lack of standardisation and inequality across the various race groups. The apartheid government adopted an education system known as Christian National Education (CNE), a system based on Calvinist principles that sought to politicise education (Msila, 2007, p. 149). Article 15 of the CNE policy of 1948 as cited by Msila (2007, p. 149) outlines the basis of apartheid education:

> We believe that the calling and task of White South Africa with regard to the native is to Christianise him and help him on culturally, and that this calling and task has already found its nearer focussing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation. We believe besides that any system of teaching and education of natives must be based on the same principle. In accordance with these principles we believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and worldview of the Whites most especially those of the Boer nation as senior White trustee of the native . . . .

Under the CNE framework, the majority of teachers' training was underpinned by Fundamental Pedagogics. Beard and Morrow (1981, cited by Naiker, 2000, p. 7) regard pedagogics in a similar light to the paradigm of functionalism. A functionalist approach is positivist in its outlook, "assuming that the social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artefacts and relationships which can be identified, studied and measured through approaches derived from the natural sciences" (Burrel & Morgan, 1979, p. 26). Parker (1981, p. 26, cited by Naiker, 2000, p. 7) argues that pedagogics "can be seen as a highly efficient method of control for the maintenance of the status quo", based as it is on the "latent assumption of the child as deficient" (Naiker, 2000, p. 8). Large numbers of teachers trained during the apartheid regime were influenced by this approach to teaching that had to do with prediction, control and a belief in the soundness of a non-democratic system (Beard, Enslin & Morrow, 1981; Naiker, 2000, p. 7). It is probable that many teachers still remain under the influence of this old paradigm, including teachers who feature in this case study. Under apartheid education policy the teacher was viewed as a "state functionary with limited autonomy" (Hartshorne, 1999). Essentially the role of the teacher was limited to following instructions and delivering a set of defined tasks. Naiker (2000, p. 8) emphasises the importance of teachers "unpacking the implications of the previous system in order to make a change".

The new policy expects teachers to be very different: they are to be viewed as knowledge producers, they are required to initiate discussion, challenge thinking and empower learners. But do teachers fully understand the implications of the old paradigm and what is required to shift towards the new, more emancipatory discourse? Instead of being the dominant force in the classroom, teachers are required by the new policy to withdraw from centre stage and 'facilitate' the learning process in a learner-centred classroom (Jansen, 2001). Teachers therefore have to grapple with major shifts in their roles, responsibilities and identities in the classroom, and this is proving to be challenging and confusing at times, especially for those teachers who were trained prior to 1990. The following section of this chapter explores how shifts in identity and the resultant confusion have in some cases led to the disempowerment of teachers (Jansen, 2001). Section 8.5 provides an analysis of teachers' understanding and negotiation of change within the context of this study, taking into account teacher identity as one of the factors impacting upon teachers' ability to effectively engage in a change process.

6.5.2 Teacher identities during a period of transformation

It is evident from recent research that policy has failed to consider the powerful legacy of the past and the impact this has had on teachers and on how they view themselves as professionals. Schäfer & Wilmot (2012, p. 5) note how, 18 years down the line, little attention has been paid to the time scale involved in the radical changes advocated by the state. The catastrophic effects of the shifts in teacher identity created by policy are only now being recognised (Jansen & Christie, 1999). The new image of teachers as 'facilitators' has ironically led to their disempowerment at a crucial time when new professional demands and challenges are being required of them (Jansen, 2001, p. 244). The discomfort and vulnerability felt by teachers during this reform process, together with the apparent mismatch between policy images and personal identity, has resulted in a large number of teachers slipping into 'survival mode' and as a result adopting a number of coping mechanisms. One of the first coping mechanisms identified is for teachers to "deny the distance between image and identity", i.e. between what was required and what was experienced in the classroom (Jansen, 2001, p. 244). This coping mechanism accounts for the problem, widely reported by researchers, of the difference between what teachers claim they do in the classroom, and what they are actually observed doing. This coping mechanism was identified in my research, when one of the American volunteer students said the following in the focus group discussion:

> *When district employees come to ask "is this being done? is this being done?", they go to the principal's office, they sit there with a questionnaire and ask "is this happening?", and when I know it is a lie the principal will say "yes this is happening". And so I don't think there is a whole lot of accuracy from a lot of those 'check-ins'.* [FG#1, 2012, p. 3]

Most teachers in South Africa have at some stage experienced a sense of vulnerability during the educational transformation process. This may have been due to feelings of powerlessness and betrayal, or stemmed from a lack of real understanding of policy changes and implementation. In such circumstances teachers may feel they have been forced to act in a certain way, and rather than opening themselves up to further scrutiny a process of withdrawal occurs (Lasky, 2005, p. 901). Withdrawal constitutes a negative state and is another form of coping mechanism. Withdrawal inhibits learning, trust building and collaboration amongst colleagues. Teachers do not feel safe in such contexts and little change is likely to occur at this time (Lasky, 2005, p. 901).

Jansen (2000) notes that early studies conducted on the implementation of C2005 showed that while OBE through the vehicle of C2005 was being adopted enthusiastically by teachers, the change taking place was superficial and procedural, rather than philosophical. Jansen and Christie (1998) conclude that actual teacher behaviour does not reflect the official policy image of teaching practice under the new curriculum. Section 8.5.1 explores the superficial nature of change with respect to the teachers in this study. Matheson and Harley (2001, p. 4) concur with Jansen and Christie, noting: "so policy on teachers' roles and competences . . . seems to be out of sync not only with teachers' professional identities but also with their personal and cultural identities". Furthermore, Soudien (2007, p. 9) notes how policy reform has provided little sense of how teachers could engage strategically with the conditions of their particular context.

Le Roux (2011, p. 309) characterises the tension between the situation of teachers and the DoE's expectations of them as a "binary opposite". Le Roux's (2011) research sheds light on the "us and them" perspective which emphasises the dislocation between in-service teachers and the DBE. The DBE has an obligation to support and assist teachers with changing policy, and yet Le Roux's (2011) findings point to the demoralisation of teachers and derogation of the way in which they view themselves as professionals. The role of the DBE and the local District Office with respect to change in the context of this research is explored in Section 8.4.1.

It is possible that teacher identities have shifted and become confused during this period of complex educational reform in South Africa. Wilmot (2005, p. 25) contends that "the issue of teacher identity and the disjunction between teachers' values and beliefs and those espoused by policy must be viewed against the backdrop of the larger state modernising project and the tensions associated with it".[11]

Mattson and Harley (2002, p. 284) introduce the term "mimicry" to describe how teachers resort to the strategy of copying and repeating what they interpret to be correct in an effort to look competent and make the South African education system appear modern and sophisticated. "Teacher education policy and providers reinforce teacher identities in the image of the first world . . . rather than attending to their pressing and practical needs

[11] Educational transformation from a broader socio-political perspective is explored in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.3). Here the work of Giddens (1990) is referred to: he argues that modernity cannot be imposed and integrated onto an essentially 'traditional way of life'; in his view modernity can only "displace and appropriate tradition".

(Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 284). It has been suggested that the professional attributes outlined in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* policy (RSA. DoE, 2000a) are better suited adoption by those teachers and institutions who are at ease with modernity (Baxen & Soudien, 1999, p. 138).

It is my belief that the school communities within rural KwaZulu-Natal that are the subject of this research have yet to fully engage with and experience modernity. My view is supported by the research findings of Mattson and Harley (2002, p. 285) regarding the rural regions of KwaZulu-Natal. For teachers operating within a rural context, where traditional leadership and authority are still dominant, and traditional beliefs abound, the new education policy's "preferred teacher identity sits uneasily" (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 285; Wilmot, 2005, p. 26).[12] It is surmised that teachers' personal and cultural identities will inevitably impact upon the way in which they view and understand change, and ultimately the extent to which they will participate in a process of change. Teachers' involvement with the change processes in the context of this research is discussed in Section 8.5.

6.6 Teachers and Change

Prawat (1992) suggests how teachers can be both agents of change as well as major obstacles to change. From working with teachers in this case study it became apparent to me that there is a willingness on the part of the teachers themselves to work towards change. However, this case study draws attention to a number of challenges and complications that are responsible for creating enormous frustration and tension around an intervention process. These challenges and complications, which extend beyond the individual world of the teacher, are slowing down the process and in some cases inhibiting change altogether. In her "morphogenic approach" Archer (1995) locates her ideas on the inter-relationship between structure and agency. Structure consists of the rules and resources that may constrain or enable action (Archer, 1995, p. 462). The structural properties presented in this chapter and associated with policy changes and implementation, and with teacher training during the apartheid years, have in my view contributed negatively to the ability of teachers to act as

[12] Further detail with respect to the tensions between modernism and traditional cultural practices are discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.3). Observed impacts with respect to modern vs traditional ways within the context of this study are expanded upon on the analysis of results in Chapter 7, (Section 7.3.2)

effective change agents within the context of this particular case study. This is explored in greater detail in Section 9.7.5.

A study conducted in 1975 by Lortie entitled *School Teacher* and cited in Fullan (2007, pp. 132-34) highlights the challenges faced by teachers over 30 years ago. The findings of this study are much the same as contemporary studies of a similar nature (Goodlad, 1984; Rosenholtz, 1989; Hargreaves, 1994; Scott, Stone & Dinham 2000) and also relate to my observations regarding the present case study. The findings of these studies concerning the numerous challenges teachers face when working towards change reveal common trends:

- Teacher training does not equip teachers for the realities of the classroom.
- The fragmented organisation of schools means that many teachers struggle with issues and problems privately in their classrooms and remain isolated from colleagues.
- Due to this fragmented organisation and classroom-based isolation, teachers do not develop a common technical culture. There are limited opportunities for 'learning on the job'.
- Teachers are often treated as puppets being incapable of making their own decisions or having their own vision. Teachers report that they are largely uninvolved in addressing school-wide problems.
- Support and help for teachers is infrequent, the most effective sources being from other teachers.
- Effectiveness of teaching and learning is gauged informally, normally by pupils themselves. As a result teachers rely on their own informal observations.
- The greatest rewards for teachers relate to pupil success. However for many teachers they find themselves in a state of uncertainty as to whether they have made a difference or not.

The findings of studies centred on the complexities of teacher development and change, such as those set out above, have a direct bearing on the many challenges that teachers in this case study are facing. Spending time within the community as well as in the schools themselves has revealed to me the isolation that schools and teachers find themselves in. This isolation is compounded of geographical isolation and the social isolation of teachers within their own classrooms. One of the teachers in the focus group discussion noted teachers' reluctance to share with each other across the DRF school network [FG#2, 2012]. This study has repeatedly called for an improvement in teacher training and development, to enable teachers

to engage effectively in interpreting curriculum policy so as to create effective teaching and learning environments in their classrooms (refer to Sections 8.5-6). This is where the DRF has been concentrating its efforts, since audits conducted at the various DRF schools (2008, 2010) highlighted incapacity amongst the teachers, particularly with respect to specialist subject knowledge and in-depth knowledge of assessment [DF1: DOC#1, DOC#2A], and exacerbated by the effects of previous teacher training (see Section 6.4.2). In addition, pupil performance on the whole has not been good, and as a result teachers derive little reward and satisfaction from pupil success. It is no wonder, then, that teachers working within the schools in the Umzinyathi district municipality find themselves de-motivated [DF1: DOC#1].

For many teachers change does not come easily, and for some it is associated with anxiety and perhaps even fear. Rudduck (1991, p. 93) observes that:

> [if] we accept that the practitioner's own sense of self is deeply embedded in their teaching, it should not be surprising to us that they find real change difficult to contemplate and accomplish.

Morrow (2007) fears that in the midst of the complex and varied policy changes that have taken place in South Africa, scholars of education, teacher educators, educators and education policy makers have marginalised, confused and perhaps even lost the true meaning of teaching. He points out that "paradoxically in our policies and plans we think very little about teaching". Morrow goes on to note that the language of teachers and teaching has almost completely disappeared from the official discourse of the country. These days we no longer have teachers, but rather 'classroom educators' (Morrow, 2007, p. 1). Yet as Fullan (2007, p. 129) argues, educational change is very dependent on the role of teachers, their actions and thought processes. Morrow believes that erasing 'teaching' and 'teachers' from our vocabulary has meant that we have undermined the importance of teaching and even lost a sense of the concept of teaching itself. Shalem and Slonimsky (2010, p. 13) point out that Morrow's message to South Africans is that unless we "retrieve the concept of teaching, teachers' work will continue to be incoherent and unmanageable and we have no hope of getting learning right".

6.6.1 Complexities faced by teachers in a changing educational landscape

There is much diversity when it comes to the kind of learning taking place in South African classrooms. In some learning environments there is active instruction by teachers who are confident, have strong content knowledge and a range of pedagogical skills and resources; on

the other hand, most South African pupils are exposed to lessons which have little substance and involve copying notes from the chalk board.

Bernstein (1971, cited in Christie, 2008, pp. 184-85) referred to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as the "three message systems of schooling":

- curriculum refers to the selection of knowledge to be taught and to whom it is taught;
- pedagogy refers to the activities of teaching and learning; and
- assessment refers to the evaluation of what has been learnt.

Essentially these three 'messages' describe the major roles played by teachers in their schools each day. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and the National Senior Certificate (NSC), and more recently, the Curriculum Assessment Policy (CAPS) documents address these three areas, elaborating upon each element in accordance with each particular subject and/or Learning Area. According to the *Report of the task team for the review of the implementation of the NCS* (RSA. DoE, 2009), it was intended that the curriculum documents would provide direction and support as far as teaching and learning were concerned as well as functioning as an equaliser of standards throughout schools across the country (RSA. DoE, 2009, p. 11). My research in the rural school context of Umzinyathi revealed otherwise. Teachers did not find curriculum documentation supportive, nor KZN DoE workshops empowering in terms of understanding the concepts, materials and philosophies informing the curriculum. One of the school teachers commented that both teachers and workshop facilitators were grappling with the concept of change. The following quotation speaks to this concern, as well as the ineffectual training which many DRF school teachers have been exposed to from the DoE:

> *In terms of the facilitators… I think even for them it is very hard, because they have been in the offices during the change time, and now all these changes in the education, they are not equipped with the changes pertaining to them. So when they come, they come with their own understanding - which is largely from the old system, which of course cannot be said, it is not suppose to be counseled at all, but they have to bear with us that what we do is what we get in terms of the changes of the curriculum. So I don't even think it is themself. Before the changes are made, I feel like themselves they need to be facilitated first before they come to us so that they will come to us being positive*. [FG#2, 2012, p.1]

For this reason, the DRF arranged additional teacher training workshops with an external education consultant (refer to TD 1, March 2009, see Appendix E). Section 8.5 of this thesis explores the role of teachers and change within the particular context of this research.

The introduction and implementation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) took place during a unique period of social change within South Africa and as a result came with enormous challenges. The curriculum itself together with the process of implementation was problematic in many areas. It was criticised by many, but in particular by Jansen (1997) for its political and epistemological base, its instrumentalist approach, but above all for its complexity, inaccessible language and inadequate implementation support. Harley and Wedekind (2004, p. 199) note that the realities of the South African education system and context were never taken into account in the design and implementation of C2005: "Teachers and probably most educators, simply found themselves in a new curriculum world". Schäfer and Wilmot (2012, p.5) concur, suggesting that little attention was paid to the "contextual realities in which the transformation had to take place". One of the teachers in this case study, in talking about transformation in education, captures the essence of Schäfer and Wilmot's (2012) statement;

> *I always want to comment on the implementation, that some of the methods that they employ, they are not relevant at times to our learners, like you cannot compare urban learners with rural learners. So for educators at times it is difficult to achieve the objectives of the whole thing. I think there are barriers that must be recognised* [FG#2, 2012].

Jansen (2000, p. 43) has argued that the period of educational transformation in South Africa was limited to the "symbolism of policy production rather than the details of policy implementation". Harley and Wedekind (2004, p. 198) agree with Jansen, making specific reference to C2005 and noting that it emerged as a "political and not a pedagogical project". Jansen (2000) and Harley and Wedekind (2004) speak to that fact that teacher agency has clearly been constrained in the new educational transformational context.

C2005 was launched in March 1997, with its formalised implementation in Grade 1 scheduled to take place in 1998 and in the subsequent grades in the years following, thereby covering all sectors of schooling by 2005. The new curriculum had three major design features.

- It was based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

- It had an integrated knowledge system whereby the traditional school subjects were replaced by eight 'learning areas'.
- It provided for a 'learner-centered' pedagogy. (Harley & Wedekind, 2004, p. 197)

C2005 presented both challenges and major changes for the large majority of South African teachers. Findings presented by the Review Committee on C2005 (RSA. DoE, 2000), suggests that at the time teachers were desperate for support, both in understanding and accepting the changes necessary and the manner in which these changes were to be implemented. In my view this situation remains largely unchanged today, as a result of poorly implemented and inadequate training to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand and make the necessary changes in their lesson planning and classroom pedagogy. The ineffectualness of teacher training is underlined by Taylor (2001, 2002).

The failure of the DoE/DBE to adequately train and equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to embrace the changes presented by the new curriculum is explored in greater depth in the context of this study in Section 8.4.1 of this thesis.

The Review Committee on C2005 (RSA. DoE, 2000b) suggests that one of the major flaws of C2005 and its implementation lay in the orientation, training and support of teachers. A "cascade model" for training was adopted, a process in which 'master trainers' would 'cascade' knowledge and understanding to district officials who would then in turn present this information to teachers within their district region. The cascade model has been criticised as an ineffective and inappropriate model for teacher training (Khulisa, 1999, Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), 2000, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 2000) (all cited in the Review Committee report [RSA. DoE, 2000b]). This model has not adequately equipped teachers for the complexity of the implementation process. The following weaknesses of the cascade model of training were identified by the Review Committee (RSA. DoE, 2000b):

- cascading of the training led to the watering down and misinterpretation of important information;
- workshop facilitators and district officials often lacked the necessary in-depth understanding of C2005 themselves;
- insufficient time was granted for training, with workshops often three to five days in length;

- training time initially took place during school hours; and
- support for teachers was minimal and irregular.

Many of the concerns identified by the Review Committee have received further confirmation from the findings of this study (refer to Section 8.4.1 and Table 8.4, which documents the ineffective nature of the KZN DoE and associated district offices).

Following the review of C2005, the National Senior Certificate was reviewed in 2009 (RSA. DoE, 2009). This report presented many similar findings with respect to teacher training and the implementation of the new curriculum. The report makes a strong call for the development of subject knowledge among teachers to enable them effectively to deliver the curriculum to pupils within the FET phase. The type of training currently being delivered was "decontextualised and unsupported" (RSA. DoE, 2009).

From the various research projects and reviews conducted over the years since the introduction of new policy and curriculum statements, it is apparent that the poor quality of the training, preparation and involvement of teachers in the various change processes has led to a complete lack of confidence in the system and as a result, limited implementation of the intended reforms (Chisholm, 1999; Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999; Taylor, 2001, 2002; Fleisch, 2001; Shalem, 2003).

6.6.2 Teachers overcoming the past in order to change

The previous section described the limited participation of teachers in the large-scale educational reform in South Africa since the advent of democracy. Teachers' involvement and participation appear to have been limited to some form of exposure to ineffectual training that failed to instil a deep knowledge and understanding of the changes necessary in the majority of South African teachers. Recent research has shown that across the country, there is little meaningful learning taking place in classrooms today, and as Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) argue, we are simply "not getting learning right".[13]

In order fully to comprehend where teachers have come from and why they are encountering difficulties with regard to reform processes it is necessary to consider the impact of teacher education. As pointed out above, international studies have shown that teacher training does not always equip teachers for the realities of the classroom (Goodlad, 1984; Rosenholtz,

[13] *Getting Learning Right* is a publication edited by Nick Taylor and Penny Vinjevold (1999). The report documents the findings of the President's Education Initiative Research project.

1989; Hargreaves, 1994; Scott et al., 2000). In South Africa, the new government has introduced sweeping changes with respect to teacher education. These included large-scale institutional and governance changes as well as curricular reforms (Council for Higher Education (CHE) Review, 2010, p. 9).

A shift in teacher education was one of the major solutions to combating the legacy of Fundamental Pedagogics, which had dominated teacher education and training during the apartheid regime (see Section 6.4.2).

I contend that inadequate qualifications coupled with Fundamental Pedagogics have had a debilitating effect on teachers' ability to participate in and cope with change. The NEPI report (1992, p. 17) claims that Fundamental Pedagogics prevented teachers from "developing an understanding of the relationship between education and the context in which knowledge and understanding are created and shared". Such an approach to teacher education produced a 'silent generation' of teachers who were closed and narrow in their approach, for critical or innovative teaching strategies were simply not encouraged (Enslin, 1990; Chisholm, 1993). Hofmeyr (1993, p. 3) contended that "CNE and its offspring Fundamental Pedagogics entrenched authoritarian teaching methods". The notion of a 'silent generation' of teachers rings partly true to the findings of this study, which shows that teachers have on the whole been passive recipients of change (see Section 8.5.1).

Many of our most experienced teachers within schools today, as well as leaders and management teams, are likely to have been trained under the regime of CNE and Fundamental Pedagogics. For much of these teachers' careers they would have practised authoritarian teaching methods and created a classroom where creativity, thinking and innovation were not the norm. C2005, the RNCS and, more recently, the CAPS challenge everything associated with Fundamental Pedagogics. A major cognitive and pedagogical shift is required to cater for the new demands of the curriculum and its emphasis on a 'learner centred' approach.

Consequently, if few teachers have been encouraged to be reflexive, to challenge, think and be innovative, change on this scale is going to be very difficult. The authoritarian nature of previous teaching methods and approaches, together with traditions and cultural values unique to the rural area of study, render any school-based intervention or change process complex and difficult.

This chapter has highlighted the importance of prioritising South African teachers in the educational transformation process in our country. Effective teacher training and delivery as well as the involvement of teachers in school transformation processes are important for changes to be sustainable.

6.6.3 Teacher unions and change

When considering teachers and change, I feel it is necessary to acknowledge the role that teacher unions have played in both effecting and affecting change within schools in South Africa. The role of teacher unions in the context of this case study was not specifically interrogated, which could be regarded a limitation of this study. In saying that, the concept of teacher unions was only brought up once during the interview with the district official, who noted:

> *"You will find the teacher unions themselves will conduct workshops, that we as a Department, cannot conduct at times. For example these CAPS documents, they have trained teachers several times on CAPS, whereas we are still organising our things and we have still not come out clearly to workshop teachers on that….*
>
> *The unions are working in collaboration with us as well. When we call them, they always come and make their contribution. And when they conduct their activities they listen to our advice to them*" [IT#7, 2012, p.4].

Further to this interview, there was little mention of teacher unions in the focus group discussions and other interview sessions. Based on this, together with the positive comment of the district official, it seems as though teacher unions are being supportive of the large majority of teachers and schools in rural Umzinyathi. Certainly from the outside, it appears as though the teacher unions are working collaboratively with the KZN DoE and local rural schools.

- **A historical overview of teacher unionism in South Africa**

South Africa has a history of teacher unionism, dating back to before the 1990s. According to Wood (1998, p. 7) a trade union is an agency and medium of power which seeks to address an imbalance of power and dissatisfaction within the workplace. Govender (2004, p. 267) notes how at an organisational level the "face of teacher unions has changed significantly"; today unions are more representative of the post-1990 socio-political landscape.

Furthermore, teacher unions in South Africa have a closer relationship with government than they did prior to the early 1990s (Govender, 2004, p. 267).

Unionism is normally associated with industry and workers, with Heystek and Lethoko (2001, p. 224) suggesting that "professionalism and unionism are not normally seen as partners". Govender (2004, p. 269) points out that when considering teacher-state relations it is imperative to explore and understand teachers' perceptions of "professionalism and unionism".[14] Union activities seem to contradict the very essence of what it means to be a professional since strike actions and 'stay-aways' are counterproductive in developing an ideal culture of teaching and learning (Haystek & Lethoko, 2001, p. 224). In addition, Kercher and Caufman (1995, p. 111) note how unionist action has created problems for the professional development activities of teachers, which is more than likely hampering efforts of teachers to cope and deal effectively with change. There is tension between a union's role in looking after the interests of its members, and at the same time ensuring that its members function as 'professional teachers' (Haystek & Lethoko, 2001, p. 224).

- **Prominent teacher unions in South Africa today**

In South Africa today the most prominent unions include the South African Teachers' Union (SATU), a predominantly white teachers' union dominated by Afrikaans-speaking members; the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), the largest teacher union in the country; and lastly the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA). Both SADTU and NAPTOSA have an equal proportion of black membership (75%), although the unions' philosophies are different. SADTU, the more militant union with a generally negative public profile (Haystek & Lethoko, 2001, p. 228), believes that "if the teachers' working conditions, salaries, facilities in schools and proper function of the DoE are satisfactory, then they can start talking about professionalism" (p. 225). NAPTOSA has a strongly non-discriminatory constitution and operates under the slogan "teach with dignity" (Haystek & Lethoko, 2001, p. 225).

[14] Professionalism versus unionism is a much contested debate across unions and teachers within South Africa. Although there is debate around the meaning of teacher professionalism, Govender (2004, p.286) suggests that it consists of standards for controlling entrance into the profession – clarified and outlined by SACE, and is therefore associated with formalised procedures such as certification, social status and higher salary levels. Unionism is more militant in its approach (i.e. strike action is encouraged) to work related issues such as remuneration (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001; Govender, 2004; see also Ozga & Lawn, 1981 and Hindle & Simpson, 1993).

- **Unions and change**

Govender (2004, p. 268) speaks about the role teacher unions play in policy implementation and educational reform. First, teacher unions are represented in joint policy forums such as the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). Secondly, unions have representatives within the DBE who have been specifically tasked with the role of ensuring effective collaboration in curriculum development and implementation.

Teacher unions have participated in curriculum development and reform since the outset of the creation of a democratic education system. However, much of the contestation and struggle commenced with the launch and subsequent rollout of C2005 in 1997. Kruss (1998) and Jansen (2000) emphasise that teachers played no role in the decision to adopt OBE philosophy and ultimately C2005. The role of unions during this period was to assist in the implementation of the new curriculum, and hence a number of training workshops and professional development strategies were arranged. NAPTOSA in particular claims to have played a significant role in this process (Govender, 2004, p. 284). As mentioned in the introductory section on unions (6.6.3), teacher unions appeared to be supportive of teachers and their development within the rural school context of Umzinyathi. However, the exact nature of this support and its effectiveness was not investigated in the course of this research, so it would appear that further investigation into the role of teacher unions and change in this region is necessary.

Through the various participatory workshops facilitated by unions, it became apparent that teachers across South Africa were experiencing challenges with the imposed curriculum policy changes and the demands of an OBE-based curriculum. These included unrealistic timeframes, a greater need for training and facilitation, and a lack of resources (Govender, 2004, p. 284).

This discussion has indicated the tension that exists within teacher unions between ideas of teacher professionalism and the militancy associated with traditional trade union movements. Whilst there is a degree of negativity associated with teacher unions, as Haystek and Lethoko, (2001) point out, Govender (2001) speaks of the proactive manner in which unions have worked in collaboration with government to bring about effective change in education and a fairer treatment of the teaching workforce.

From this brief survey of the literature pertaining to teacher unions, it is evident that unions need to adopt a more supportive and less militant approach in order to help teachers cope with change. Teacher professionalism and accountability need to be prioritised so as to ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place in classrooms across the country.

6.7 Professional accountability

6.7.1 Teachers' roles and responsibilities

According to Fullan (2007, p. 129), classrooms and schools become effective when quality individuals are recruited into the profession and the work environment is such that teachers are motivated and duly rewarded for their accomplishments. Professionally rewarding workplaces will retain and attract good staff. Unfortunately, (with a few exceptions) conditions of teaching and therefore teacher morale appear to have deteriorated. In the summary of findings presented by the DRF and TS initial school audit (2008), it was revealed that teacher motivation within the DRF schools during this time was at an all-time low [DF1: DOC#1]. Teachers are having to cope with, inter alia, increasing diversity in their classrooms, larger numbers of pupils, more administration and an externally imposed curriculum (Day, 1999, p. 8).

In this regard, one of the school principals interviewed alluded to the increasing demands on the school management:

> *There are so many sections in our district, there is school nutrition, sport, curriculum, special needs, there are so many sections, school governance and the likes and all these sections they work with one person and that is the principal of the school. So it is quite a lot work to be the principal....* [IT#8, 2012, p.1]

All these additional burdens mean that the time available to engage with change and professional development is drastically reduced.

6.7.2 Teacher attitudes

Teachers have a crucial role to play in their relations with pupils, parents and fellow community members. Teachers can make a huge difference to whether children feel safe, respected and nurtured. Teachers are important role models, particularly as so many children are orphaned and come from vulnerable homes (see Section 3.3.2). Teachers ultimately determine whether schooling is meaningful for a child or not.

Research conducted by the NMF (2005) revealed that a large majority of teachers working within rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape Provinces do not live near to the schools in which they are employed. On average, the majority of teachers live up to 36 kilometres away. A similar trend was observed in this case study, with some teachers living as far as 60 kilometres from their school. Section 8.4.2 provides an analysis of the impact of transport on schools in the Umzinyathi community. Bird, Moon and Storey (2013, p. 25) note the importance of understanding teachers' working conditions when considering teacher effectiveness, particularly within the developing world context.

Findings from the NMF research (2005) suggested that the majority of teachers are involved in some form of community activity, not within their school community, but rather in the area in which they reside. This involvement includes funeral and burial societies, youth development and women's groups. Research conducted by Bennell (2004) and Mulkeen, Chapman, Dejaegghere and Leu, (2007) in Rwanda reveals how low teacher salaries have forced teachers into other forms of business. Rwanda has a special bank for teachers providing them with loans for setting up part-time businesses. This is not unique to Rwanda, but has also been observed in this study, with many teachers operating small businesses on the side to supplement their income. It can be assumed that this has an impact on the culture of teaching and learning within rural schools. One of the consequences of teacher involvement beyond the school community is high absentee rates. This can be due to their involvement in teacher union activities and training (which can be up to five days a month), their home community commitments, alternative employment operations, transport-related issues and ill health. A high rate of teacher absenteeism is highly frustrating for pupils and parents and is not conducive to effective learning. At a School Experience Workshop in the Eastern Cape in July 2003, caregivers emphasised their frustrations in this regard:

> Educators come late to school. Sometimes they do not teach. School sometimes breaks early without parents' knowledge. Sometimes the school breaks for educators to do shopping in town. Parents do not have a say in decision making. They [educators] do as they wish. (NMF, 2005, p. 116)

This example suggests that teachers are not being appropriate role models, conveying the wrong message to learners regarding commitment, responsibility, respect and the importance of education. It reflects a negative culture of learning, and is likely to result in high pupil absentee rates and even school drop-outs. Both teacher and pupil absentee rates remain high

within the DRF schools. The Siyanakekele initiative together with the DRF have been working towards improving teacher attendance and accountability, which since the launch of the programme in 2010 appears to be having positive consequences.

Taylor and Vinjevold (1999, p.1 37) discuss the importance of teacher attitudes in establishing a culture of positive learning within schools. They note that there are two contrasting dispositions of teachers within this country: there are teachers who have a "disposition to their job which rests on an internalised professional conscience, on a notion of personal responsibility for pupil welfare and outcomes, whilst others have a disposition of a more civil servant cast". The "civil servant mentality", according to Taylor and Vinjevold (1999), regards the state or DoE as responsible for the child's learning, progress and welfare, and does not assume any personal accountability for these things.

One of the major changes in educational governance in South Africa has been an emphatic shift from an authoritarian state towards greater autonomy and responsibility at lower levels in the system, which includes each and every school. A change in teacher attitudes and school management systems is required in order for people to assume this responsibility, and this is highly dependent on better communication between district offices, schools, teachers and parents. Principals and teachers need to be self-motivated and driven by an internal locus of control to look to their own resources, as well as what they can locate within their surrounding community and environment to improve their overall situation and the learning experience for pupils (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999), p. 138).

The DRF is helping to achieve this, especially through the example set by Mr Henderson, a motivator and role model within the community. Many teachers, school principals and the district office have drawn inspiration from the example set by the DRF. This is explored in Section 8.3.

6.7.3 Teacher accountability

The South African government has recently begun to put various measures in place that deal with the accountability of teachers. For example the *National Curriculum Statement*, (RSA. DoE, 2002) consisted of a number of booklets for each Learning Area covering the required outcomes and assessment standards for each grade. The *Norms and Standards for Educators* (RSA. DoE, 2000a) and the *Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education* (RSA. DoE, 2000) provide guidelines for teachers regarding the

academic competencies they require and how to deliver sound lesson plans and classroom-based learning situations to achieve the desired outcomes as stipulated by the National Curriculum. In addition, the following policies have been introduced as accountability measures for teachers:

- The South African Code of Conduct for Educators (SACE) (RSA. DoE, 2000c)[15]
- Developmental Appraisal System[16]
- Whole School Evaluation (RSA. DoE, 2001b)
- Systematic Evaluation[17]
- Teacher's National Awards (RSA. DoE, 2007b)[18]

Such documents show the intent of the Department of Education to improve teaching and learning and account for those schools that are not performing optimally. Unfortunately this has been particularly challenging in South Africa, in that many teachers and schools object to the idea of being "inspected". The concept of inspection is frequently associated with former school inspection practices under the apartheid regime, which for many conjure up negative perceptions and associations. The result is that there has been general resistance on the part of teachers to accountability measures and internal structural adjustment policies (Chisholm, 1999). But finding a suitable way to ensure responsibility and accountability has to be a priority, as learner and school performance is of national concern, especially when our school system and annual results are compared to those of fellow African countries and elsewhere (refer to Section 2.5.2 and Table 6.2). Elmore (2000, p. 9) notes that it is time for school management teams and teachers to take responsibility for educational performance and low achieving learners. Speculative reasons for poor pupil and school performance such as "the unexpected results of poverty", "weak authority structures in the family", "lack of academic ability" and "too much television" no longer hold true. If such concerns do pertain to a particular school, management teams and teaching staff need to work towards putting systems in place to assist and support those pupils most affected, so as to ensure that learning and academic performance are not hampered.

[15] This code aims to provide for the registration of teachers entering the profession; it promotes the professional development of teachers as well as aims to maintain and protect the professional and ethical standards of teachers.

[16] Aims to identify strengths and weakness of teachers/school managers in both classroom settings and administrative office based functions.

[17] Sees that National testing and assessment takes place within key Grades- 3, 6 and 9. This will include periodic assessment of the school system and learning programmes.

[18] Provides an opportunity for the public to evaluate teachers.

In this case study, the DRF has concentrated much of its efforts on working towards improving the accountability of teachers and principals in the context of holistic school improvement (see Appendix F which contains a copy of the document entitled *Memorandum of Understanding with Schools*: Section 6 of the document highlights the responsibility and accountability of the school community in terms of the DRF's interventions). Teacher accountability is seen as an important element of the DRF's school-based intervention in that it is deemed essential for longer term and sustainable change in schools.

Referring more broadly to the South African context, Taylor and Fleisch have both been involved in research concerning teacher accountability. Taylor's (2001, 2002) work largely concerns systematic reform, whilst Fleisch (2001) has worked on a prescriptive model of school improvement. Both approaches to accountability concern the external regulation of teachers' work through recourse to sanctions and rewards, together with a very systematic approach to teacher support. Shalem (2003, p. 30) provides a critique of their approaches to change and teacher accountability, arguing that their view is predominantly focused on a "bureaucratic or managerial process of control" and neglects the complexity of change and improvement processes for the individual teacher, particularly a poorly-performing teacher. She goes on to question whether Taylor and Fleisch's models of change create an environment conducive to long-term and sustained learning (Shalem, 2003, p. 35). Shalem's argument for teacher accountability and associated change is strongly rooted in educational pedagogy. Teachers require meaningful learning and development opportunities. Cohen and Ball (1999) emphasise the importance of specific and focused learning opportunities for teachers. Jansen (2002, p. 4) supports this view, criticising the short-term, once-off teacher training reform workshops hosted across South Africa that have been largely unsuccessful. The findings from this research point to dissatisfaction with training and development workshops for teachers (see Section 8.4). Shalem (2003) calls for "direct, sustained, classroom-anchored training". Concerns relating to teacher training and the superficial involvement of teachers in change processes unique to this case study are explored in Section 8.5.

In the context of this study, we see attempts to make teachers and schools accountable through a medium of external control, that is, through the work of the district office as well as the controls set in place by the DRF (refer to the Memorandum of Understanding document, Appendix F). While I do not deny the importance of such external forms of accountability, I would argue the need for deeper, internalised accountability and responsibility on the part of

each individual teacher in order for changes to be sustainable. And as Shalem (2003) insists, for this to happen, appropriate and ongoing teacher development positioned within an educational pedagogical framework is necessary. Then if, for whatever reason, external accountability measures were to be removed, teachers themselves through correct and responsible development would be able to rely on an internal sense of accountability to drive the learning and teaching process effectively and thus ensure the continued achievement of their pupils and the school as a whole. The following words from Elmore (2002) are relevant here:

> Internal accountability precedes external accountability. That is, school personnel must share coherent, explicit sets of norms and expectations about what a good school looks like before they can use signals from the outside to improve student learning. Giving test results to an incoherent, atomised, badly run school doesn't automatically make it a better school. The ability of a school to make improvements has to do with beliefs, norms, expectations and practices that people in the organisation share, not with the kind of information they receive about their performance. Low-performing schools aren't coherent enough to respond to external demands for accountability… Low performing schools, and the people who work in them, don't know what to do. If they did, they would be doing it already. You can't improve a school's performance, or the performance of any teacher or student in it, without *increasing the investment in teacher's knowledge, pedagogical skills, and understanding of students*. This work can be influenced by an external accountability system, but it *cannot* be done *by that system*. (Elmore, 2002, pp. 5-6) (emphasis added)

In order for teachers to identify what to work towards changing and how to go about it, they need to be able to "see the reasons for change, understand its core principles and be convinced that it is feasible and will benefit their learners" (Shalem, 2003, p. 43). Teachers need to have meaningful and appropriate learning and development opportunities. A culture of trust needs to develop among teachers, the principal and the experts. This of course takes time, and Shalem argues for time during school hours for teachers to engage in learning activities, observe the "teacher experts" and so develop a collaborative learning culture amongst teachers within a school. To make this possible, assistance and support should be readily available in the form of relief teachers, so that lessons are not disrupted.

This section has explored the importance of teachers' attitudes and professional outlook in responding to the challenges presented by curriculum reform. In order for teachers to work towards improving their attitudes and professional roles, Shalem (2003) has argued for more effective training and role-modelling by 'teacher experts'. It is only when these elements are in place that teacher accountability can be monitored and assessed fairly.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature pertaining specifically to teachers within the context of a changing educational landscape. I agree with Schäfer & Wilmot (2012, p. 2) who contend that "educational transformation in South Africa is a complex and multifaceted social process". I have taken appropriate note of the work of Jansen (2000, 2001), Sayed (2001) and Harley & Wedekind (2004), who argue that policy shifts in the South African educational context have been largely symbolic in nature, strongly aligned to the political sphere of the country rather than that of the classroom.

When positioning teachers within the context of educational transformation one needs to take into consideration the complexity of the broader macro-context that is contributing to the challenges that teachers are grappling with in their schools and classrooms on a daily basis. In this research I have revealed how the new policy in South Africa, based on democratic principles and underpinned largely by Western ideals and values, conflicts with the values and thinking of the rural community on which this case study focuses.

In addition, previous teacher training philosophies and models have created a tension between the teacher identities they have shaped and the expectations of the new policies regarding democratisation, social justice and accountability. I have argued in this chapter that these broader contextual factors have impacted negatively upon teacher agency. In the context of contemporary teacher training, pedagogical and conceptual knowledge is recognised as being crucial for the empowerment of teachers, particularly within the rural school context in which this case study is located.

Chapter 7 shifts away from the literature and focuses on the actual case. In this chapter the analysis of the case commences, with particular attention being paid to the contextual environment and the DRF's intervention.

CHAPTER 7

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DAVID RATTRAY FOUNDATION SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION: CONTEXTS AND EVENTS

While the notion of partnerships holds much promise, we should not run the risk of being diverted from the real task at hand, which is the renewal of education in Africa. This is not an undertaking for the faint-hearted. It requires from all of us a sustained commitment to developing and nurturing education systems as the building blocks of sub-regional and regional systems, without which we cannot hope to participate meaningfully in partnerships. (Naledi Pandor, November 2008)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a critical analysis and interpretation of the DRF's school-based intervention from January 2011 to October 2013. The chapter explores the findings in relation to the first and third goals of this study (see Section 1.4): the documentation of a process of change located within a particular context.

Drawing on Bhaskar's (1979) tiered critical realist framework I developed a heuristic method (see Figure 4.1) for the analysis of the findings in the first two analytical activities within this study, namely:

- the complex transitive and intransitive elements which have both served as catalysts for change and, in certain areas, acted as barriers to the intervention process; and
- the conceptualisation of the DRF's school-based intervention strategy.

Figure 1.2 and Table 1.2 illustrate the multilayered nature of this study.

The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the findings within the domain of the Real and Actual and the inter-relationship between these two layers of the study. This provides the necessary platform for the in-depth analysis of the final layer of the study, the human dimension, which is discussed in Chapter 8.

7.2 Analysis activities

There has been an emphasis in this research on documenting the complex historical and socio-political landscape teachers find themselves a part of. Chapter 2 provided an overview of the realities of rural schooling in South Africa, whilst Chapter 3 focused on the case itself, documenting the rural schooling experience within the Umzinyathi municipality. Chapter 6 considered the position of teachers within the context of the large-scale educational transformation processes currently taking place in South Africa. This chapter critically analyses the specific context of the case and examines the DRF's intervention, so as to better understand the approach to and process of change involved.

As discussed in Section 4.3, Bhaskar's (1979) tiered critical realist philosophy and its "real, actual and empirical" domains were used to develop a unique heuristic tool (see Figure 4.1) for the purposes of data analysis in this study (see Section 4.3.1.1). The following section of this chapter explores the layered data analysis process and attempts to illuminate the findings, which reflect the complexity of the change process within the particular case of the DRF intervention.

7.3 Analytical activity 1: Layer 1 - the domain of the Real

Bhaskar & Lawson (1998, p. 5) show how:

> [t]he intelligibility of experiments presupposes that reality is constructed *not only* by *experiences* and the *causes of actual events*, but also by *structures, powers, mechanisms and tendencies* – by aspects of reality that underpin, generate or facilitate the actual phenomena that we may (or may not) experience, but are typically out of phase with them. (emphasis added)

This quotation addresses the structure of reality, noting that it consists of experiences and events, but is also strongly influenced by a number of "structures, powers, mechanisms and tendencies", whether we are aware of them or not. In this study, I have identified both transitive and intransitive factors within the domain of the Real that are shaping and influencing change processes in the Umzinyathi community.

7.3.1 Transitive factors operating within the domain of the Real

Transitive factors are representative of individuals' perceptions and interpretations of reality (Bhaskar, 1979, p. 78, and Danermark, Ekshaw, Jakobson & Karlsson, 2002, p. 23). With reference to the heuristic tool developed (Figure 4.1), the first layer I have named the 'broad context' which emerged as a theme during Phase I of my data collection. Within the domain of the Real, there are a number of geographic and socio-economic factors specific to the Umzinyathi community that directly affect the lives of the people and indirectly affect the schools. Teachers, principals and community members spoke of these factors during each of the interviews and focus group discussions. Many of the factors mentioned are visible to the passer-by as one surveys the homesteads across the landscape. I have classified these factors as being within the 'Real domain' for the following reasons:

- they have an **indirect** bearing on schools as organisations
- they are operating **beyond** the realm of the school per se
- they are **broad** and **complex** factors.

Such factors are classified as transitive in that they are visible and community members are very aware of them as aspects of the reality of their situation. And while essentially external to the school environment, they nevertheless have an impact upon the school as an organisation and how the schools interface with or relate to the intervention strategy.

- **Location of research site**

The 17 schools that benefit from the DRF intervention are located within the broader

municipal area of Umzinyathi (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). These schools are located within the Nquthu and Endumeni local municipal areas. The areas are significant in terms of South Africa's heritage in that both local municipalities contain important battlefield sites from the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879. Of particular significance is the site of Isandlwana (Figure 7.1) located within the Nquthu local municipality, and across the Umzinyathi River, Rorke's Drift (Figure 7.2) within the Endumeni municipality

Figure 7.1: View of Isandlwana, the site of the famous Isandlwana battle fought during the opening stages of the Anglo-Zulu War, where the Zulu were victorious, January 22, 1879.

Figure 7.2: View of the hospital at the former mission station at Rorke's Drift, where the famous battle of Rorke's Drift was fought and narrowly won by the British, January 22-23, 1879.

These sites are of global significance and each year attract hundreds of local and international tourists. Through the tourism connection, the DRF has gained international exposure, with many tourists being interested not only in the battlefields history but also in the DRF intervention and the various schools benefitting from their work. The geographical location

of the schools and community within an area of historical significance has thus assisted in **enabling** and **stimulating change** within this area.

- **Socio-economic factors**

Table 7.1 presents a summary of the key socio-economic factors identified in the interviews and focus group discussions. I have classified these factors as operating within the domain of the Real since they are **external** to the school organisation. Yet despite being peripheral to the daily functioning of the school organisation, they nevertheless have an **impact** on this functioning; and ultimately, on the ability of the school to engage effectively with intervention and change.

Table 7.1 has been structured in the following manner. Column A represents the key socio-economic factors which emerged during *Analysis Activity 1* and *2* of the research process. This data was gathered from various documents as well as from the interviews and focus group discussions. Column B represents the consequences of the emergent socio-economic factors on the schools in the area, and more specifically on the ability of a child to learn effectively.

Table 7.1: Emergent socio-economic factors and their direct impact upon schooling and the ability of a child to learn effectively.

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
	Direct consequence
Emergent socio-economic factors	**Impact on schooling and effective learning**
THE FAMILY UNIT • School and home are seen as completely separate entities. • A large number of children are orphans and live with their grandparents. • There are many child-headed families *(especially mentioned in high-schools*) • Most parents/grandparents are illiterate. • Many children are faced with these realities on a daily basis: ▪ raising at least 2 other siblings, ▪ talking to Gogo after a long day at school, ▪ collecting firewood, ▪ hauling water, ▪ driving in the cattle and sheep ▪ huge amounts of manual labour and household chores needs to be done on a daily basis.	➢ Huge issues with communication and inability of the parents/grandparents to assist children with homework or engage meaningfully about the school day. ➢ Little to no homework is done, no consolidation of key concepts/skills beyond school. ➢ There is simply not time for homework. ➢ Little to no reading is done at home, hence literacy and comprehension remains at a low level. ➢ Little time for involvement in extra-curricular activities which are vital to the development of the whole child.
MODERN AMENITIES • In many homes there is no electricity.	➢ Extra study/homework at night time is almost impossible. ➢ Modern technology associated with effective communication such as TVs and computers is not available. ➢ Communities are isolated from the modern world.
INCOME GENERATION • Poverty and unemployment are rife. • Many families are dependent on social grants as their only means of income.	➢ Survival becomes the priority and education is not seen as essential. ➢ Little time and money are invested in school, school improvement and effective learning. ➢ Little/ no money is available for uniforms, books and stationery. ➢ Children are malnourished and this impacts upon concentration and cognitive development.

Members of the community themselves identified their **physical and social environment** as a **barrier** to change. Their apparent isolation (despite this being an area of historical significance), their poverty and lack of access to basic amenities are negatively impacting on community members and therefore the ability of schools to be able to engage with a process of change. People are seen to be **reliant on others to provide change on their behalf**. Due to the circumstances these people find themselves in, they appear to be **unable to see themselves as agents of change** or drivers of change.

7.3.2 Intransitive elements operating within the domain of the Real

Bhaskar and Lawson (1998, p. x) speak of the social world as being pre-structured. They explain that agents operating in this world are acting in an environment of "structured constraints and possibilities they did not produce". Humans may be largely **unaware of** these "intransitive" constraints or possibilities as they go about their daily lives, interactions and decision-making processes, but are affected by them nonetheless (Bhaskar & Lawson, 1998, p. 17).

In the context of my research, I have identified three significant intransitive factors, which are considerable and complex and have played a part in shaping the way in which community members have coped with the interventions and associated changes. The three intransitive factors are:

- culture, which includes tribal governance and traditional practices
- South Africa's apartheid history
- trends in contemporary educational transformation.

7.3.2.1 Culture, tribal governance and traditional practices

In Section 5.2.3-5 I review the literature pertaining to organisational culture. Culture extends beyond the functioning and running of a school, into our daily lives; it plays a role in determining who we are as individuals, as well as how we behave within a particular group or society. In my analysis of the literature on culture, I draw on the work of Schein (2010) and Hofstede (1991), who focus our attention on the many **invisible** factors pertaining to culture. I have therefore classified culture as an intransitive element within the domain of the Real that has a significant and ongoing impact on the change processes at work within this environment.

Hofstede (1991) is recognised for his research pertaining to the various dimensions of culture. In Section 5.2.5 I detail Hofstede's four-dimensional model for understanding cultural differences. Using this model, I have identified the following within the Umzinyathi community:

- **Large power-distance relationships** - relating to the relationship between older and younger generations, and between people of greater and lesser authority.

- **A collective society** - which demonstrates strong cohesive ties between the family units and community members. Protection and loyalty are highly valued.
- **A dominant feminine culture** - feminine cultures are associated with a caring environment, where relationships are important and people are modest in character.
- **Weak uncertainty avoidance** – people give the impression of being non-confrontational, quiet, easy going and are sometimes misunderstood as being lethargic.

These observations and interpretations are accounted for and justified in Table 7.2 on the following page.

The cultural tendencies that appear prevalent within the rural community of Umzinyathi create a number of challenges for teachers and community members with respect to imposed interventions. Many of the school reform interventions offered by the DBE and the DRF are rooted in modern discourses which cannot simply be integrated into traditional settings (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 289). In the quest for social and education progress in this rural community, cultural identity and difference need to be considered. And indeed it appears that through effective partnerships and a unique leadership structure, traditional practices and beliefs have been integrated with modern ideas and development strategies with some success. This is analysed and discussed in Section 8.2.

I have classified community leadership, customs, governance and tradition as part of the cultural sphere because these elements to a large extent dictate how the community lives, behaves and socialises.

Table 7.2: Applying Hofstede's (1991) four-dimensional model in an effort to better understand the culture operating within the Umzinyathi community and more specifically within the school context.

	My observations and interpretations	
Dimension of culture	**Community in general**	**School environment**
Power-Distance Relationships	• I have interpreted the power distance relationship within this rural community as **large**. • Respect for elders and parents is seen as a basic virtue. • There is a pattern of dependence on elders for advice and decision making.	• Principals and HODs (SMTs) have very high status and respect within the school. "There are important cultural elements with respect to decision making in a school. The one with the **highest respect or the elder in the room will speak for the group.** I think we come from an individualised culture where we want individuals to be stronger, but it is very different here and this is how people operate in this community" [FG# 1, p.10]. "At my school the **principal** normally **comes up with the idea**. She will forward it onto the HOD who will discuss it with the teachers. The **teachers normally always agree**. I think the principal normally does most of the deciding in my school, but sort of palms it off to look as though she is not the one making all the decisions" [FG#1, p.10]. "I have made sure that with our SMT we are **strong**. **SMT you must make sure changes do take place** as we have said there is no turning back. I have told them there is no looking this way and that way" [IT#8, p.6]. • Lessons are generally teacher-centred. Strict order prevails in the classroom. • It is common in lessons for learners to repeat facts/material in unison with the teacher. • Classrooms are not viewed as free-thinking, creative and innovative spaces.
Individualism and Collectivism	• I view the Umzinyathi community as a **collective society.** • The community is arranged **collectively** such that the entire **extended family** unit will live within the **same homestead.** • Families are a **cohesive group** who work hard to support each other and the homestead as a whole.	I have interpreted the people within this community as operating within a collective culture. There are strong ties between large power distance relationships and collective societies particularly within a school organisation. Within a collective school culture, I have observed the following: • The teacher is the expert and should not be questioned. • **Humiliation** is an effective way of dealing with offenders; sadly I personally witnessed corporal punishment still taking place.
Masculinity and Femininity	I have interpreted this community's culture as essentially **feminine**. • In this instance the community is concerned for one another and will support those in need, which is unlike the Western culture which is quite selfish, centring on individual success and wealth accumulation.	• Within a typical feminine culture, learners are not encouraged to actively question their teachers and to think critically.
Uncertainty avoidance	I have interpreted this community as having **weak** uncertainty avoidance. Cultural traits associated with weak uncertainty avoidance which I observed are: • Things will happen in time • Late arrival at meetings • Very relaxed almost lethargic approach to problem solving and change	

Mamdani (1996) as cited by Westaway (2012, p. 116) argues that 1994 brought institutionalised de-radicalisation to South Africa, but not democratisation. As Westaway (2012, p. 116) observes, "the areas of our country that were reserved for African groups in terms of the 1913 Land Act, are still, after 1994, governed distinctly and differently from the rest of South Africa". Urban centres such as Dundee, Newcastle, Ladysmith and Pietermaritzburg, all within relative proximity to the rural community in which I based my research, are governed by rights, democracy and development. But the people living in traditional rural homesteads in the former KwaZulu homeland are governed by custom, tradition and welfare. Leadership and governance within the area of my research is presented and analysed in Section 8.2.2.

I was fortunate enough to be able to meet the tribal leader, and conduct a personal interview with him. To date he has been in this position of leadership for 15 years as his father's successor. He describes his role within the community as follows;

> *What normally happens is that the people of the clan are taking me as their father figure. So I cannot say the specific work that I am doing. I am doing almost everything to help them out, particularly if there are challenges in the community.* [IT# 5, 2011, p. 1]

Specific detail relating to leadership within the community will be dealt with in Section 8.2.3, as I have classified this emergent information as being a part of the Human Dimensions layer (Layer 3) of my heuristic framework.

The 2004 Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework (TLGFA) stipulates that traditional councils must be established in former Bantustan areas to operate and work alongside elected municipalities. Many of these traditional councils do not practise democracy, in that members are appointed by traditional authorities (Westaway, 2012, p. 122). Accordingly, Beall, Mkhize and Vawda (2005, p. 763) argue that the TGLFA "significantly entrenches the authority of traditional leaders, and means that . . . the legislation introduced in the 21st century will give perpetual life to a system of indirect rule dating back to the colonial era".

Further to this, the Traditional Courts Bill – currently going through a phase of public consultation – aims to remove democratic thinking and modern administrative systems from these rural communities altogether:

> The Traditional Courts Bill is a new proposed law that aims to replace the Black Administration Act of 1927. It is supposed to bring traditional courts more in line with the constitution and its values. The new Bill says that all people living in former homeland areas, (as defined by the apartheid government), will be subject to traditional law, whether they like it or not. The Bill places the powers of the traditional courts in the hands of a single traditional leader - which in almost all cases would be a man. This single person has the power to interpret the custom in that community and make decisions over disputes, including criminal matters. The Bill gives the traditional leader extensive powers over people in their jurisdiction accused of a crime or civil wrong. In many cases, people do not have the option to appeal or have the decision reviewed. (Stop the Traditional Courts Bill, 2012, p. 2)

The strength of traditional leadership appears to have increased over recent years, particularly as several local municipalities are in disarray due to the poor management of funds, a shortage of skilled personnel and other problems (Westaway, 2012, p. 123). As Oomen, cited by Claasens (2008, p. 274) puts it, South Africa operates as a "patchwork democracy". This is in direct conflict with the country's global and national transformation agenda in which education plays an important role (this will be elaborated upon in the following section of this chapter).

Traditional leadership and governance influences the way in which people act and participate within their community. It influences the way in which decisions are made and by whom. African traditional leadership practices are authoritarian in nature and, as suggested in the Stop the Traditional Courts Bill (2012) document, are not always consonant with the values of a democracy.

With reference to Hofstede (1991), I identified a marked prevalence of large power-distance relationships in my area of study, which presumably reflects the traditional leadership practices that the people have been accustomed to for generations. I argue that cultures which exemplify large power-distance relationships and collective cultures operating in an area ruled by traditional governance are going to find it difficult to respond appropriately to Western interventions and are unlikely to be active participants in the process of change. In this particular study, **culture does present a barrier to change.** However, I argue in Section

8.2.3 that traditional leadership within this community is in fact working towards **embracing change**, and this has assisted in the successful implementation of the DRF's intervention.

7.3.2.2 South Africa's apartheid history

The consequences of South Africa's segregated and apartheid history in relation to education are outlined in Sections 2.4 and 6.4-6.

Despite South Africa being classified as a middle income country it is classified as one of the most unequal societies in the world, with the Gini coefficient[19] worsening from 0.64 in 1994 to 0.69 in 2012 (Westaway, 2012, p. 118).

The legacy of apartheid is of significance to my research as my site of study is located within the former homeland of KwaZulu (see Section 2.3). South Africa's apartheid history has shaped the terrain of education and has presented numerous complexities associated with change, which I have classified as being part of Bhaskar's domain of the 'Real'. Apartheid produced a number of socio-political consequences over which the people living within the area of my research had no control. Apartheid has had both social and psychological consequences for each person and our nation as a whole, and hence it falls into the 'broader context' layer of my heuristic framework.

Under apartheid, the institutional geography of schools was determined by racial classification. A fragmented and complex education system existed with 18 separate Education Departments catering for different provinces, homelands and racial groups. In the majority of cases, black schools were not equipped for success (Christie, 2008, p. 135). The School Register of Needs study Bot (1997) conducted in 1996 revealed that the majority of schools serving black students did not fulfil the basics in terms of school infrastructure and learning resources. The report revealed the following:

- 24% had no access to running water on the school premises
- 57% reported no electricity
- 69% reported no learning materials
- 83% reported no libraries.

[19] The Gini Coefficient is a measure of inequality in the distribution of family income from 0-1, with 1 being the most unequal.

The greatest deprivation was reported in rural schools within former homeland regions. The schools in my research sample up until recently reported infrastructural issues and resource-related concerns similar to those revealed in the School Register of Needs study. It was at this point that the DRF was established to formulate an intervention aimed at improving the basic infrastructure of schools so as to enable the quality of teaching and learning to improve. The conceptualisation of the DRF and the intervention strategy are described in Chapter 3.

In addition to infrastructural inequalities, apartheid ideology infiltrated into educational training and teaching in ways that have affected several generations of teachers and pupils. (See Section 2.4.1, and 6.4 which detail the role of teachers within the transformational period in our country).

Evidence of inequalities inherited from the previous regime is visible in my area of research. Despite continued efforts by the DBE and the DRF, not all schools have the necessary infrastructure and resources. Teacher confidence and competence is lacking, which is at least in part the result of apartheid training policies and teacher education programmes.

Through my observations of various schools and the rural environment in which these schools are located, as well as through my interaction with teachers, I came to the conclusion that our country's **apartheid history presents a barrier to change**. This is with respect to infrastructure and learning materials as well as the human resources involved in the intervention process.

7.3.2.3 Trends in contemporary educational transformation

In my analysis and interpretation of the domain of the Real, I have explored the vast and complex landscape referred to as the 'broad context' in the heuristic framework (Figure 4.1). I have discussed and analysed the impact of the immediate geographical location, the various socio-economic factors at work, and the ways that culture influences how people think, act and behave within a particular social context. I have also taken cognisance of the role of apartheid in engineering many of the inequalities observed today. But beyond the geographical location, local socio-economic factors, cultural systems and our history lies a national and global sphere which has also influenced the school-based intervention in my area of study.

A key theme that weaves through the domain of the Real is the tension between the drive towards modern democratic ideals and neo-liberal values within the national and global landscape, and traditional ways of being in the local area of study.

In response to South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994, major school transformational processes were driven by the National DoE at the time. The new curriculum was arguably "imported" (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 285), characterised as it was by an information-based, hi-tech, and high-skills focus, with a premium placed on teacher and learner reflexivity. To an extent, it assumed a degree of stability and modernisation that does not exist in the majority of South African schools (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 285). The C2005 review conducted in 2000, now 13 years ago, revealed that education policy was out of touch with school and classroom realities and needed to be revised urgently (p. 284). Despite a subsequent curriculum review, the introduction of the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002) and the *Curriculum and Policy Assessment Statement* (CAPS) (2012), observations in the area of my research indicate that very little has changed in this regard: teachers working within rural schools continue to struggle with the demands of a curriculum steeped in democratic ideals and with a strong urban bias.

The key paradox here is that education policy is not aligned with the personal and professional identities and beliefs of these teachers (see Section 6.5). The fundamental principles underpinning education policy in South Africa advocate human rights and gender equality, and encourage both teachers and learners to be critical thinkers and lifelong learners. Such principles stand in stark contrast to the values held by traditional communities (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p. 287). The new policies present the following tensions within rural communities:

- governance: tension between government policy and traditional leadership
- classroom: tension between learners and teachers, as learners are now encouraged to be more critical and to question openly
- home: tension between children and their parents and grandparents, as they question authority and the status quo. This creates further tension in the community.

Mattson and Harley (2002, p. 289) argue that "modernist, neo-liberal discourses cannot simply be integrated or indigenised into traditional settings through policy edict, specification of teachers roles and good intentions of social reconstructionism". Tradition is complex, in

that it is a "self-validating system which does not open its practices to doubt, but defends them unreflexively through appeals to ritual and authority, in the interests of preservation rather than progress" (Mattson and Harley, 2002, p. 289).

The findings of my study reveal that teachers are ambivalent regarding the changes imposed by the new curriculum and, to a certain extent, by DRF intervention. This will be discussed in greater depth in Section 8.5. Teachers view the collapse of the apartheid system as a good thing, and hold the tools of modernity such as computer literacy and Internet usage in high regard; however, they are experiencing enormous tension between aspects of modernity and traditional value systems. Such tension creates conflict in the community and is seen to be a barrier to change, so long as change is associated with 'modern, Western and neo-liberal' ideals.

The following paraphrased extracts from my interviews and focus group discussions revealed the tension between modernity and traditional values:

> *The youth are being referred to as the 'cell-phone' generation. They are using phones, TVs and some the internet, where electricity is available. A cultural and generational gap is developing between the youth and the elders. The youth have a foot in both worlds. The elders do not understand this; there is limited support and encouragement of their children for these reasons*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 4]

> *There are huge differences between a typical 'urban parent' and a 'rural parent'. One of the biggest issues in rural communities is that of parent illiteracy and lack of empowerment of parents. Frequently parents are called in for meetings where their input or responses are required. They simply say 'yes' to everything and agree, with little knowledge or understanding of the decision/implication on their child or them as a family*. [FG#2, 2012, p. 2]

> *There are important cultural elements with respect to decision making in a school. The one with the highest respect or the elder in the room will speak for the group. I think we come from an individualised culture where we want individuals to be stronger, but it is very different here (rural community) and this is how people operate in this community*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 10]

The extracts highlight the tensions that many community members are experiencing as a result of change. From my discussions with teachers and community members, it seems that the children are at the heart of this tension or paradox, with many of them feeling the lure of a modern lifestyle and its associated culture, while at the same time trying to respect their elders and parents and adhere to traditional ways. A gap is developing in family relationships and support structures, since children's parents are less able to relate to them. Parents take

little part in their children's school careers and school work because of literacy issues, and because they have little time available due to the burden of chores that are associated with a rural lifestyle.

7.3.3 Concluding comments Layer 1

The DRF school-based intervention is a large school improvement project, involving intensive efforts driven predominantly through and by outside forces and agents. (The driving force behind the change processes will be discussed in Section 8.2.3.) The critical realist analysis has revealed an intricate and fragile terrain on which an intervention is being imposed. This terrain comprises a host of socio-political factors, historical and geographical influences, and cultural dimensions, that all appear to be barriers to the implementation of largely modern and Western reform measures. I am not suggesting that intervention and change are not possible, but the elements identified above within the domain of the Real will add to the **difficulty** of the intervention as well as the **temporal aspect and sustainability** of the process.

7.4 Analytical activity 1: Layer 2 - the domain of the Actual

The following discussion illuminates the second layer of my heuristic framework (Figure 4.1), consisting of the 'actions and interventions' which emerged during Phase I of the research process. It is at this point that my critical lens adopts a sharper focus in order to explore the second domain of Bhaskar's (1979) view of reality, the Actual. The domain of the Actual involves all **events**, whether experienced or not (Houston, 2010). In this layer I have attempted to identify and understand the DRF's school-based intervention strategy from its inception to its current position where there are a number of goals the organisation is still working towards achieving.

7.4.1 Baseline assessments used to determine the scope of the DRF intervention

Shortly after the conceptualisation and formalisation of the DRF in 2007 (see Section 3.2), the Together Schools (TS) and Delta Environmental Centre (DEC) were approached by the DRF to assist with a school evaluation and baseline study, after which recommendations would be made for future interventions. The TS and DEC mandate was to:

> [e]valuate the school with a view to understanding what the causal issues are and make recommendations for improvement, specifically in respect of the school becoming functional as a place for learning. (DRF Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008)

Together Schools has developed a scalable model which has enabled corporate organisations and NGOs such as the DRF to engage with schools to improve their "regulatory and infrastructural functionality", to the point where they can become places of effective learning (Together Schools concept document, see DF1: DOC1A). According to research conducted by the Joint Education Trust (JET), schools can be categorised into three groups:

- Top performing schools (5% of South Africa's total schools)
- Schools with threshold capacity (15% of total)
- Dysfunctional schools (80% of total)

Taylor, as cited by Together Schools (2008), points out that top performing and threshold schools provide *regulatory functionality*, which relates to an orderly school environment, where a sense of discipline and routine is maintained and there are relationships of trust and honesty amongst all school stakeholders. Such schools also have well-maintained infrastructure, which includes administration facilities, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. Included within the category of *infrastructural functionality* are functioning water and electricity supplies, proper sanitation facilities and appropriate nutritional requirements for all school pupils. Teaching and learning within top performing and threshold schools are usually of a higher standard, with teachers and pupils demonstrating proficiency in the language of learning and instruction. Pupils are able to develop reading, writing and arithmetical skills through appropriate instruction and support. Teachers are qualified, experienced and exhibit proficiency in a range of academic disciplines. Pupils' development is further enhanced through a range of extramural opportunities on offer at the school in the afternoons. Teaching, learning and extension activities relate to the category of *instructional functionality*. In order for schools to perform effectively, the requirements for all three aspects of functionality need to be met.

Together Schools has adapted the aspects of school functionality into an evaluation score card based on a variety of categories and an associated point system. From there, short-term and medium-term priorities can be identified for schools to focus on. The following major categories are used in the whole school evaluation:

- Physical infrastructure
- Learning
- Operational
- Environmental.

An initial baseline study using the TS assessment model was conducted on 22 and 23 July 2008 by representatives of the DRF, TS and DEC, accompanied by DoE officials (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 1). The assessment was conducted collaboratively and in an interactive manner that involved the following people at school level:

- the principal and all educators,
- the SGB,
- the Learner Representative Council (LRC); and
- local community members.

(DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 3)

Initially six schools were covered by the assessment, in the Nquthu and Endumeni local municipal areas. An overall score card and detailed report was prepared for each school, highlighting key factors requiring urgent attention (some of which had never been identified as areas of intervention by the principals in previous interactions with the DRF). For examples of school scorecards, see DF 1, DOC 1. In order to ensure that the results of the survey were correctly communicated to principals and teaching staff as well as thoroughly understood, a series of workshops was organised and facilitated by the DEC. It was hoped that these workshops would ensure "buy-in and sustained commitment" (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 1) via a partnership between each school and the DRF, if the school wished to received support and financial assistance from the DRF. Two participatory workshops were held on 1 November and 26 November 2008.

The key resources utilised by the DEC facilitators included:

- The concept of a Sustainable School – see Figure 7.3
- The concept of a School hand print – see Figure 7.4
- Audit analysis results and scores (TS assessment model)

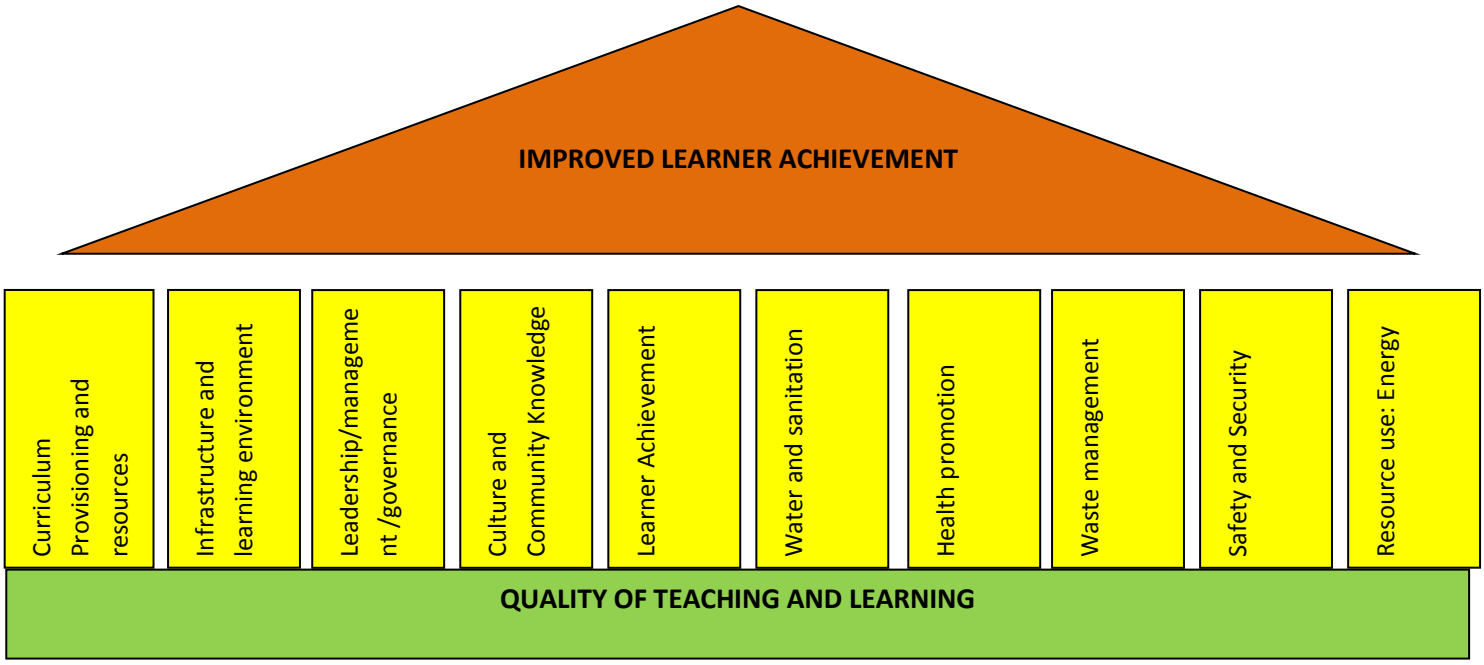


Figure 7.3: Components of a Sustainable School (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 11)

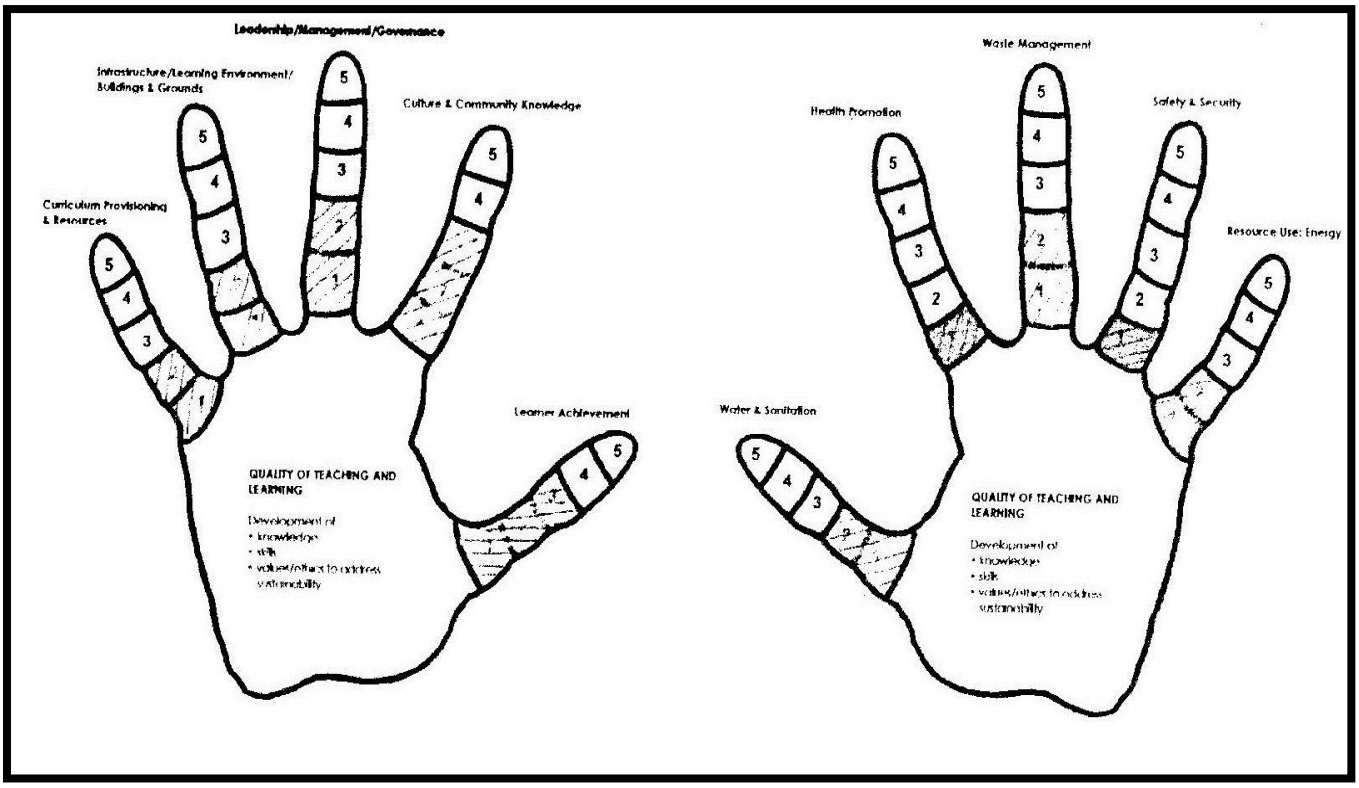


Figure 7.4: An example of a school hand-print (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 12)

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 were specially created and developed for the purposes of teacher workshops based on current thinking related to "The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: 2005-2014" (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 1). It was the DEC's belief that the six schools being evaluated should aim to become 'sustainable schools'

despite their disadvantaged circumstances. Each school prepared their own hand-print, which provided an illustration at a glance of the "school's main issues, needs and concerns whilst also identifying areas of success" (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 2). Feedback from the DEC facilitators indicated that the teachers and principals were "not used to doing strategic reviews and their literacy levels were very low" [IT#3, 2011, p. 4]. However, it was reported that during the workshops and feedback sessions there was a sense of "electric engagement and desire within the community" (DRF. Umzinyathi Project Schools Report, 2008, p. 2). These workshops provided a space for teachers and principals to share and discuss their concerns, and move towards devising appropriate intervention strategies with the necessary support of the DRF.

The extensive Whole School Evaluation assessments conducted by the TS and DEC revealed a number of key intervention areas in line with a move towards sustainable schooling. The key focus for intervention is to ensure schools are engaged in a participatory manner. To date the DRF has forged further partnerships in an attempt to achieve the goals originally set out (partnerships are discussed in greater detail in Section 8.2.1).

I felt it appropriate to include the Sustainable School model (Figure 7.3) and the School-handprint diagram (Figure 7.4) in my discussion of results, since these two diagrams are associated with Bhaskar's (1979) theory of critical realism. The Sustainable School model is strongly aligned to the DRF's Education Development Plan (EDP) (see Appendix C), which is elaborated upon below. According to the heuristic framework, this model is classified as being a part of Layer 2, namely the 'actions and interventions layer' aligned with Bhaskar's (1979) domain of the Actual. This model has strongly influenced the DRF's school-based intervention strategy. The model details the set of actions which schools need to work towards improving in order for quality teaching and learning to take place and pupils' achievement levels to improve.

The handprint diagram (Figure 7.4) sought to involve teachers in the change process. The handprint effectively provided for a "hands-on-approach" or participatory method of change. Here teachers themselves critically analysed their schools from various angles and rated them according to the ten categories illustrated on each of the fingers, namely:

- curriculum provisioning and resources
- infrastructure, the learning environment, buildings and grounds

- leadership, management and governance
- culture, community and knowledge
- learner achievement
- water and sanitation
- health promotion
- waste management
- safety and security; and lastly
- resource use.

With reference to the heuristic framework, teachers were identifying specific **actions and interventions** necessary (which were a part of Layer 2 within Bhaskar's (1979) domain of the Actual). Teachers represent the human dimension within the heuristic frame, or Layer 3, Bhaskar's (1979) Empirical domain. The handprint diagram is pertinent to this study since it illustrates the relationship between Layer 2 and Layer 3 in the study. The human dimension of this study, with particular reference to teachers and their participation in the school-based intervention, is discussed in Chapter 8.

In 2009 the DRF furthered its commitment to interventions in education through a partnership with MiEt Africa, working in collaboration with the DoE (partnership aspects are discussed in Section 8.2.1).

At the outset of the partnership with MiEt Africa and the DoE, further research was conducted into the current situation in local Umzinyathi schools. This took place from 3-7 August 2009, almost a year after the initial research work conducted by TS and the DEC. This research was more comprehensive in that it covered 14 schools. Three MiEt researchers carried out the investigation at each of the 14 schools, after meeting with each of the principals and/or heads of department in the case of an absent principal. A summary of the school baseline study reports is available within the case record, DF1: DOC 2A.

7.4.2 Goals of the DRF intervention: the Education Development Plan

Building on the Whole School Evaluation conducted by TS and the DEC, the DRF developed a comprehensive Education Development Plan (EDP). A copy of the EDP has been inserted into Appendix C of this study and is also contained in the electronic data file [DF1:DVD:EDP]. This is a working document and is still in the process of being refined and formulated by the DRF. The DRF's EDP speaks to the various goals which the organisation

is trying to work towards. Strong ties are visible between the DRF's EDP and the components of a Sustainable School as outlined by the Delta Education Centre (DEC) [DF1: DOC 1B] and illustrated in Figures 7.3 and 7.4. It is a holistic plan and considers the all-round needs of pupils and teachers in order to maximise effective teaching and learning. Key target areas included in the plan are:

- nurturing the individual
- safety and security
- infrastructure and environment
- water and sanitation
- health and nutrition
- academic curriculum and resources
- sports, culture and community interaction
- leadership, management and governance
- academic achievement
- eco-friendly approach.

7.4.3 The DRF's achievements

Since the formalisation of the DRF in 2007, a number of successful school-based interventions have been implemented, based on the findings from the various baseline assessment activities conducted. In a relatively short space of time, community members, schools and their various stakeholders, together with supportive outside organisations have worked hard to make an "immediate difference". The DRF's commitment to change and efficiency was noted in the interviews and focus group discussions with the local District Office, teachers and principals.

> *The DRF works to solve problems efficiently and quickly*. [FG#3, 2012 p. 2]
> *Within the DRF schools, the change is noticeable, it is rapid*. [IT#7, 2012 p. 3]

The successful and ongoing projects have been summarised in Table 7.3, column 4. Many changes are visible as one walks through the various school grounds. Teachers and school principals are speaking enthusiastically about the changes and the obvious difference they

have made to their schools. The holistic nature of the DRF's EDP has also been noticed by principals and teachers. The following quotations point towards whole school development:

> *The DRF is developing the teacher in the classroom, the manager in the office and the community around the school*. [IT#7, 2012, p. 3]

> *A lot of the work the DRF is doing is trying to skill people, so that people can reach that point of empowerment*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 8]

The immediate and obvious difference the DRF has made within each of the 17 schools has gone a long way to galvanize trust and respect for the organisation.

As outlined in this section, the DRF's school-based intervention is a comprehensive plan drawing on a broad range of inputs necessary for a school to function as an effective organisation. Table 7.3 provides a summary of the key interventions the DRF is working towards (column 2) and the successful school-based interventions accomplished to date (column 4). Importantly, many of the successful interventions require ongoing work, assessment and auditing to ensure they remain sustainable. I believe that the success of the DRF can be attributed to the following:

- Having an awareness and understanding of various elements operating in the domain of the Real, for example, socio-political influences and the legacy of a segregated history.
- Creating unique partnerships with community members in an effort to bridge the cultural differences and tensions between modern and traditional ways of thinking.

The importance of community engagement and participation came through during the interviews with principals and focus group discussions with teachers. The school community values the fact that the DRF is a community-based organisation focusing their interventions at a grassroots level at which participation of the community and schools are encouraged.

> *The DRF is working hard to engage with people and their real problems at grassroots level. It is much harder to empower someone that to give them something*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 8]

> *The DRF has used the idea of community ownership. Change is taking place through participation*. [IT#7, 2012, p. 6]

Table 7.3: Working towards sustainable change within schools of the Umzinyathi District, 2013 (*categories are in no specific order*)

Components of a Sustainable School	Interventions envisaged	Specific detail [Findings from TS, DEC and MiEt audits]	Successful Interventions
Infrastructure: **Learning Environment** **Buildings** **Grounds**	All schools would benefit from an overall improvement in infrastructure and grounds in a culturally appropriate way.	• 79% of DRF schools have overcrowded classrooms (70+ pupils/class). • No language or science labs. • 12 have no libraries. • 13 have no computer centres. • 9/14 schools have electricity • Many schools do not have proper administration offices and kitchens. These spaces are shared with classrooms – disrupting teaching and learning.	**BUILDING PROJECTS**: • 3 classroom blocks built at Matutshana Primary and Nhloya Intermediate. • Library built at Shiyane High School. • Kitchen built at Matutshana. • Community built and designed classrooms at: Buhlebamangwe Primary, Mampunga Primary, Cebelihle Primary, Ntalatana Secondary School. **ONGOING INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE:** • Encouraging respect for self and existing facilities. • Building and equipping kitchens and classrooms. • Provision of safe external play equipment. • Painting and maintenance of school buildings. • Repair, replacement and installation of electrical distribution networks. • Supplying refuse bins to keep grounds tidy.
Water and Sanitation	Potable water is a priority. Water tanks are required and some maintenance of already existing tanks is necessary. Existing boreholes must be checked. Local municipality must be consulted about water supply. Schools require additional water points (i.e. Taps).	• Most basic aspects of sanitation such as toilets and clean water are not available at the DRF schools. This is causing a high rate of school absenteeism. • At the times of surveys no school has flushing toilets, all pit-latrines. Shared by pupils and teachers. • Only 8 schools reported having piped water on their properties.	**CLEAN WORKING TOILETS**: • Regular visits to schools to inspect toilets. • Repair of broken toilets and construction of new toilet facilities. • Regular cleaning of septic tanks by the "honey-sucker". • Guidance and education as to how to use, care for and maintain toilet facilities. **CLEAN DRINKING WATER:** • Installation and repair of water pumps and JOJO rain collection tanks. All schools now have access to potable water on site.
Safety and Security	Schools need to be properly fenced. Vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse are problems cited at intermediate and high schools. Input from local community and church groups are required here. Pupils need to develop a sense of pride and ownership in the school.	• Safety at the various schools varies. • 10/14 schools are properly fenced. • 10 schools have a security guard paid for by DoE/SGB. • Many schools reported that security was not a major concern with few cases of vandalism/break-ins over the past year.	• Security will become more of a concern as schools acquire computer centres, libraries and other teaching resources. These will need to be addressed up installation of such infrastructure.

Components of a Sustainable School	Interventions envisaged	Specific detail [Findings from TS, DEC and MiEt audits]	Successful Interventions
Health promotion **[Care and Support]**	**Nutrition** of pupils is a major concern. Developing food gardens and a proper feeding scheme must be a priority. **School accessibility/transport** is a major issue. Long distances impact on energy levels, roads are dangerous, many low level bridges need to be crossed. Theft and rape are issues pupils have to deal with. High rates of pupil absenteeism need to be addressed.	• Estimated that 40% of the government's daily food allowance for each child is wasted through a combination of factors – linked to poor management and lack of proper training. • Lack of support for pupils with disabilities. • All schools cited accessibility as a major issue. • 11/14 are a 30 minute drive away from the nearest tarred road. • Educators use taxis which cost R22/day.	**NUTRITION** SGBs: • Regular meetings are held with SGBs to acquaint them with the requirements of the feeding schemes, to ensure effective delivery of the programme. TRAINING AND DELIVERY: • Recruiting and training staff to monitor quantities and quality of food delivered and report on these to the DoE. FOOD PREPARERS: • Trained and prepare children's food in a balanced and hygienic manner. SUPPLIERS: • Meet with suppliers to assist and ensure an improved delivery method. GARDENS: • Community: –support through business and agricultural training to local women's co-operatives to teach them to grow food to service surrounding schools. • Schools:- expanding food gardens at schools and training local staff to supplement the feeding scheme. **CARE AND SUPPORT:** • This has been identified as an area requiring major intervention. • MiEt care and support programme is working with schools, SGBs and community members in this regard. LSAs home visits are providing valuable information as to where support is required. • MiEt workshops and programmes require continuous follow up in order to be sustainable. • Since the introduction of the MiEt interventions, pupil and teacher absenteeism is reportedly lower.
Leadership and governance	Schools in the area were all very aware of the important role played by the principal, the school management team and SGBs. Specialist support in effective school management would greatly benefit schools. Audits revealed 3 dominating school structures: • Representative council of learners (RCL) • School Governing Body (SGB) • School Management Team (SMT)	• All 14 schools have a SGB. Majority meet quarterly, however will also meet when there are urgent issues. • 13 Schools have a functioning SMT. Meetings vary from weekly, to monthly to quarterly. Minutes of meetings were available. • 2 schools have a Institutional Level Support team (ILST). • More than 60% of DRF schools have expressed concern at their inability to properly manage the schools' many activities including: Budgeting, feeding schemes and maintenance.	**TIME MANAGEMENT:** • Working to improve both teachers' and pupils' time management and design of an effective learning programme. SGBs are provided with tools to monitor and manage this. • It is the objective of the DRF to expose all teachers to specifically designed courses to assist them in building a sense of responsibility and efficient management of their teaching day. **SCHOOL ADMINSITRATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COURSES:** • 2010-2011: DRF together with experts in the field are running school management and administration courses for principals and administrators. • MiEt training and workshop facilitation with SMTs and SGBs.

Components of a Sustainable School	Interventions envisaged	Specific detail [Findings from TS, DEC and MiEt audits]	Successful Interventions
Culture and Community	Positive engagement of schools with the local community and cultural activities is important.	• The DRF sees community ownership as the most effective method of sustainability. • The DRF engages and consults with the community on all issues concerning education through SGBs and parents' organisations. • The DRF works with local communities surrounding schools to encourage community engagement, developing a culture of ownership and ongoing relationship building is encouraged.	The following community engagement programmes/initiatives have taken place to date: • Inviting community members onto the board • Delta baseline assessment workshops • Assisting SGBs • Attending school meetings • Involvement with security issues at schools • Maintenance skills transfer • Parental involvement in design and building of classrooms/facilities • Community co-operatives in school feeding schemes. • Community leadership through the Columba 1400 Leadership Training Academy (Principals, teachers and pupils)
Waste Management **Resource use: Energy**	These areas were largely neglected by schools. Little was known about sound environmental practices. Training in this regard is very necessary.		• Teachers attended a short accredited course in environmental training with the assistance of the DEC.
Learner Achievement: **Curriculum Provision/Delivery Quality of Teaching and Learning**	All of the above categories influence teaching and learning. Teachers stressed that the training they received on the NCS by the DoE was inadequate and they felt ill-prepared. Teachers also indicated they lacked suitable LTSM. Senior phase teachers are desperate for in-depth 'content knowledge' relating to their subjects as well as creative and innovative teaching methods and curriculum support.	• In a survey of 200 local teachers, 90% reported a need for further training and development. • Almost all teachers have experienced difficulty with the implementation of the NCS. • Most schools lack specialist staff e.g. IT technician, school counsellor, nurse or librarian. • Many staff are forced into roles/responsibilities for which they have no training. • Many teachers are not attending DoE training workshops/are unaware of such opportunities.	Curriculum development interventions include: **Curriculum planning and implementation training:** • 16 week programme, well attended by local teachers. Follow up training is essential to entrench understanding. **Maths and Science workshops and training:** • Together with CASME a 5 year development plan has been devised to assist teachers in ensuring pupils achieve/exceed the national average for numeracy, maths and science. **Teaching Aids:** • Visual and tactile teaching aids provided in line with DoE curriculum requirements. **Summer Camps:** • Run at the end of each school year. Key pupils are selected from DRF schools to participate in the programme. Programme fosters the personal development and aims to improve confidence and leadership skills of each child. **Arts extra curriculum programme**: • In partnership with Lalela the DRF has embarked upon an arts enrichment programme. This programme is aimed at the personal development and enrichment of learners. It is currently being run as a pilot project at one of the primary schools. **Pre-school Programme:** The Unlimited Child assisted the DRF conduct a survey with respect to the preschools in the area and children's readiness to enter the formal schooling programme. Upgrading of preschools and proper training of pre-school teachers into ECD specialists is a key goal.

7.4.4 What is yet to be achieved by the DRF intervention?

The DRF has outlined a comprehensive EDP to guide its school-based intervention. As elaborated upon in the previous section, a number of projects have already been successfully completed and changes have become increasingly visible at the DRF schools. But looking at the EDP together with the successful projects to date as summarised in column 4 of Table 7.3, one can see that the DRF still has some way to go in terms of fulfilling the full scope of its holistic intervention.

According to my findings in this study, a key focus area that the DRF intervention needs to focus on is the area of **Academic, Curriculum and Resources.** I regard this as representative of 'real and deep change' in that it is at this point that pupils will start to reap the rewards of improved teaching and learning, and the goal of the DRF to influence the greater Umzinyathi community will be achieved. However I realise that in order for the DRF's intervention to get to this point, infrastructural changes together with teacher training and development will be essential. With respect to infrastructural changes, the DRF has been very successful to date, as shown in Table 7.3.

In this study I addressed the following question to the teachers at the various schools involved in the DRF intervention:

- "*What sorts of changes are still needed or would you like to see*?" (Refer to the case audit [DF2:DOC2D])

The desired changes common to both groups of teachers in the focus group discussions coalesced into three emergent themes:

- Community Involvement
- Teaching and Learning
- School Governance

Key points raised by various teachers in the focus group discussions have been classified in terms of these themes as follows:

- **Community Involvement**:

- Cultural heritage preservation – for the community to develop an appreciation and sense of pride in their culture.
- Better parental support, a commitment and interest and assistance with homework.
- Schools enabling positive changes within the communities they serve.

- **Teaching and Learning:**

- Career Counsellor working in the area to support Grade 12s with future career options, university access and application and securing bursaries.
- Better technology, teachers having the skills to use technology to their advantage.
- Higher standards for teachers, teachers must have good skills and subject knowledge – they need to be experts in their field.
- Creating a true culture of reading, learning and discovery in schools.
- Continuous upgrade and improvement in infrastructure.
- Science Laboratory and proper equipment and teacher expertise in this regard.
- Learners and teachers speaking English confidently.

- **School Governance:**

- Holding teachers accountable.
- Schools should be more teacher led and be less reliant on the principal.
- SMTs need the confidence and need to be empowered to say no to the DoE at certain times. E.g. Not all teachers should have to attend certain workshops during school hours.
- Making sure that all departmental policies are adhered to honestly.

A number of the issues identified by the teachers are areas of priority in the DRF's EDP. Chapter 8 explores the human dimension of this study, which includes community involvement and the role of teachers within the process of change.

7.4.5 Concluding comments Layer 2

Layer 2 of the analysis provides insight into the DRF's school-based intervention. It is apparent that in a relatively short space of time (2007-2012) the DRF has made significant progress in various aspects of the efficient running and functioning of the 17 community schools which the DRF supports to date. The successful implementation of many of the interventions can in my view be attributed to the organisation's understanding of the context in which these schools operate (domain of the Real) and its acknowledgement of the need for community participation and involvement (domain of the Empirical). However, through

analysis of the various interviews and focus groups discussions I have identified the area of Academic, Curriculum and Resources as requiring further intervention.

7.5 Synthesis and conclusion

As illustrated in the heuristic framework, Figure 4.1, each of the emergent themes from Analysis Activity 1 forms a layer. In its entirety the framework is a reflection of the multifarious nature of the change process.

Layer 1, representative of the broader context, relates to immediate aspects of community life (transitive factors), as well as the broader elements operating outside of our awareness (intransitive factors), such as cultural practices and beliefs, socio-political influences and global pressures. Importunately, each school is firmly rooted within a particular environment, and therefore any intervention, action or change needs to be understood and considered with reference to its context.

Through the analysis of data in Layer 1, several factors were identified as "restraining factors" (Lewin, 1947) or obstacles to change. The physical location of the community is isolated and remote, with family units feeling detached and removed from the 'modern world'. This apparent isolation is exacerbated by the socio-economic situation families find themselves in, in terms of which the actual family unit, the absence of modern amenities, and the lack of income generation have all been identified as barriers to change (see Table 7.1, Section 7.3).

Socio-cultural and political factors are also seen to be inhibiting effective change, since many of the changes imposed embody Western ideas, and these have been identified as creating tensions within a largely traditional mindset (see Section 7.3.2).

The second layer of the analysis is representative of actions and interventions taking place within the school community. These relate to visible dimensions such as teacher training workshops or new classroom blocks, and include most aspects of the intervention driven by the DRF in support of school improvements and changes. I have linked this emergent theme to Bhaskar's second domain, the Actual, which involves **events or things that happen**.

The analysis of Layers 1 and 2 of this study have revealed how the specific rural context of the schools inhibits the process of change. Furthermore, an array of historical, socio-political and economic factors have positioned community members such that the change process

involved in the DRF's school-based intervention presents itself as complex, time-consuming and at times uncomfortable. In this chapter I argue that it is important for the broader context to be fully understood and appreciated prior to the creation and implementation of any intervention. Interventions need to be specific to the context and the community involved. There is evidence to suggest that the DRF has been proactive, through their encouragement of community participation and a 'grass roots' approach to the school-based interventions.

The continued success of the DRF's school-based intervention will depend on the **processes at work** within the third layer of the heuristic framework, the human dimensions, falling within Bhaskar's (1979) Empirical domain. This is discussed in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

"Without the input of a teacher, a school is nothing"
(The Principal, Cebehlile Primary, February 2012)

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the analysis and interpretation of the data relating to the final layer within the heuristic framework, the human dimension, which correlates with Bhaskar's (1979) innermost layer, the Empirical domain. The analysis and interpretation of this final layer focuses on the second research goal of this study, an investigation of the experiences and participation of teachers within the change process (see Section 1.4). Within the human dimension, five sub-themes emerged from this study, including that of partnerships and leadership. This chapter explores the various partnerships the DRF has created with members of the immediate community, as well as with other stakeholders working towards school-based improvements. The chapter makes a case for the role of partnerships in any change-orientated intervention, and illuminates the various leadership structures operating at the level of the DRF and more broadly within the community.

Finally the chapter concentrates on the role of teachers within the school-based intervention. Here I argue that the teachers' knowledge and understanding of change is superficial, a situation explored and accounted for in terms of their lived experience and background.

8.2 Analysis of Layer 3: The Empirical Domain

The lower level of the heuristic framework, as seen in Chapter 4, Figure 4.1, relates to the human dimension of my research. As discussed in Section 4.3.1.2, I have placed the human dimension at the bottom of the pyramid since it represents the final layer of analysis in the study. It is also the point at which, in my view, there can occur the kind of deep and

sustainable change that is necessary for the continued progress and maintenance of an improved system. The human dimension was an emergent theme from Phase I of my data collection. From this overarching theme, I identified several sub-themes, all of which relate directly to the human dimension of an intervention.

Table 8.1: Sub-themes of the Human Dimension which emerged during Phase I and Phase II, respectively

Partnerships	Emerged during **Phase I** of the research process
Leadership	
Key drivers – directing and executing the change process	Emerged during **Phase II** of the research process
Human obstacles – human and bureaucratic elements preventing change	
Teachers and change	Emerged during **Phase II** of the research.

Bhaskar's (1979) Empirical domain focuses on the innermost layer of reality, the world as perceived by the individual. Within this layer, I started to interpret and analyse the stories of the teachers and community members who shared their lived experiences and their understanding of the intervention and the change processes at work.

Analysis of the broader aspects within the Real and Actual domains (see Chapter 7) helped me develop an understanding of why these individuals interpret and understand their environment and community as they do. Through my discussions with teachers, principals and community members I gained insight into the relationships between people within the community. Relationships are highly important, particularly in a society distinguished by the traits of a collective culture. It was important for me as a as a non-community member to understand these relationships and partnerships as effectively as I could.

8.2.1 Partnerships

- **Partnerships with the local community**

Partnerships have come to be viewed as a critical aspect of any renewal process in education (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992; Dufour, Eaker & Dufour, 2005; Dufour et al., 2006; Stoll, Bolam, McManon, Thomas, Wallace, Greenwood & Hawkley, 2006) (see Section 5.7 for a discussion of the literature pertaining to collaborative practice in working towards change).

Theories of change maintain that effective collaboration is strongly linked to success in any environment or organisational culture dealing with an intervention or change of some form. Fullan (2002, pp. 2-6) speaks of the importance of successful human relationships and interactions in the context of working towards sustained change: "deep and sustained reform depends on many of us". Ridley (1996, p. 175) concurs, noting that "co-operative groups thrive and selfish ones do not".

David Rattray believed in equality amongst all and he worked hard to involve himself in the local community. He valued human relationships. This is a strong theme emerging throughout the data analysis process: the DRF was founded on the values of "friendship, grace and reconciliation" [IT#2, 2011, p. 1]. Human relationships are built on trust, and the success of the DRF's project has to a large extent depended upon developing in the community an understanding of who the DRF are and what they are trying to do, and thus engendering trust: "Once this trust developed, working with the community has become easier and to an extent more effective too" [IT#1, 2011, p. 4].

The fact that the DRF values community input and participation is a key factor enabling the development of trust, and ultimately successful and sustainable change: "Change needs to start with the community members. It needs to be driven by the community members in order for it to be sustainable. Change must be supported by the government and requires large scale co-operation" [IT#2, 2011, p. 11].

The following excerpts from the DRF's Strategic Plan point towards the value the organisation places on community participation and involvement (DRF Strategic Plan, p. 12):

- *The Foundation engages and consults with the community on all issues to do with education through the SGBs and various parents' organisations. Their active participation in the management and running of the school is positively encouraged. Only in this way can participation and sustainability be achieved.*

- *The Foundation works extensively with the local communities surrounding our schools to encourage community engagement in the schools and their continued development by developing a culture of ownership and providing ongoing relationship building.*

The DRF and some of its partners assumed that community members would engage in the various change initiatives and participate to the full. The evidence from my interviews, however, suggests that whilst community input is valued and encouraged it is not always

forthcoming. It has taken a lot of time and patience for some community members and teachers to become active participants in the various change processes. I believe this can be attributed to cultural factors and traditional ways, as explored and accounted for in Section 7.3.2. These factors have played a large role in determining how teachers perceive change, and the manner in which they participate and engage with the various initiatives.

As my research progressed over time, I began to see that teachers and community members were gradually getting more involved, taking action and acknowledging the importance of their responsibilities in the intervention. This does not apply to all teachers and community members, but a select group. Sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 explore the transforming roles of leadership and community engagement in the intervention.

- **Partnerships with external and specialist organisations**

The DRF has come to recognise the need for specialist help and support in the domain of education. As a result a number of partnerships have been forged with outside organisations "which have the experiences, expertise and knowledge that complements or supplements our own" (DRF Strategic Plan, p. 14). The DRF works very closely with the local Dundee DoE district office in all its planning and decision making, as reiterated by the former chairman in his interview: "[e]verything we have done from the beginning, our clear policy has been to work with government" (IT#2, 2011, p. 3). Over the past six years the DRF has forged partnerships and linkages with the following organisations:

- **CASME** (Centre for the Advancement of Mathematics and Science Education) – key focus is the advancement of mathematics and science teachers' subject competence and teaching skills.

- **DELTA** – an independent NGO that aims, through innovative education and training programmes, to enable people to improve their environment by promoting the management and sustainable use of all resources, in line with the South African Constitution.

- **FUEL** – experts in the National Schools Nutrition Programme.

- **HEARTLINES** – challenges people irrespective of race, gender, age or religion to live out positive values in a way that will build people, families, communities and the nation. Introduced the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy to South African schools.

- **MiET Africa** – has worked extensively with schools & DoEs in KwaZulu-Natal and across southern Africa, preparing materials and developing models of schools as centres for care, support and education.

- **SIYAZISIZA** – promoting food security and small enterprise development in rural communities in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

- **AVENG GROUP** – National construction company funding a skills transfer and pilot building project.

- **DREAMFIELDS** – provision of football pitches, uniforms and equipment.

- **BIBLIONEF** – NGO providing Library books for schools.

- **LALELA PROJECT –** provides educational art opportunities to the youth affected by extreme poverty. Through the workshops which are run regularly after school the various art projects and workshops assist with the development of academic performance, self-esteem, concentration skills and pupils' individual sense of self-worth.

- **THE UNLIMITED CHILD –** NGO which has assisted the DRF in surveying the quality of pre-schools in the area. Together with the DRF they are working towards improving the quality of teaching and learning in pre-schools.

(DRF Strategic Plan, p. 14; B.H. Henderson, personal communication, 19 July, 2013.)

The positive outcomes and achievements of these partnerships are summarised in Table 7.3. Three partnerships stand out as having been particularly effective in assisting the DRF to achieve some of the goals outlined in the EDP:

- ***MiEt Africa***

MiEt Africa's mission is to "be an African leader in developing and providing innovative education solutions, with the vision of children attaining their full potential through quality education" (DRF School Survey Report, 2009, p. 4). MiEt Africa pursues this mission by focusing on barriers to teaching and learning, HIV/AIDS education and curriculum and

teacher development. The joint venture between the DRF, MiEt and the KZN DoE is a two-year programme that addresses the 'human aspects' of sustainable schooling identified by the TS and DEC (curriculum provisioning, culture and community knowledge, health promotion and safety and security). This collaborative project, broadly aimed at strengthening the capacity of the school community, has been named the Siyanakekela Project. Schools within the Endumeni and Nquthu circuits of the Umzinyathi District form part of the project, involving around 4000 pupils and their families, together with 140 teachers (Partnership Project Presentation, 2010, slide 4. See DF1: DOC2B).

Below is an overview of the Siyanakekela Project's main goals, objectives and associated strategies:

Goal:	To ensure that both schools and their communities collectively provide care and support for their children.
Objectives:	• To strengthen schools by building their capacity to provide care and support for children; • To build partnerships between schools and their communities so that a continuum of care and support for vulnerable children is realized.
Strategies and Activities:	• Building the capacity of parents, care givers and community in the provision of care and support; • Advocating for HIV prevention, care and support at all levels and across all sectors; • Building a foundation for the provision of school-based care and support; • Facilitating school-community relationships; • Facilitating the delivery of integrated services.

(Siyanakekela Baseline Report, 2010, p. 15)

- ***The Aveng Group***

The DRF through the various school evaluation exercises (see Section 7.4.1) realised that there was an enormous infrastructural backlog at a number of their 17 supported schools. Many of these schools have overcrowded classrooms (up to 60 learners in a single class), few have school halls, and several lack adequate administrative space and facilities.

In order to meet some of these infrastructural needs, the DRF has forged a partnership with the Aveng Group. The Aveng Group consists of a number of construction and engineering entities operating across South Africa, Africa and internationally. The company established the Avenge Community Trust in 2005, the objective of which was to "make funding available

to projects and organisations aimed at improving the lives of the underprivileged" (Aveng Group, 2012). In particular the trust has chosen to focus its corporate social investment (CSI) strategy on skills development, with particular reference to "skills shortages, in the field of infrastructure development". Projects are selected that will add "lasting value to the communities in which they serve" (Aveng Group, 2012).

The Aveng Group thus had specific CSI targets, whilst the DRF also had explicit objectives.[20] The two organisations realised that a partnership would serve their mutual purposes. On the basis of a successful pilot project constructed at Mablomong in Gauteng, the Aveng Group agreed to a roll-out plan and provided funding for the various school-based projects.

The project roll-out started with an additional building at Mablomong in Gauteng and a first structure at one of the local primary schools. This was followed by similar structures at three other schools in the area. The KZN DoE came out to inspect the building and requested the Foundation to construct a Full Service School [FSS] building at School X, which the DRF has subsequently done (B.H. Henderson, personal communication, June 27, 2012). However this FSS building is still awaiting funding and special learning facilities and equipment from the DoE. To date the FSS is not fully functional.

This project partnership has resulted in a number of positive outcomes not initially envisaged. The following have been identified by the DRF:

- attractive end product,
- provision of an income for both trainees and general community members (generating a large cash injection directly into the very impoverished communities),
- use of local materials for building requirements (reducing transport-related carbon waste and providing additional income potential for local residents),
- self-regulating temperature controlled building due to high thermal mass,

[20] DRF's objectives as far as school-based infrastructure projects were concerned:

1. Engage the local community and provide a platform for SETA-accredited skills transfer (with a potential enterprise development model).
2. Provide a school building with best practice African indigenous design principles (including green building and safety practices).
3. Use a building method that represented maximum labour and minimum material cost components.
4. Provide accredited teacher training on sustainable buildings with lesson plans for the participation of the learners.
5. Ensure cooperation with the DoE.
6. Establish core building groups able to migrate to other, similar projects.

(B.H. Henderson, personal communication, June 27, 2012)

- healthy internal environment – natural ventilation since the walls breathe,
- low maintenance structures,
- spacious rooms (almost double the size of a government regulation classroom),
- dual purpose rooms (retractable doors between classrooms means that they can be opened into a large room which can be used as a hall or an examination venue),
- strong sense of ownership of structure in community (reducing vandalism)
- low building costs. (B.H. Henderson, personal communication, June 27, 2012)

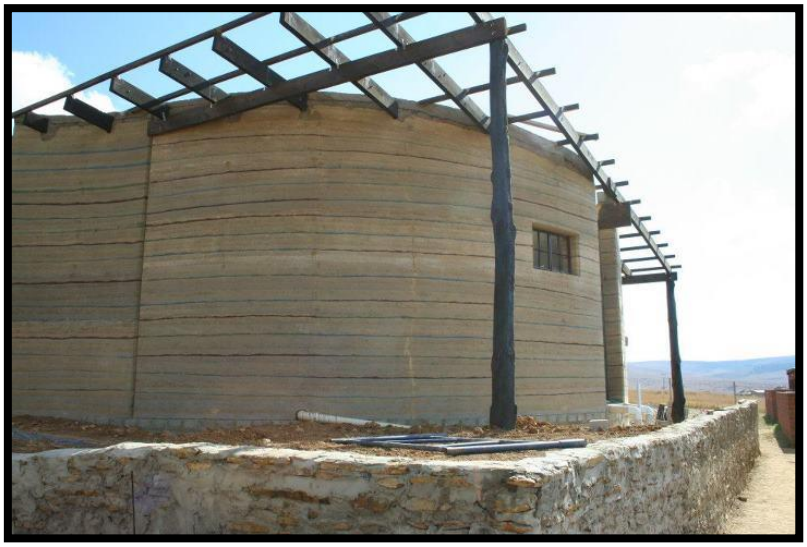
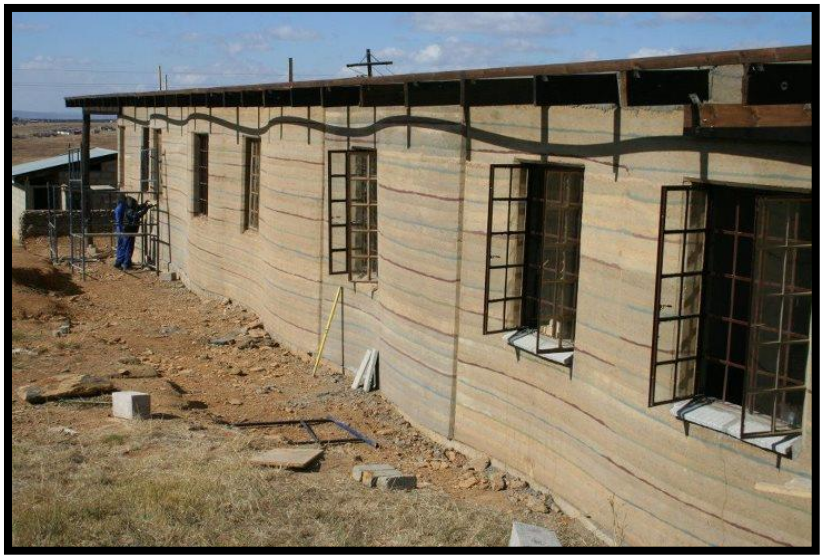


Figure 8.1 Final stages of construction of the Full Service School [FSS], June 2012



(Photographs courtesy of the DRF Facebook page)

Figure 8.2 Side view of the FSS building. Rammed earth walls made from local materials are clearly visible.

This project partnership has attracted the attention of the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of the KZN DoE. He indicated that the DRF were providing wonderful support and assistance as far as the infrastructural needs of the province were concerned, and he was interested in forging further partnerships with the DRF, the Aveng Group and the KZN DoE (B.H. Henderson, personal communication, June 27, 2012).

- ***The Chain-Schools concept***

The DRF has come to the realisation through interaction and ongoing discussions with school principals that a contributing factor towards effective teaching and learning and the pupil's overall school performance lies in his or her early childhood development (ECD) and readiness to enter into the formal schooling system.

> *All the primary school principals confirmed to me that the children who enter their schools are not school ready. As a result they lose at least a year as they try to help them catch up. We carried out a survey of the pre-schools in the area and found that none of them had a qualified teacher and none of them did much more than offer a baby-sitting service. They were not preparing the children for entry into the formal education phase of their lives*. (B.H. Henderson, personal communication, 19 July 2013)

Because of this situation, the DRF has partnered with the Unlimited Child, an organisation that conducted an independent survey of the pre-schools operating in the area. The two organisations are working in partnership to improve the facilities at local pre-schools, importantly focusing on teacher development strategies to promote an effective ECD programme.

Through the increasing interest of the DRF in preschools, the Chain-School concept has emerged. The DRF has attempted to identify schools that are responding well to their interventions. During 2013 the first chain of schools was identified, comprising a pre-school, primary and high school. These schools are located within the same district and considered to be feeder schools to one another. The DRF continues to work and engage with each of these schools through their intervention project. Through this chain-school concept – i.e. a partnership or link between schools – the DRF intends to track the individual performance of pupils through their school careers. This will provide the DRF with a holistic view of the whole school programme and, it is hoped, in time, an indication of the efficacy of their interventions.

> *Most of our interventions to date were in response to identified needs of various individual schools, without thought about the measurability of any impact our interventions, but as the years have gone on and with funders asking how much impact we are having, it is becoming increasingly important to be able to somehow measure the success or otherwise of what we are doing – and to try and measure it in quantitative terms. This "chain schools" concept will, we believe, allow us to do this. With the ability to track individual performance throughout the schooling period, and with a parallel control group to make comparisons with, we should be able to identity and quantify the effects of our interventions*. (B.H. Henderson, personal communication, 19 July, 2013)

The findings of this research point towards the importance of partnerships in the context of working towards a change intervention. This section has provided the following evidence in support of my argument:

- the importance of being a **community member** – the fact that the DRF is based within the Umzinyathi district municipality is a significant factor;
- this has allowed for the DRF to have an understanding of and realistic empathy with the **local community**;
- partnerships work on a strong foundation of **trust**, which the DRF has built up with the community since the death of Rattray in 2007;
- the partnership needs to involve **development and community empowerment**; both the AVENG and MiEt partnerships have shown evidence of this; and lastly
- the partnership is fostered through and directly associated with leadership.

8.2.2 Leadership

The literature on leadership (reviewed in Section 5.8) points to the importance of effective leadership in ensuring that the right sorts of relationships and partnerships develop, particularly in uncertain times. Heifetz (1994) and Fullan (2001, 2003) emphasise the importance of effective leadership in any process of change.

In order to understand the human relationships and leadership structures operating within the Umzinyathi community I developed three flow chart type diagrams. The diagrams serve to account for how and by whom decisions are made, and who the main drivers of change are. They also aim to illustrate the progression and evolution of the DRF over the past six years. The diagrams were developed using the information I obtained from various interviews and documents contained in the DF1, as well as informal notes and information recorded in my

research journal [RJ, DF1]. I emphasise that they depict **my interpretations** of leadership structures and partnerships in the implementation of the DRF's school-based intervention.

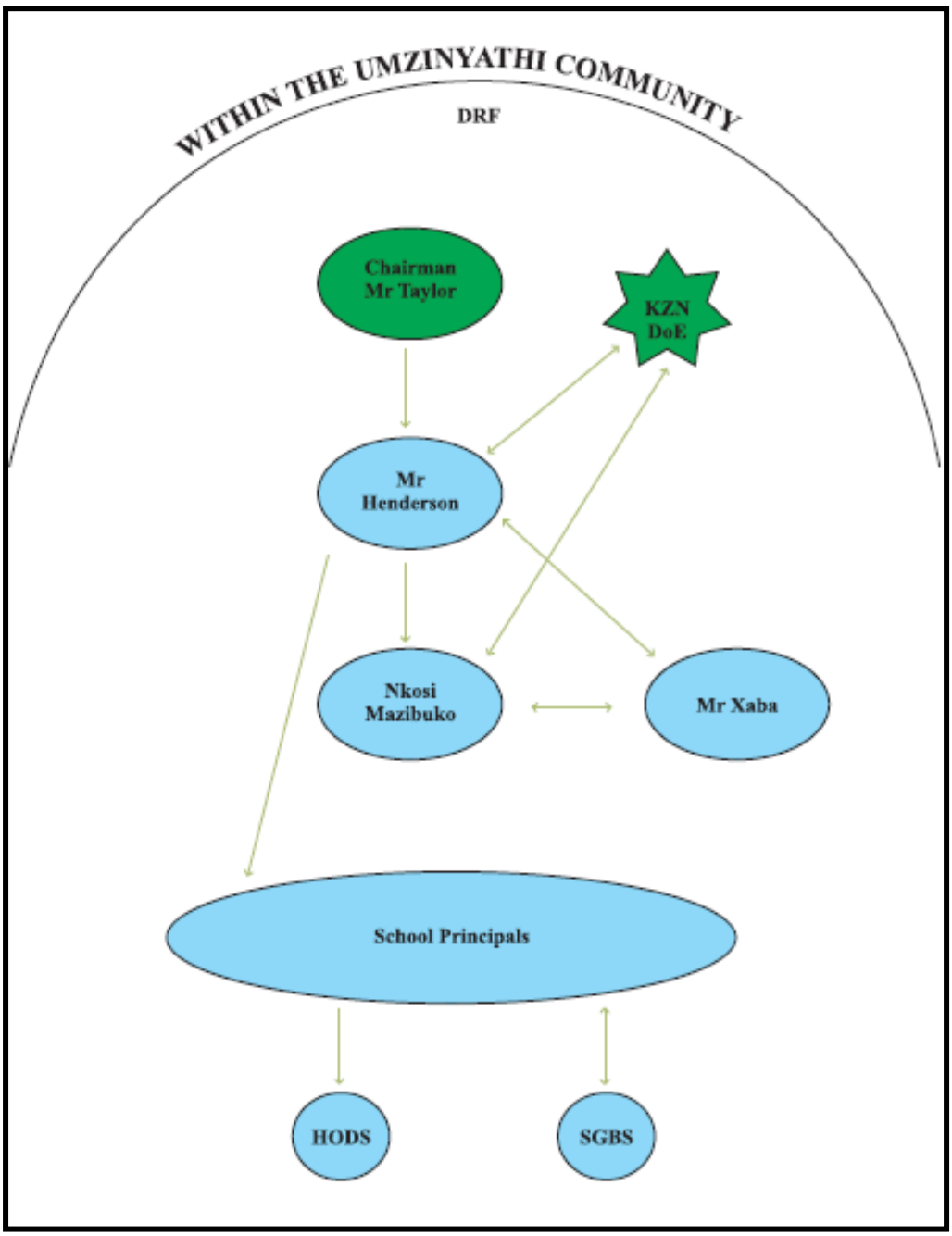


Figure 8.3: Inception of the Foundation (March 2007).

Figure 8.3 depicts the leadership structure and development of relationships and partnerships at the inauguration of the DRF in 2007. The boxes depicted in green reflect people or organisations that I would not consider a part of the Umzinyathi rural school community. Through my interviews and interactions with the various members of the DRF I came to

realise that the DRF sees itself as being a part of the Umzinyathi community. With reference to Figure 8.3, the DRF's first elected chairperson, Mr Rob Taylor, resided in Johannesburg and as a result was not considered a community member. However, Mr Taylor was actively involved in the establishment and formalisation of the DRF [IT#2, 2011]. His work involved a lot of background research and investigation into possible educational upliftment projects, as well as sourcing the necessary funding for the various projects. At this stage in the life of the DRF, it appears that Taylor was the main decision maker and driver of change within the DRF. He communicated directly with Henderson, the CEO of the DRF living and working within the Umzinyathi district municipality.

Henderson was the main link and communicator with various stakeholders within the community, including the KZN DoE and the local tribal council. With reference to Figure 8.3, Xaba and Mazibuko are tribal council members.

Through regular school visits, Henderson stayed in direct contact with school principals. It was his role to communicate possible educational initiatives to the tribal council and the KZN DoE district office, through which the local community would have an opportunity to respond and be involved. Via these channels local community members were also able to communicate their needs and requirements to the DRF [In#T1 and IT#1, 2011]. It has been reiterated that no project would be actioned without the permission and participation of the local community.

Over the past six years, the leadership structure and community involvement has become more complex in the Umzinyathi District, as illustrated in Figure 8.4. The complexity in structure has involved a greater number of stakeholders, and as a result communication, decision making and driving the change initiatives have become a lot less linear than was originally observed in Figure 8.3. First, a new chair has been elected to head up the DRF, Mr Tom Boardman. Boardman plays a figurehead role and is peripheral to the daily running and decision making of the DRF. DRF board meetings, which were previously held at least four times a year are now held less frequently, once or twice a year. Boardman communicates with Henderson and has no direct involvement with community members. He is viewed as a non-community member and hence the dotted line in Figure 8.4 is used to separate Boardman from the community relationships and leadership structure. Figure 8.4 depicts Henderson in a more powerful position in terms of decision making and driving change within the community. He does not act alone, but in conjunction with important partners. Numbers 2

and 3 on Figure 8.4 depict important channels of communication and decision making within the community.

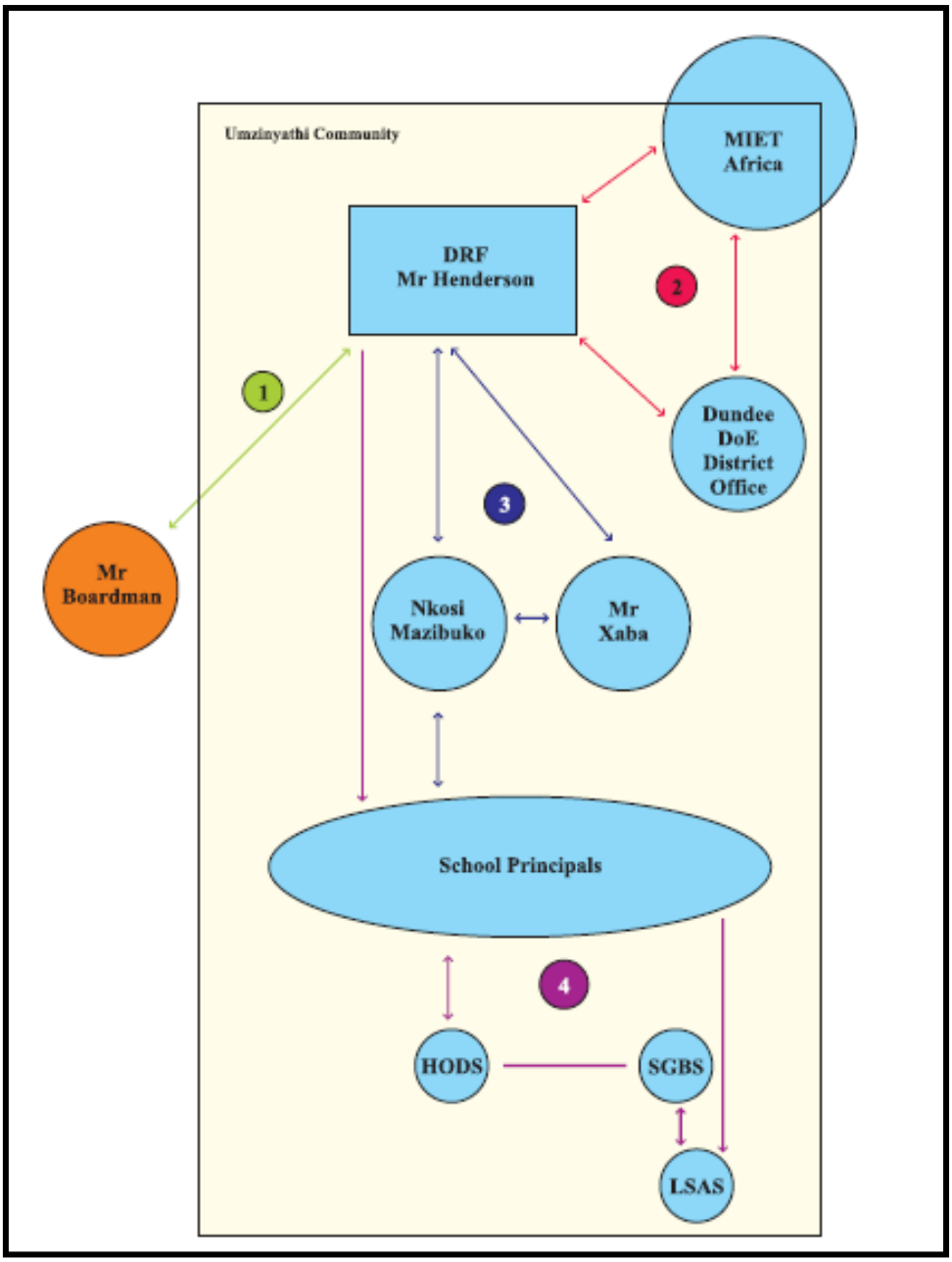


Figure 8.4: Leadership structure as perceived in 2011-2013.

While I would not consider the members of MiEt as part of the community, they have been actively working within schools and households to effect change. The partnership among the DRF, MiEt and the Dundee DoE district office has in my view so far been largely successful,

and I would regard these three organisations as the main drivers and implementers of change and educational upliftment within the community to date.

Xaba and Mazibuko are in direct contact with the DRF and play a major role in communicating and directing change within the local community. These two gentlemen provide an important link between the various organisations and local people. Through the various change initiatives, school principals have become increasingly empowered as key decision makers and drivers of change within their local school community. Number 4 on Figure 8.4 depicts this interaction and leadership. The following excerpts present evidence of the change in attitude and sense of empowerment among school principals:

- *I have learnt the importance of doing my job properly. I realise that I need to be an example as a principal on all levels. I have learnt to see the bigger picture*. [IT#8, 2012, p. 8]

- *I am a better principal. The education consultant has helped us to manage our schools better. I understand the importance of involving learners at school and going beyond the daily teaching and learning*. [IT#9, 2012, p. 5]

- *Personally I have changed a lot. I was fortunate to go overseas to the UK to represent the schools within our community. I spoke to an audience of 300 people as part of the fundraising team. We raised over R7 million. I am a very hard working person and I want to fulfil my dreams. I wish to see my learners become better people. To this point I have assisted many of them in securing funding for tertiary study. I am going above and beyond my responsibilities. I must not just teach to claim my salary at the end of the month*. [IT#10, 2012, pp. 3-4]

8.2.3 Leadership structure within the local community

I was fortunate enough to have an interview with the tribal chief Nkosi Mazibuko. He has been in this position of leadership for 15 years, having inherited the role and title through his father's family. He is seen as the "father figure" of the community and is known for being "open to change" [IT#1, 2011, p. 4]. He sees his main role as trying to help the local community face and deal with the various and complex challenges that confront it [IT#5, 2011, p. 1]. Mazibuko commented on the importance of collaboration and support for working towards effective change:

> *It is a big relief because we are working as a team rather than just one man. There is good support and lots of members of the DRF. I am enjoying the team; they are doing a great job*. [IT#5, 2011, p. 6]

He went on to explain the process the DRF goes through together with the community at the commencement of a project or initiative. “We don’t just tell the people what we are going to do for them. Rather we get input from them” [IT#5, 2011, p. 6]; “The community identifies each and every project” [IT#5, 2011, p. 4]; “Although, everyone is looking to you [as chief] to come up with everything” [IT#5, 2011, p. 6].

The community living within the Umzinyathi district municipality are fortunate in that their tribal leader appears to be making an effort to incorporate democratic principles into his approach to leadership, which is contrary to the style of leadership dictated by the TLGFA (2004) (see Section 7.3.2). My interactions with Mazibuko, together with my findings from other community interviews, all point towards a leader who sees the importance of change and is open to supporting interventions such as that driven by the DRF. While other issues relating to culture and tribal governance may conflict with change, I argue that tribal **leadership** in this community is not a hindrance to change. The leadership welcomes change if it is perceived to be in the long-term benefit of the people. Community members are involved and have their say when this is appropriate, but the tribal council remains accountable for most of decisions made.

At regular intervals community council meetings are hosted at the tribal headquarters. The local chief chairs these meetings. Change initiatives suggested by the community and the DRF are brought to these meetings. Henderson and Xaba (both DRF board members) discuss a project or initiative with Mazibuko.

> *“Mr Henderson and Mr Xaba communicate with me and give me feedback with respect to everything they are doing. I am seeing that they are doing very well”*. [IT#5, 2011, p.3]

Mazibuko takes proposals to council and ultimately to the community to be ratified. From there a more localised report-back process occurs, where council members give feedback to their local community. Within the local community there are various portfolio committees, including one that deals specifically with education and provides input to the DRF through the council.

This consultative process is illustrated in Figure 8.5:

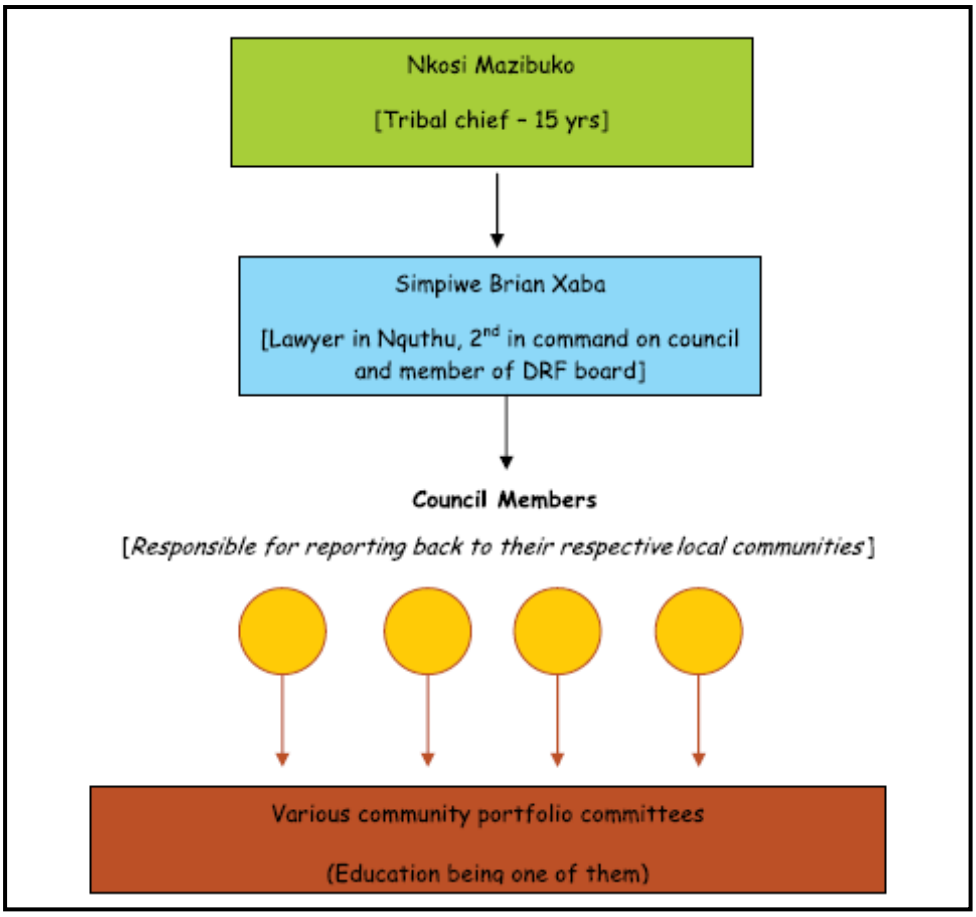


Figure 8.5: Tribal governance and decision making process

The DRF has accomplished a lot in a relatively short period of time (see Table 7.3 and Section 7.4.3). While Henderson and the DRF's school-based intervention have been identified as the major driving force of change, much of the change would not have been possible without the influence and leadership of Mazibuko.

A unique relationship has developed between Henderson and Mazibuko over the years, building on the trust and mutual understanding that Rattray had earlier established with Mazibuko. This relationship is a key factor in the leadership that is responsible for the success the DRF has enjoyed to date.

Henderson is contributing large-scale, Western ideas to the intervention, which in many respects are in line with the initiatives outlined by the DBE's various school policies, while

Mazibuko offers the view of his people, his culture and his ways. This sharing of ideas and combining of Western and traditional ways is moving the intervention forward. I regard both Henderson and Mazibuko as being involved in transformational leadership (Leithwood et al., 1999), in that their ultimate goals involve large-scale and continuing improvement of the community and schools in the area. I also see a moral dimension of leadership coming through in their approach. I have identified elements of Sergiovanni's (1992, p. 8) "hand-head-heart" approach in their decision making and leadership (illustrated in Figure 8.6) (see Section 5.8 for discussion of leadership models).

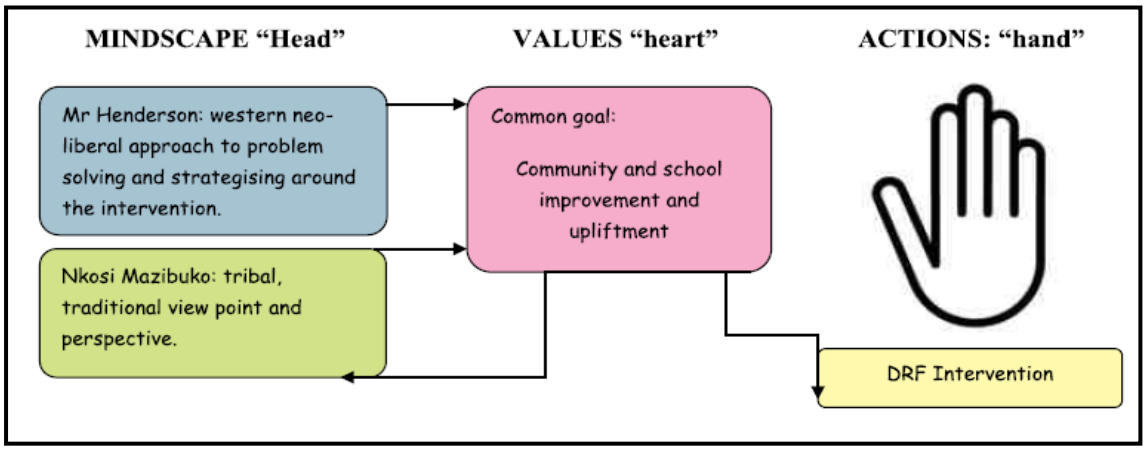


Figure 8.6: Application of Sergiovanni's moral approach to leadership to the Umzinyathi community.

The transformational leadership style encourages the involvement of community members, which is crucial to the achievement of meaningful and long-term change (Sergiovanni, 1992; Moloi, 2005; see Section 5.8.4). The documents that I analysed all pointed strongly towards community involvement and participation in the change initiatives. The process of decision making and intervention illustrated in Figure 8.5 clearly indicates community participation, as do the excerpts summarised from various documents in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Evidence of community involvement

Document Code	Evidence of community involvement
DF 1: DVD: MM1-5 (2004-2006)	Early minutes of Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana Education Appeal have involved community members at meetings, discussions and decision making.
DF1: DOC#4 DRF Strategic Plan (2009-2014)	DRF believes community ownership is the most effective method of sustainability. The DRF works with local communities encouraging engagement and participation developing a culture of ownership and providing ongoing relationship building.
DF1: DOC#4B DRF I (2009)	The DRF envisages a 10 year commitment to interventions. Thereafter it is hoped that communities will have sufficient skills and knowledge to provide necessary input and support to maintain interventions and offer continued support.
DF1:DOC#2 Siyanakekela Baseline Study (2010)	The Siyanakekela project has embraced community participation and involvement in order to promote a sense of care and responsibility between the home and school environment.

8.2.4 The application of Complex Leadership Theory

In this research I have drawn on complexity theory as a theoretical framework for exploring the DRF intervention strategy. In Chapter 9, both systems and complexity theory are invoked in the assessment of the intervention as a whole. In Section 5.8.2 I reviewed contemporary thinking on the notion of Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT), which offers a framework involving three interrelated leadership roles: *adaptive leadership, administrative leadership and enabling leadership* (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, pp. 298-318).

In Sections 5.4.2 and 9.3 I argue for the inappropriateness of applying complexity theory in this study, since I do not believe the rural context in which these schools and teachers are situated has the characteristics of contemporary organisations – 'knowledge-based, flexible, democratic systems' – that lend themselves to the application of complexity theory. The schools and community in this case study adhere to an authoritarian, hierarchical leadership structure.

The following quotation characterises the authoritarian stance taken by one school's SMT body. The quotation alludes to the decision-making process, which appears not to involve teachers directly, although the decisions made are having a direct impact on these teachers:

> *We sit here as an SMT and say looking at what has been happening last year, what is it that we can do? So right, let's have a turn around strategy for all the teachers. What is it that they are going to do? And then we do a follow up…We have said with our prep, our preparation, teachers have to submit Monday morning and we check the prep. We see that this teachers is going to need this and be teaching that and then if we get time. We have told them we are starting with this next week. You are going to submit on Monday morning and then after that I am going to go into classes and observe the lessons and observe whether these things that are written down are happening. Because we find that some people are just writing down and not doing it. So we are going to make sure that everything is done*. [IT#8, 2011, p. 4]

A contemporary leadership model focusing on dynamic leadership, interacting agents and democratisation would not be an appropriate fit for a school organisation in the unique context of this case study. The above quotation suggests that this particular school's principal and SMT would find a CLT approach to leadership especially challenging. Nevertheless, CLT might be a strategy to work towards, especially since the DRF has committed to ongoing SMT development and training. CLT offers a combination of contemporary thinking on the interactive nature of the leadership process together with a respect for existing hierarchical structures. I have applied Uhl-Bien et al.'s (2007, pp. 298-318) ideas of adaptive, administration and enabling leadership to the quotation, as an example of how CLT could be successful in school organisations in a rural context.

- In the example quoted above, teachers' lesson plans and the implementation thereof appear to be an area of contention. If it is to follow an *adaptive leadership* approach, the SMT needs to be *involving* teachers in discussion of their teaching practice and the notion of lesson plans. Its role might then be viewed as less authoritarian, and more supportive and encouraging of teachers.
- From an administrative leadership perspective, I see it as appropriate that the SMT retain a certain degree of authority. Here the SMT could execute their authority by putting forward a meeting time for teachers to attend a compulsory staff meeting to discuss the notion of lesson planning. Here I see it as appropriate that the SMT devise an action plan, in consultation with the teachers, as to when and how lesson plans will be submitted for observation by the SMT.

- In the process of lesson plan design and creation, perhaps a particular group of experienced teachers will stand out as highly capable. Here the SMT needs to identify these teachers and enable them to support and guide those teachers who are less experienced or who are in need of additional support. This is *enabling leadership*. At this stage, the initial actions and process identified at the *adaptive stage* and then *administered* have matured into an enabling and empowering stage. It is in this way that intervention becomes sustainable and part of the larger vision of the school.

8.3 Exploring the DRF's school-based intervention through a theoretical lens

Thus far, this chapter has explored the various sub-themes (partnership and leadership) which have emerged and which have been classified within Layer 3 of the heuristic framework, the Human Dimension. In this final and innermost layer of the analysis process, I regard it as necessary to return to some of the theoretical principles of change theory in order to better understand the intervention process and the human dimensions thereof.

Chapter 5 provided an overview of various theories pertaining to change, concentrating on the work of Lewin (1947) and Schein (1961). Lewin's three-stage model involving *unfreezing, change* and *refreezing* was adapted by Schein into a model that explores the processes in each stage in more depth. With reference to my research, observations and analysis of interviews have led me to believe that the schools as organisations within the Umzinyathi area are still in the *unfreeze* stage of change, or put more simply, in the beginning stage of change. In the *unfreezing* stage a number of complex processes will have to occur in order to prepare the organisation for change, and I believe that this is the point at which many schools find themselves. Schein (1961) interprets the *unfreezing* stage as consisting of the processes and phases involved in creating a **motivation for change**.

A number of assumptions with respect to change and associated action were held at the outset by the DRF. Some of these assumptions manifested themselves during Phase I of my research interviews, as indicated below:

- "*Unconsciously the Foundation thought that it would sweep in and produce a solution*". [IT#1, 2011, p. 4]
- "*I think there was a tendency to want to fix everything our way, rather than going through a consultative process*". [IT#4, 2011, p.2]
- "*We are going to fix everything and do it immediately*". [IT#4, 2011, p. 2]

The schools also had a number of assumptions about the DRF and its role, viewing the organisation as nothing more than a supplier of infrastructure and resources: "The DRF would provide new classrooms and solve everyone's problems" [IT#3, 2011, p. 3].

As the DRF intervention strategy has developed and matured, principals, teachers and community members' views have changed. There is greater acceptance of the DRF, as principals and teachers have begun to understand and appreciate the intervention as well as see the benefits thereof. The following comments were made by teachers in the two focus group discussions: the subject is the role the DRF has played in bringing about change within the schools and the community as a whole.

- "*A lot of the work the DRF is doing is trying to skill people, so that people can reach that point of empowerment"*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 8]
- *"The DRF is working hard to engage with people and their real problems at grassroots level. It is much harder to empower someone than to give them something"*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 8]
- "*The DRF works to solve problems efficiently and quickly*". [FG#3, 2012, p. 2]
- *"Within the DRF schools, the change is noticeable, it is rapid"*. [IT#7, 2012, p. 3]
- *"The DRF is empowering by example. This changes you as an individual, the DRF is helping us to learn and be motivated"*. [IT#7, 2012, p. 6]

Following the example of Rattray, the Foundation regards educational transformation as the route to change and upliftment within the community. From the research conducted, it appears that the DRF is the major driving force behind change initiatives in the Umzinyathi community: "The DRF is the main driver of change. They are allowing for great progress, good improvements and schools are competitive when assessed nationally" [IT#7, 2012, p. 4]. Mr Henderson, the CEO of the DRF, is largely responsible for the work of the DRF and has also been identified as a key player in driving and motivating change within schools.

> *Mr Henderson can be identified as the main driver of change. He is pushing schools to their potential, pushing them closer and closer to show their potential. He is kind of lighting a fire under the people within the community*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 6]

Thus, spearheaded by Henderson, the DRF has been responsible for the *unfreezing* of their 17 adopted schools in an effort to prepare them for various interventions and change processes. Schein (1961, 2010) speaks of three phases which take place within the motivation for change phase: disconfirmation, creation of survival anxiety/guilt and the creation of psychological safety to overcome anxiety.

- **Disconfirmation**

During the disconfirmation phase, various conditions within an organisation will lead to dissatisfaction, discomfort or disequilibrium. It is these factors that motivate for change by preparing organisational members for the change processes ahead. Even although the change is being driven by the DRF, an outside organisation, the schools too are unhappy or dissatisfied with a number of factors, which has led to a greater desire and readiness to change. The many factors include high teacher and pupil absentee rates, significant school drop-out rates, poor academic results, a lack of qualified teachers, ineffective school management systems, a lack of parental support, pressures from the DBE, insufficient and largely unsuitable school infrastructure. There is a great deal of evidence suggesting that these factors are not unique to this research context, but occur across education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa (Moon & Buckler, 2007).

The hopelessness and despair encountered in some of these schools is captured in the following quotation:

> *"At my school the principal has been there for 20 years. The teachers there say that the school has not changed in all that time. It is disheartening to walk into that school and feel like there is no hope"*. [FG# 1, 2012, p. 10]

Many schools within the community are within this disconfirmation stage, or have recently moved out of it as a result of the intervention. Despite the work of the DRF and other external organisations, schools do have complex problems which cannot be resolved immediately. Coming to understand these problems via a realist ontology has enabled me to appreciate the depth and intricacy of the school-based interventions required.

- **Creation of survival anxiety or guilt**

The first phase of creating a motivation for change is the disconfirmation phase, where the teachers themselves start to identify the problems and the need for change. This point of

realisation moves them into the second phase, the anxiety and guilt phase. At this stage, teachers and principals have realised that change is vital in order for the school to continue to survive and function at an optimal level. As suggested earlier, schools within the Umzinyathi district municipality are in the *unfreeze* stage, while the majority of principals and teachers are in the survival-anxiety-guilt stage. Teachers have come to this point on their own, through recognition of the immense failings in the majority of schools. But they have been helped toward this recognition by the DRF's attempts to improve and intervene. The result is anxiety, confusion and pressure. The following quotations from two of the interviews conducted within the school community emphasise the fear and anxiety associated with change.

- "*Changes have involved teachers having to move out of their comfort zones. To many this is viewed as a load"*. [IT#6, 2011, p. 4]
- "*Change is not easy at all. Change is very difficult and I have been telling them (the teachers) that it comes with pain*". [IT#8, 2012 p. 5]

During this phase teachers need to be resilient, confident, proactive and supportive of one another as they move into new territory. Leadership and direction is required to steer teachers during this phase of uncertainty (see Section 8.2).

Schein (1980, 2009) speaks of the importance of creating a safe environment for employees when they are going through a process of change, especially when they reach this stage of anxiety and fear of the unknown. Therefore the third phase of the *unfreeze* stage, is the creation of psychological safety.

- **Psychological Safety**

Schein (2010) has identified eight activities which need to be carried out virtually simultaneously in order to create psychological safety in the workplace. These were outlined in Section 5.6.2.2. From observation during my fieldwork, I am persuaded that the DRF is trying hard to create a safe atmosphere within their 17 supported schools.

Among the most important ingredients in the creation of psychological safety is to have a compelling positive vision and to provide optimistic role models to work within or alongside the organisation. As the major agent of change working within the school community, the DRF is undoubtedly regarded as a constructive force, a positive example and a motivation to

the community as a whole. Other key role models identified through my research are as follows:

- Henderson as the leading force behind the DRF is a highly respected member within the community.
- Through the motivational of work of the DRF, two principals have emerged as positive role models, working towards change within their schools, but also within the greater network of DRF schools.
- The American volunteer workers living within the community and working within the schools have emerged as significant role models for community members, particularly the teachers and the youth.

The excerpts in Table 8.3 provide evidence of the positive vision that the DRF and these key role models appear to be creating and upholding within the school community.

Table 8.3: The creation of a positive vision by key role models in the community

The DRF	Henderson	Principals	Volunteers
I am learning from the DRF and being **motivated** by them. It is good to see someone doing something that you are suppose to be doing, **they are setting the example** [IT#7, 2012, p.5]. The DRF is **empowering by example**. This changes you as an individual, the **DRF is helping us to learn and be motivated** [IT #7, 2012, p.6]. The DRF works to solve problems **efficiently** and **quickly** [FG #3, 2012. p.2]. When you view the DRF staff, those who come in and facilitate, they are very **efficient and effective**. And very **passionate** about what they do and that **motivates** you [IT #7, 2012, p.5].	Ben is pushing schools to their **potential**, pushing them closer and closer to show their potential. Ben is kind of **lighting a fire** under the people within the community [FG# 1, 2012, p.6]. Ben has come to see me and asked me to share ideas; he has asked me many questions. Ben is **open to suggestion and consultation** [IT #10, 2012, p.2]. I think my involvement in the community has been a kind of 'warming experience'. You know you suddenly discover that you move past the position of being a 'bad guy with a bag full of cash' , to actually **being a friend** to people who don't just want to talk to you because they want something, but just because they want to talk to you [Henderson, May 2011, p.8].	Through the work of the DRF, two principals have become particularly **influential in driving change and motivating their teachers to move forward**. Mrs S and Mr M are both working hard to push themselves and their staff [FG #1, 2012, p.6]. Ben told me **I am a leader with direction** and that is why changes are always happening at my school [IT# 10, 2012, p.2]. I have learnt the importance of doing my job properly. I realise that I need to be an **example as a principal on all levels**. I have learnt to see the bigger picture [IT# 8, 2012, p.8].	As volunteers I don't think we fully understand the **impact** that we make [FG#1, 2012, p.5]. **Outsiders** come in with **new energy, fresh ideas** – in many ways that is what is needed here. We need privileged, educated South Africans to come and work in this environment. This is necessary for **skills transfer** [FG#1, 2012, p.8].

Of the eight activities working towards the creation of a safe place for change, three speak to the importance of formalised training, coaching and practice sessions. As the key driver of change within the community, the DRF views skills training and the empowerment of teachers and school management teams as vitally important. The following quotation from

one of the interviews speaks to the holistic nature of the training sessions arranged by the DRF, as well as the importance thereof: “The DRF is developing the teacher in the classroom, the manager in the office and the community around the school” [IT#7, 2012, p. 3].

A series of workshops has been arranged and funded through the DRF, with the support and expertise of an educational consultant. The first series of workshops (Focus 1: Curriculum Planning and Implementation) was aimed at improving teachers’ understanding of the school curriculum. This involved a number of workshops and individualised school follow-up visits over a six-month period (May – November 2009). The second phase of workshops (Focus 2: School Management and Community Inclusion) was aimed specifically at management, focusing on the role of school management teams, the involvement of parents, as well as the roles and responsibilities of learners within a school. This phase of training also took place over several months and was still in progress during 2012. For a detailed breakdown of information and focus topics at the various training sessions, please refer to the case record [DF1:DVD:TD], Appendix E.

The curriculum-based and school management training has had a major impact on teachers and principals and has gone a long way toward easing the anxiety and fear associated with change. This training has given teachers support and in so doing has developed their confidence and belief that they can manage change. The following key points emerged from the individual interviews with principals and focus group discussions with teachers. These key trends have purposively been chosen in that they speak to the impact that training and development have had on the people and the schools as a whole:

- Teachers are a lot more knowledgeable about policy.
- Workshops have given teachers a vision.
- SGBs have become more effective and powerful in a positive way.
- There is a greater collaboration and sense of support amongst teachers and DRF schools.

The factors described have helped guide schools closer towards the second phase of Lewin’s (1947) model of the change process, that being change itself. According to Lewin’s theory of Force Field analysis, change will take place when an imbalance occurs between the sum of the driving forces and the sum of the restraining forces (Section 5.6.2.2). In the case of the DRF schools, this has occurred and the change processes are well under way (see Section

7.4.3). The final process in the change cycle is *refreezing*, when a state of equilibrium is achieved once more. This occurs when the changes have been fully accepted and adopted and become the norm.

A number of obstacles to the change cycle have been identified and discussed in the critical analysis of each layer of change. The Real domain presented a number of complex issues which we are often unaware of in our daily problem-solving and strategising exercises. These factors were discussed in Section 7.3, where various socio-economic, political, historical and cultural factors were identified as hindering change and intervention. Additionally, a number of human-related factors at the Empirical level function as barriers to change. In order to fully appreciate the nature of these human obstacles, one has to consider them from the perspective of both the Real and the Empirical domains.

8.4 Human obstacles to change

8.4.1 The Dundee Department of Education District Office

The DRF has worked hard to foster a positive relationship with the Dundee DoE district office. And judging by the responses to questions in various interview discussions during Phase I and Phase II of the research, a positive relationship appears to exist:

- *Everything we have done from the beginning, our clear policy has been that we will work with government*. [IT# 2, 2011, p. 3]

- *When the DRF requires school community meetings they contact my office (DoE District Officer), and then I co-ordinate directly*. [IT# 7, 2012, p. 1]

- *We (Umzinyathi District Office) have good working relations with the DRF. The challenges are there, but they are at a manageable level. There is nothing that is beyond our control….We are now engaging in a process of trying to advance our relationship to the senior level of the Department, to the provincial level*. [IT#7, 2012, p. 2]

The DRF has committed to working with the Dundee DoE district office in an effort to improve the rural schools within the Umzinyathi community. The DRF recognises that its role and influence within the bigger decision-making sphere as far as schools are concerned can only run so far: “The DRF can only support, complement and supplement the efforts of

the Department by working with the people and facilities that are in place" (DRF Educational Development Plan, p. 2). It is evident that the DRF is aware of the boundaries involved and plays a role in upholding and respecting these.

While the DRF appears to be working hard to co-ordinate with the KZN DoE, the local district office in Dundee appears to be a weak link in the system. This is of concern in that the KZN DoE plays a major role in the school organisational system. If there are issues within this powerful unit, the system will find itself out of balance.

In every interview and focus group discussion, the DoE came up as posing a major barrier or threat to effective change and development in schools. "The DoE is our biggest barrier to change" [IT#9, 2012, p. 5]. As a result, teachers and principals are starting lose trust in the Department and look towards the DRF to solve their problems. I view this as problematic, especially since the DRF has little power as a decision maker.

Table 8.4 presents a summary of the emergent themes that point to the ineffective nature of the DoE/DBE as a key source of input.

Table 8.4: A summary of evidence which emerged through a series of interviews and focus group discussions highlighting the ineffective nature of the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department and associated district office.

Issue or area of concern raised	Specific concerns
1.**Planning, Delivery and Follow-up**	• The DoE is so **slow** in initiating any change or decisions. • I know I am going to **get nothing** from the Department [IT# 8, 2012, p.8-9]. • The DoE is very **poor at planning** and plans come out at the **very last minute** – affecting your ability to plan as a school. In this poor planning there is **little communication or co-ordination** between different areas of education. This means that often **meetings and workshops clash** [IT#9, 2012, p.1-2]. • The **huge amount of paper work** prevents the management team from attending to the real tasks at hand. Concerns re paper work with respect to the FSS – pupil care may not be a priority due to huge amount of paperwork [FG#2, 2012]. • Checking on the quality of the school roof is the only DoE follow up I have witnessed in the last 2 years [FG#1, 2012, p. 8].
2**. Staff Recruitment**	• We can **wait up to 2-3 months** to get a new teacher [IT#9, 2012]. • We have been **waiting for around a year** for a computer teacher. [IT#9, 2012]. • One would expect when teachers leave, the very next day the replacement teachers would arrive. This does not happen, if you are lucky it will take **2-3 weeks** [IT#9, 2012]. • The DoE appoints staff **without knowing our needs**. Today a Foundation phase teacher arrived, but we don't need a Foundation phase teacher [IT#10, 2012, p. 5].

	• **Teacher-Pupil ratios are far too high**. In our schools it is not uncommon to have a ratio of 1:70 [FG#2,2012, p.3]. • Admin staff are **not replaced** when they go on maternity leave – this places huge strain on the principal – as there is no one to do admin[IT#10, p. 5].
3**. Leadership**	• With a very **top-down approach** teachers felt the DoE has **little understanding or empathy** of their real needs – particularly within a deep rural environment. "There needs to **be more research done at ground level** to know exactly what we need to do to build that empowerment" [FG#1, 2012, p. 7]. • The DoE officials are really not open to suggestion or change themselves. [FG#3, 2012, p.4]. • The DoE appears to be **limiting the potential** of some of the principals. The DoE is actually **disempowering people** through their top-down approach and strict control measures which are suppose to be in place. • Principals and SMTs feel tied by the hands of the DoE.
4.**Training and Development**	• Changes imposed by the DoE are very top-down and involve **little consultation** and almost no training – or in some cases the training is too late. For example, The Circuit Manager whom I interviewed at the DoE office in Dundee admitted to me that the DoE has **been late in rolling out CAPS training** this year, and as a result the teacher unions were taking it upon themselves to train and support teachers in this regard [IT#7, 2012]. • The huge number of workshops and meetings that take place during the school day **takes teachers out of the classroom** and **principals out of the office**, which is hugely frustrating for them and at the same time **destroys contact time** with the pupils [IT#9, 2012]. • With regards to the training and workshops, it was noted that some of the **facilitators themselves lacked the necessary knowledge** expertise and training required. "The facilitators are not quite sure of what they are saying" [FG# 2, 2012, p. 1]. "Developers need to be the experts and know how to get the necessary support from teachers" [FG# 2, 2012, p.1]. • Facilitators and Subject Advisors are very often **negative and discouraging of teachers** and keep telling them that they are doing things incorrectly, but **offer little guidance and support** as to how to improve, grow or develop. "Teachers also need positive reinforcement and recognition" [FG#2, 2012, p.1]. • It was noted that the DoE workshops in particular were not as useful as they had been in the past. It seems as though conducting workshops is a **matter of ticking of boxes** and **adhering to protocol**. It is not about learning and development. **Workshops are not very practical**, they are very **theoretical** and teachers frequently walk about with **limited knowledge and understanding** [IT#9, 2012]. • The Subject Advisors are there, but they are not able to reach each and every one of us, there are **too few of them** and **too many schools** in the District [IT#10, 2012, p.1].
5.**Funding**	• Our annual school funding from the DoE comes very late [IT#8, 2012, p.7]. • We have been **promised** 3 special posts and a car for the FSS – we will have to see whether those promises **will be fulfilled**. We were promised a subsidy of R140 000 for the FSS – **none of this money has been forthcoming as yet** [IT#10, 2012, p.6].

8.4.2 Transport

In a deep rural environment, transport is a significant factor in the successful implementation of change and the optimal functioning of a school. Section 2.5.4 identifies transport-related issues as contributing towards the complex nature of rural schooling in South Africa. In order for a school to function, it requires both pupils and teachers, and in order for pupils and teachers to arrive at school each day they require an effective transport system. For this reason, transport is identified as an important input factor in the effective functioning of the school organisation. I have classified transport as being a part of the human dimension of this research (Layer 3), since transport is essentially controlled and executed through human input.

From the interviews and focus group discussions conducted, transport emerged as a major factor consuming teachers', pupils' and parents' minds, so much so that I have classified it as an obstacle to change within this community. The following excerpts have purposively been chosen to highlight the challenges that transport presents to this community on a daily basis:

- *Transport issues prevent teachers from focussing on the real issues at hand* [FG# 2, 2012, p. 3].

- *Learners have to leave for school very early in the morning – by 10am they are exhausted and very hungry – especially the little ones* [IT# 8, 2012, pp.8-9].

- *Learners have to walk in groups – safety in numbers. Some pupils at our school have been bitten by a viscous dog in the area on their way to school* [IT# 8, 2012, p.8].

- *The conditions of the roads are very poor. They are extremely inhibiting* [FG#1, 2012, p. 8].

- *A lack of transport means pupils are often late for school. Insufficient transport also contributes to rate of high absenteeism, especially on rainy days and in the winter months.*

- *Some pupils walk up to 10km to and from school each day. – Hence children have to rush home in the afternoon. There is no time for extra classes, sport or activities.*

These excerpts indicate that transport is a serious issue hampering the implementation of effective change within the school community. The question of transport is seemingly always uppermost in the minds of teachers, impacting upon their ability to think innovatively and creatively beyond the basics. As a result of transport-related issues – poor road infrastructure and the lengthy distances many teachers travel to school and back each day – there is little time beyond the school day to collaborate effectively, to plan, to discuss and engage in change. The idea of the school as a learning organisation (Moloi, 2005, Section 5.7.1) is particularly difficult to realise in this context. Any planning or workshop activity regarding change tends to occur during the school day, which is counterproductive to a fully functioning school organisation. Extra-curricular involvement in the form of sports and cultural activities is a challenge, since coaches and teaching staff are reliant on lifts from colleagues or the local taxi service, which does not operate in the area beyond three o'clock in the afternoon. Therefore possibilities for the development of the 'whole child' beyond the academic curriculum are very limited. Pupils too face a long walk home, allowing little time for afternoon activities. Transport is also a limiting factor when it comes to parental or guardian support for and involvement in the school, as many parents are simply unable to get to the school during operating hours.

Parents are an important element in the effective functioning of the school organisation and a key source of input. The 'three-legged pot' was used as an analogy by one of the principals interviewed. He noted that a school is like a pot, which has three legs, the teacher, the pupils and the parents: "The pot will not stand if one of the legs is missing". The principal noted that in many schools, the "parental leg" is missing, and this is hampering change and development within the schools in this area in a very big way [IT# 9, 2012, p. 3].

8.4.3 Parental involvement

> The role of parents and guardians in supporting their children's education is vital. Many parents still believe that education is the responsibility of the school and the Department alone, and that they have no role to play. It is crucial that parents are empowered and kept informed of their children's and the school's progress. (Soobrayan, 2012)

The above is extracted from a letter to principals and SGBs from the Director General for Education, highlighting the important role that parents play in supporting their child and the school as a whole. Lack of adequate parental support was identified as an area of concern by

teachers, principals, the DRF and the District Officer with respect to the Umzinyathi community.

> *One of the biggest issues is parental illiteracy and lack of empowerment of parents. Frequently when parents are called in for meetings and their input/responses are required, they simply say 'yes' to everything and agree – with little knowledge or understanding of the decision/implications of the decision on their child or them as a family*. [FG#3, 2012]

The prevalence of illiterate parents was identified as a key issue, in that illiteracy is clearly a hindrance to effective parental support and involvement. It is important, though, to remember with Freire that "illiteracy itself is not the original problem" (1985, p.13). Developing an understanding of these parents and their own unique struggle is important, rather than simply blaming their lack of school involvement on illiteracy. Unfortunately the scope of this study does not allow exploration of the question of illiteracy and related empowerment issues among parents.

The Siyanakekela project and the DRF have been working with parents to try and get them involved in their child's education. The project appears to be having some success, largely attributable to the role of Learner Support Assistants [LSAs] and home visits. However, in the focus group discussions, teachers claimed that change in parental attitudes and involvement has been gradual and beset by many challenges. Some parents have taken it upon themselves to try and work with negative and uninvolved parents, as was reported by one of the principals interviewed. During the focus group discussions it was apparent that teachers felt very strongly about the involvement of parents in assisting and supporting their children: "Parents should know what is taking place at school; we need to change the attitude of parents, as they are being left behind" [FG#3, 2012, pp. 1-3]. During the focus group discussions a fair amount of time was devoted to conversations about parental involvement. This was an issue that teachers felt strongly about and, interestingly enough, felt at ease with discussing. Teachers considered possible reasons why parents had this apathetic attitude towards school and school support, and made the following key suggestions in the focus group discussions. I have synthesised and paraphrased the points discussed in the focus groups in Box 8.1.

Box 8.1

- **Transport** issues – it is difficult for parents to get to their child's school.
- **Illiteracy** – parents cannot assist children with homework, they are unable to read school communication letters and information; being uneducated themselves means they have little ability to relate to their child's schooling experience.
- **Absent parents** – a high percentage of homes are reliant on older siblings or grandparents to raise the children which further adds to the complexity of the problems.
- **Communication** – being a deep rural environment and extremely poor area, there are few means of modern communication devices such as cellphones, the Internet, email and fax. It is difficult to keep in touch with parents.
- **Separate entities –** school and home are seen as completely separate. What happens at school stays at school and what happens as home, stays at home. There is little room for school activities e.g. homework or reading at home.
- **Poverty and unemployment** – these are very real issues and all consuming issues for parents within the community. So often their efforts are focussed around basic survival, that their child's school is seen as superfluous.
- **Payment of school fees** – all the schools in the area are non-fee paying schools. Teachers raised the point that if parents were to have a minimal fee contribution, perhaps they would be more involved, as they have to be sacrificing something to send their child to school. Perhaps then they would want to know more about 'where the money was being invested' per se.

If these ideas are closely examined, they all appear to be linked, and – the issue of transport aside – parents appear to be both the problem and the key to its solution.

The issue of transport is explored at length in Section 8.4.2 of this chapter and as identified in Section 2.5.4 as a common problem across rural districts in South Africa. In my view this is an aspect which is relatively easily addressed with input and commitment from the Umzinyathi district municipality and the KZN Department of Education. Transport is integral to the lives of everyone living in the area, and since populations are expanding within the greater rural area of Umzinyathi the issue is worth addressing. The gravel roads in the area would benefit from regular grading, particularly in the rainy season. A reliable, daily municipal bus service operating on a regular timetable would be of benefit to teachers accessing the area, school pupils and the parental body. A municipal bus service would be more cost efficient for the wider population in the area than the current reliance on taxis.

Parental involvement is a more complex issue to resolve than transport, since one is dealing with the mindsets and attitudes of people. Changes involved at this level take time. In addition, many children living within the Umzinyathi district municipal area attending the

DRF schools have been identified as being 'vulnerable' in that they live in single parental unit homes, or without parents at all. This is discussed in Section 2.5.3.

I believe that schools have a central role to play in getting parents involved and committed to the support of their children's education. In the focus group discussions it became evident that teachers want parents to be involved, and in my view teachers and school principals need to realise that this responsibility lies with them.

The issue of school fees was raised in the focus group discussion, with one of the teachers making mention of the fact that there is limited accountability on the part of the parents since the schools in the study are all classified as non-feeing paying institutions. I believe that this could be the **starting point** for schools in terms of parental involvement, and I understand that some schools are already working towards such a plan. It is self-evident that, given the socio-economic profile of this community, the payment of school fees is problematic. However, in my view parents should still have to pay an annual amount to the school. In a case where a minimal contribution is impossible, parents should be encouraged to volunteer their services to the school in some way; this could be in the kitchen, the school garden, or even assisting with basic administrative tasks. In the case of absent parents, a guardian would have to fulfil this role.

Guardian school volunteer services should be formalised and properly organised by the school, with a roster being set up. A member of staff from the school needs to be in charge of running and overseeing this volunteer system. Attracting a regular group of parents or guardians to the school on something approaching a daily basis would be half the battle won.

Schools would benefit from additional help and support, while the school would become a part of parents' lives too. Through this greater exposure and involvement, the gap between school and home life would slowly begin to close. In my view, having more parents around the school would make teachers more accountable to the pupils and the job of teaching, ensuring their timeous arrival at lessons and the meaningful engagement of pupils in learning activities.

Through regular attendance at school by a group of guardians, communication with these care givers will also improve. Meetings could be set up more regularly, and in time the establishment of a school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) might even be a possibility. Such an example illustrates the role of various school stakeholders working collaboratively

towards effecting change. This is in line with Fullan's (2001) idea of human relationships and knowledge creation through working towards common goals within a change process (see Section 5.8.5).

Illiteracy has been cited as a problem in this context, resulting in parents and/or guardians being unable to actively assist and support their child at home when he or she is required to complete homework activities. Freire (1985, p. 7) suggests that the concept of illiteracy is naive, noting that "indices statistically compiled by international organisations, distort the level of 'civilization' of certain societies". Freire warns that illiteracy can be viewed as a manifestation of people's "incapacity, lack of intelligence or proverbial laziness" (1985, p. 7), and this may well be the impression that outsiders and/or teachers may hold of illiterate parents in the area who are deemed unsupportive.

However, in my view, schools need to be playing a greater role in reaching out to the immediate community in order to break down such perceptions. Schools need to be viewed as places of learning and empowerment, not just for children, but adults too. The proposed guardian school volunteer service discussed above could be combined with adult literacy classes. And as the programme becomes more successful, it will have the effect of attracting greater support and commitment from the community.

On the subject of adult literacy programmes being offered at local schools, I draw on the writings of Paulo Freire, who is known for his work among oppressed communities within less developed parts of the world, particularly in Brazil. His work commenced with interaction and involvement with trade unions and community education, teaching the Portuguese language, and was not initially about literacy. In order to develop this community education programme Freire devised a teaching and learning model known as "Culture Circles" (Taylor 1993, p. 22). Freire discovered that the method of teaching in culture circles was an effective means of structuring both discussion and collective action (Taylor 1993, p. 22). It was through these culture circles that Freire discovered the issue of illiteracy amongst the peasant communities of Brazil, out of which his literacy programmes eventually developed. I believe that in the Umzinyathi community, schools could set up similar 'culture circles' for volunteering parents. Through these circles, adult literacy programmes could be formulated, encouraging local empowerment alongside greater awareness of the outside world for parents living in the area. Such circles could provide collaborative and non-

threatening learning opportunities for parents. Through this sharing, literacy circles could become support networks for parents and schools alike.

It is evident that for a school to function optimally, and for it to be a place where change and innovation can occur, the input of parents remains crucial: "It is important for parents to be involved with and supportive of their children's education. Children feel encouraged when their parents are informed about their progress at school" (NMF, 2005, p. 119). I have argued that the responsibility to ensure parents and guardians become involved in the life of the school lies with the school itself. Through the example of a guardian school volunteer service, I have illustrated how the gap between school and home life can be reduced so that parents and guardians can play a more active role in the life of their child's school. Such programmes also have the potential to support parents and guardians in improving and developing their skills, which may serve ultimately to reduce unemployment and poverty in the region.

8.5 Teachers and change

The latter part of this chapter focuses specifically on the **role of teachers** within the DRF's school-based intervention. This discussion seeks to address the second research goal of this study, which was:

- to examine how **teachers** within the Umzinyathi district municipality understand change; and
- to examine their experiences and participation within the DRF intervention.

In the course of analysing the experiences and participation of teachers within the intervention at the Empirical level (Layer 3 in the heuristic framework, see Figure 4.1), I found it necessary to extend my exploration of the subject into all three of Bhaskar's domains and associated layers in the heuristic framework.

Teachers play a vital role in the school-based intervention in that they are the individuals who will be initiating changes in the teaching and learning environment. At the World Education Forum hosted in Dakar in 2000, a framework for action (Education for All) was put forward (UNESCO, 2013). This section of the framework describes the role that teachers should be playing as far as change and intervention is concerned: "Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based

programmes, they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change" (cited in Dembélé & Miaro, 2013, p. 188). The literature, generally, points to the importance of teacher involvement and collegiality in working towards improvement (Marris, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992; Newmann et al., 2000; Fullan, 2001; Dufour, Eaker & Dufour, 2005; Stoll et al., 2006; Dufour et al., 2006; Mourshed et al., 2010).

This study has revealed that teachers are on the path to transformation and that the DRF's school-based intervention has contributed to greater engagement and participation on their part, through an enhanced understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The following positive developments came across in the interviews and focus group discussions:

- *Teachers have brightened*. (IT#1, 2011, p. 6)
- *Principals have become more confident*. (IT#1, 2011, p. 6)
- *The Delta Foundation workshop revealed that teachers were interested in change*: *"there was an electric engagement and desire for change"*. (IT#4, 2011, p. 4)
- *The school climate has definitely changed. There is a buzz and sense of direction*. (IT#1, 2011, p. 3)
- *The relationships between teachers and the SGBs are improving despite many challenges*. (IT#5, 2011, p. 3)
- *Teachers are getting there somehow because they are conscious of their profession*. (IT#6, 2011, p. 4)
- *Teachers are beginning to follow up and take a greater interest in their pupils*. (IT#6, 2011, p. 4)
- *Both teacher and pupil school attendance has improved*. (IT#6, 2011, p. 4)

Below is a summary of the some of the positive changes observed across various schools, largely through the work of teachers and their commitment to the DRF's school-based intervention. This information was reported in several of the interviews and in the focus group discussions with teachers.

- Teachers are a lot more knowledgeable about policy.
- Teacher training workshops have given teachers a vision.
- Teachers are arranging extra workshops and have supervised homework sessions for pupils after school and over weekends.
- Teachers are working hard to improve reading and literacy skills.
- More effective collaboration is occurring among teachers and schools involved within the DRF intervention.

Despite these positive changes, I argue that change at the level of the teacher is still, on the whole, at a very **superficial level.** I feel that deep change has only occurred in a select group of teachers and principals.

8.5.1 A superficial understanding of change

My contention is that teachers' knowledge and understanding of the DRF's school-based intervention is superficial. This is based on evidence from my interviews, focus group discussions and casual conversations with teachers.

The majority of teachers appear not to have fully engaged with, nor even to comprehend the various intervention and change processes at work. Alvarado, cited in Fullan (2001, pp. 60-62) emphasises the importance of "moral and intellectual attention" in order for deep and sustained change to occur. I agree with Alvarado, and go so far as to say that a shift in these rural school teachers' moral and intellectual engagement with the change processes is fundamental for the long term success and sustainability of the DRF's school-based intervention. But in my view this has not taken place. (Moral perspectives on leadership and change are presented in Section 5.8.4.2).

It is evident from their attendance at workshops and training sessions that large numbers of teachers are committed to change. And while there is willingness and openness, the real challenge is the **transference** of the skills or knowledge gained into **action**. International research on school reform indicates that only a very specific pedagogical mode of teachers' learning will result in changes within their practice (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Ball & Cohen, 1999). This pedagogical model involves labour-intensive interventions, such as ongoing collaboration between teachers and teacher experts. This takes time and requires teacher experts, and my personal concern is that in the Umzinyathi rural school community there are few teacher experts.

It seems that teachers within the DRF schools have not fully internalised the process of change, and as a result are practising a kind of 'window dressing'. The following observation was made in a focus group discussion, by one of the volunteers working in the local community schools.

This observation touches on issue of teachers' **moral responsibility** as well as the **necessity** of their understanding the "bigger picture and reaching beyond themselves" (Fullan, 2003, p. 18):

> *But as far as teachers altering actual programmes or changing actual lesson plans, I have not seen that much at all. The teachers will say they are doing this and they are doing that, but I don't think it is a reality…. When district employees come to ask "Is this being done? Is that being done?", they go to the principal's office, they sit there with a questionnaire and ask "is this happening?", and when I know it is a lie the principal will say "yes this is happening". And so I don't think there is a whole lot of accuracy from a lot of those 'district check-ins'.* [FG#1, 2012, p. 3]

As a result, one can draw the conclusion that not all teachers have responded to or embraced the necessary changes, and that there appears to be little change as far as teaching strategies are concerned, while teacher attitudes and values have not altered significantly. Surface changes may have taken place, with teachers reporting to district officials – with varying degrees of honesty – that they have changed their ways and that teaching and learning strategies are improving, when in actual fact there is very little evidence to suggest that this is actually the case.

One has to consider why this is the case, when there appears to be a willingness to participate and 'change'. For some teachers change may be associated with an increase in workload, and for others it comes with a certain degree of fear, as suggested by one of the principals in an interview: "changes involve teachers having to move out of their comfort zones, which is viewed as a load" [IT#8, 2012]. In the light of the recent policy changes which have taken place in South Africa, Morrow (2007) argues that such changes have lead to the *confusion* and *marginalisation* of teachers, and – I would add – contributed to a loss of professional confidence amongst them.

In my view, for teachers to fully engage in a process of change they need to be confident and competent professionals. This confidence and competence will enable them to take risks, to experiment and to embrace change and not be put off when something fails. Competence and confidence will enable the teacher to be sufficiently reflexive, to think and engage with their practice critically and continually improve and develop their pedagogy. Taylor and Vinjevold (1999, p. 161) speak of the development of teachers' conceptual knowledge in an effort to improve their confidence and ability to deal with pupils more effectively within classroom

situations. But for Shalem (2003, p. 39), the idea of conceptual knowledge is too simplistic. She argues that order fully to develop teacher confidence and competence one has to consider the domain of teacher knowledge as "broad and multi-layered" (Turner & Bisset, 1999, pp. 44-45, as cited by Shalem, 2003, p. 39). This broad and multi-layered knowledge involves:

> substantive subject knowledge, syntactic subject knowledge, beliefs about the subject, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge/models of teaching, knowledge of learners (cognitive) knowledge of learners (empirical), knowledge of self, knowledge of educational contexts, and knowledge of educational ends. (Turner & Bisset, 1999, pp. 44-45, as cited by Shalem, 2003, p. 39)

Many South Africa teachers, perhaps particularly those working in rural schools, are seen to be lacking in the necessary professional competence and confidence, and the multi-layered knowledge required (see Section 6.4.3-4).

The teachers and principals working in the DRF schools have been fortunate to have had the additional benefit of curriculum support and training from an external education consultant (see Section 8.3). Despite this additional training, however, in my view their knowledge and understanding of the school-based intervention processes remains superficial. Teacher training, development and change needs to be an ongoing process, led from within the community and not by outsiders. Teachers need to realise the importance and value of collaboration and teaming. Shalem (2003, p. 38) speaks of creating "meaningful opportunities to change". Cohen and Ball (1999) suggest that one needs to consider teachers' professional development in a similar light to that of improving learners' classroom instruction. They argue that, in addition to curriculum and learning materials, the improvement of teachers' learning requires an appropriate pedagogy of instruction. Shalem (2003, p. 38) explains that this refers to what teacher trainers or workshop developers need to understand about the "*ways in which* and the *context in which* teachers learn the content of their programme" (emphasis added). The "ways in which" relate to what teachers may find difficult or foreign to their original practice or understanding of the material; whilst "context in which" accounts for enabling teachers to better understand *how* their pupils learn, and *why* in some cases their pupils are failing to succeed. Furthermore Anamuah-Mensah et al., (2013, p. 201) argue that the structures of teacher education and training in the 21st century need to be reconsidered and rethought in fundamental ways. In their view the potential role of technology needs to be

explored and realised if significant improvements in access to quality teacher training and development are to be achieved.

Despite efforts made on the part of the DRF to collaborate with teachers, in the focus group discussions it was revealed that many teachers and principals are not good at sharing knowledge and being supportive of change processes. There appears to be a certain power-related tension, in terms of which knowledge is kept for personal gain, at the expense of sharing it with the group and facilitating the improvement of the entire organisation. This attitude to power may have ties with a lack of understanding of the democratic principles upon which the new school curriculum has been founded, especially since traditional tribal leadership practices remain in place in this community (see Section 7.3.2 for detail in this regard).

In my opinion, the DRF schools need to be working towards becoming "Learning Organisations". Moloi (2005, p. 2) emphasises the role that learning organisations play in creating empowering systems which support and encourage new learning habits (see Section 5.7.1). The literature points strongly towards the importance of collaboration and teaming in the context of working towards change within schools (Maris, 1975; Sergiovanni, 1992; Newmann et al., 2000; Fullan, 2001; and Mourshed et al., 2010; see Section 5.7). I argue that for change to be fully embraced and sustainable, teachers need to be working together, sharing and learning through example. McCormick, Fox, Carmichael and Proctor (2010) suggest a networked approach that brings teachers and schools together in supported forms of education and training, while Elmore & Burney (1977) note that meaningful learning opportunities for teachers are essential all the way through a process of change.

Commitment to developing a deep understanding of school-based interventions and change requires a certain degree of accountability. Elmore (2000, p. 9) notes that SMTs and teachers need to accept greater responsibility and accountability for learner achievement and overall school performance. He argues that speculative issues such as poor family structures, limited ability, and so forth, no longer hold true. I agree that schools need to start taking responsibility and stop placing the blame on external factors that may only be partially linked to the problem. Teacher accountability and professionalism was identified as an area of concern amongst the DRF schools. This emerged from my interviews with several school

principals, who noted that on numerous occasions teachers needed to be reminded of their professional roles and responsibilities.

The following observation was made by one of the school volunteers in the focus group discussion:

> *A typical teacher's work day is seen as being from 08h00-14h00. Lessons are frequently skipped to get marking and preparation done, as this is not done at home or after school. Teachers are often late and spend too much of the school day doing non-teaching related activities*. [FG#1, 2012]

The issue of teacher accountability is contested in the South African context, particularly given the strength of teacher trade unions that have no culture of accountability (these unions are discussed Section 6.6.3). This issue is emphasised in international thinking too: the framework for action set by the Dakar Summit in 2000 emphasises the fact that teachers must accept their professional responsibilities and be accountable to both learners and communities (cited in Dembélé & Miaro-II, 2013, p. 188). This research confirms the importance of teacher accountability and responsibility in driving change forward and ensuring the DRF's school-based interventions remain sustainable.

8.5.2 Acknowledging the role of teachers in the intervention

I have pointed out that few teachers are actively involved in decision making, debate and discussion with regard to school-based changes. It seems that the majority of teachers remain on the **receiving end** of interventions. Teachers are required to implement interventions and changes that they know little about and have played almost no role in devising. In addition to this, their understanding of the processes of change and the reasons for change is superficial and approximate (as discussed in Section 8.5.1, above). I believe that these factors are obstacles to long-term sustainable change within a school organisation. In my view until such time as teachers themselves **own** the process of change, deep change will never occur.

Despite my argument that teachers have played a limited role in the school-based intervention, there was general consensus among the teachers I interviewed that their role in change is fundamental. Perhaps this is the first affirmative step in the change process, recognising the need to change and identifying the role one must play in moving into this process.

> *Teachers should be playing a greater role in the decision making process. They are the ones that are working at ground level, they are within reality and know and understand the situations within their school*. [FG#3, 2012, pp. 3-4]

The literature points to the importance of individuals wanting to change and, importantly, believing that change is necessary (Cummings & Worley, 1993; French & Bell, 1999). This study has revealed an interest and a willingness to change on the part of many of the teachers and school principals. In my view teachers are beginning to open themselves up to change and display signs of change readiness, which is an encouraging sign that the DRF's intervention is beginning to take effect.

The following excerpts have been taken from my focus group discussions and select interviews. These quotations by teachers acknowledge the importance of their role and involvement in the process of change.

- *Teachers themselves should be involved in change. They should be saying we need to be involved in this*. [IT#8, 2012, p. 5]

- *Teachers need to have a say and a chance to participate. Ultimately it is the ordinary teacher who has to execute many of the changes. [FG#2*, 2012, p. 5]

- *Without the input of the educator, a school is nothing*. [FG#3, 2012, p. 5]

- *We have involved our teachers in change by conducting a SWOT analysis. We have worked hard to identify: where we are, where we want to be and what our weaknesses are. We are trying to involve all our staff in change and development*. [IT#10, 2012, p. 4]

I raise the question here of whether teachers truly understand **wha**t their roles are and what their level of participation **should be**, particularly as argued earlier if their understanding of the change processes and intervention strategy is superficial? My interpretation of the conversations that unfolded in the focus group discussions is that teachers **want to be heard**, and **want to participate** in school intervention processes. But my research points to very limited involvement on the part of the teachers. I have concluded that this may be the result of a lack of knowledge and understanding of the changes and intervention strategies, as discussed in Section 8.5.1 of this chapter. In addition my observations and analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions have led me to believe that teachers have limited

opportunities to speak out as schools are predominantly controlled and run by the SMT, SGB and DoE/DBE.

The following excerpts speak to the issue of control and decision making in schools:

> *"The DoE are the decision makers. They do not always know the reality on the ground. The SMT and SGB are more the implementers rather than the decision makers per se"*. [FG#3, 2012, p. 3]

> *"The SGB, SMT and DRF make the decisions in our school. However my door is always open for assistance, suggestions and development. I am not able to see all angles*". [IT#10, 2012, p. 4]

In addition, I believe that cultural factors play a role in decision making within this community, even within schools. Socio-cultural hierarchies will determine who will speak and contribute:

> *"There are important cultural elements with respect to decision making in a school. The one with the highest respect or the elder in the room will speak for the group ... [t]his is how people operate in this community"*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 10]

8.6 Beyond the teacher's world

Section 8.5 of this chapter addressed the second research goal of this study, an analysis of the lived experiences and participation of teachers within the DRF's school-based intervention. From my interactions with teachers and principals as well as from the data gathered in the various interviews and focus group discussions, I have come to recognise that teachers are eager to develop and engage in the process of change initiated by the DRF (see Section 8.3). And indeed, there have been visible changes in teaching and learning. But I have argued that, on the whole, teachers' understanding of change is superficial. Sayed (2001, p. 196) speaks of the tension between "knowing what and knowing why": in my view, the teachers may "know what", but seem not so sure of "why". It is the "why" aspect of change that deep and lasting changes will begin to take shape.

I also maintain that there is insufficient collaboration among teachers, both within their own school and between the DRF schools. This, according to teachers, is linked to various power-

sharing tensions. I have also made the comment that teachers and principals need to be more accountable for their actions and commitment to the profession.

Section 8.5 of this chapter has focused on the actual experiences of teachers and principals within the Umzinyathi district municipality. But this study is rooted in a critical realist ontology and therefore acknowledges a reality beyond the "teachers' worlds". The following section of this discussion begins to look beyond the individual teacher's perspectives in order to account for their superficial knowledge and engagement in the DRF's school-based intervention.

8.6.1 The Empirical

Within this domain, the teacher's own sense of understanding and conceptualisation of the teaching and learning process is unpacked and illuminated.

In my interview sessions and focus group discussions, I had conversations with a total of 29 teachers. Of those 29, 14 had been teaching for more than 12 years. I concluded that a large number of teachers in my study could be classified as **experienced**. Through a brief questionnaire document that I required teachers to complete at the start of each interview/focus group, I was able to determine subjects taught and degree of subject speciality (see Case Record, DF2:DOC2C). The questionnaire revealed few subject specialists, with many teachers teaching a broad range of subjects across the various learning areas. Many teachers were teaching more than three different subjects, and often in seemingly non-complimentary combinations, such as Mathematics, Art and Culture.

My research seeks to understand the experiences and participation of teachers in a process of change, so as a result I did not spend a significant amount of time observing lessons within the schools. However I did spend some time in classrooms, I attended various teachers' workshops, and my visits were long enough to enable me to perceive the general 'atmosphere' and 'culture' within the schools. Based on my experiences and observations as recorded in my research journal, I reached the following conclusions about teaching and learning.

Lessons are structured and inflexible, and I felt that the kind of teaching and learning taking place was narrowly focused and very classroom based. There was little room for creativity, critical thought and individuality. In the course of my engagement with teachers, I noticed that many demonstrated poor English language skills and had superficial subject knowledge

in many areas. This is not helped by the fact that few seem to be subject specialists. As a result, teaching and learning are very theoretical and based on the examples provided in the curriculum statement or textbook. I wondered whether pupils were able to relate to or understand much of what was being taught, given their circumstances and learning context. In my observations of both primary and secondary school lessons, I noted that learners were mainly passive and became vocal only to repeat in unison the main facts or points being taught.

The overall impression I gleaned, from my observations and time spent with teachers, was that little effort was being made to implement strategies for teaching and learning advocated by the current education policy and curriculum. This is despite the numerous curriculum and policy workshops and training sessions teachers have attended over the years.

8.6.2 The Actual

The Actual domain involves the DRF's school-based intervention. I have identified this layer of my analysis as being associated with actions and interventions. The DRF school-based intervention is a complex and holistic intervention aimed at improving a variety of aspects of the school organisation (see Section 7.4). In analysing the DRF's EDP, a number of key areas of their intervention relate specifically to teaching and learning and therefore involve the teacher directly. These include:

- regular and current teacher training;
- competent computer literacy skills for all teachers;
- collaboration and networking opportunities for teachers;
- high levels of teacher attendance;
- teacher commitment, honesty and accountability;
- an emphasis on academic competence, where schools should be results-focused, (examination pass rates being above eighty-five percent);
- achievement and high competency in mathematical, literacy and English language skills; and
- regular and reliable school-based assessments administered by teachers.

The results of my research revealed that teachers are on the **receiving end** of the teaching and learning-based interventions put in place by the DRF. They are required to **implement** the changes and strategies within their individual classrooms once they have assimilated them. At

the empirical and actual level, then, teachers are on the whole **not involved** in the change process or decision making from the outset; they remain at the **receiving level** of the intervention.

In my view, teachers are seen as the '**implementers'** of change in the classroom (although, as already suggested, not much implementation of change is actually occurring). Jansen (2000) and Sayed (2001) both argue that teachers have been granted little opportunity to devise and introduce change in their own classrooms. Section 6.3 provides a review of the literature concerned with school and education policy reform in South Africa. The review provides strong evidence to suggest that little change is visible in schools today, beyond that of policy (Jansen, 2000 & Sayed, 2001).

The following questions come to mind:

- Why are teachers unable to effectively engage and involve themselves in the decision making and intervention process?
- Why do teachers remain on the receiving level of the school-based intervention?
- Why does there appear to be little implementation of improved teaching and learning taking place within classrooms?

I believe the answers to these questions are to be found within the domain of the Real.

8.6.3 The Real

Sections 7.3.1-2 explore in detail the transitive and intransitive factors operating within the domain of the Real. These are broad, complex and deep-rooted factors that are difficult to change. My research has revealed that the elements within the domain of the Real have created **obstacles** to the effective and sustainable change of teachers working within school organisations as well as among the community at large.

Cultural factors plus inadequate teacher training and development are the reason for many teachers' superficial knowledge of their teaching subjects and failure to grasp the rationale of change. They are also in part responsible for teachers' reticence, lack of confidence and inability to participate in the decision making and implementation processes associated with a school-based intervention, or even in their own classrooms.

Teachers are beset with a number of tensions pulling them in different directions and impacting upon the manner in which they are involved and affected by change processes.

Education policy and new curriculum documents are informed by principles relating to human rights, democracy, modernity and global connections, which are in direct conflict with the ways of thinking, social hierarchies and traditional customs characteristic of the Umzinyathi community (see Sections 2.6 and 7.3.2).

Teachers' personal identities which have been shaped by both cultural factors and the previous apartheid regime (48% of teachers interviewed had been teaching for more than 16 years, see Case record, DF:DOC2C) are now in conflict with 'policy images' dictating the roles of contemporary teachers in post-apartheid South Africa. (Teacher identity is discussed in Section 6.5.)

The key to greater teacher empowerment is always 'more training'. But currently, much of the training offered by the DBE, teacher unions, NGOs and other stakeholders tends to be superficial in nature, offering little practical advice and with few follow-up visits or training sessions to ensure that it has been effective and properly understood. (Teacher training and development is detailed and discussed in Section 6.4.4.) I do not of course dispute the importance of teacher training and development, but I believe that the type, manner and duration of training need to be rethought. I also believe that there should be greater emphasis on schools becoming effective learning organisations. Teachers need to work collaboratively and be exposed to good teacher role models within their schools. Here I advocate the idea of a 'teacher expert' (Shalem, 2003) in each school. This 'teacher expert' should act as a mentor, observing lessons and providing constructive critical commentary and feedback, and in doing so increasing teacher accountability.

In order for the DRF's school-based intervention to be effective and maintained into the future, deep change needs to occur at the innermost level of the empirical, the level of the individual teacher within the classroom. This section of my analysis has highlighted the complexity of this process and the extensive time frames required, since deep change only comes with changes in value and belief systems, personal identities and basic ways of thinking about teaching and learning.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the human dimension within a process of change, focusing on the second goal of this research study, the role and experience of teachers.

The chapter has argued for the importance of partnerships when one is working towards a change intervention. The fact that the DRF is working in the Umzinyathi community and the intervention process is driven from within has emerged as an important contributing factor to the success of both the partnership process and the change intervention as a whole. In addition, this research has revealed how the kinds of partnerships which develop are closely aligned with the role of leadership. Aspects of transformative-moral leadership practice have seemingly emerged from the DRF's working in concert with the community.

Through capturing teachers' and principals voices and stories, this chapter provides sound evidence of the need for the DBE and policy makers to act in a manner that is more supportive, accountable and relevant to the needs of rural teachers. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the role schools need to play in fostering support and involvement from parents in order for change interventions to remain sustainable and ultimately to achieve the goal of successful teaching and learning.

The chapter closes with a discussion focused on the role of teachers within the school-based intervention. Here I have argued that the teachers' knowledge and understanding of change is superficial: this is explored and accounted for both from within the teachers' lived experiences and, more broadly, in terms of the context and reality beyond the individual teacher's consciousness.

CHAPTER 9

PHASE III: TOWARDS SYNTHESIS

Participation enhances empowerment, and empowerment in turn enhances performance and individual well being.
(French & Bell, 1999, p. 88)

9.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the DRF's school-based intervention as a whole and provides a synthesis of the findings using both complexity and systems theory. The chapter finds that, given the particular context of the case study, systems theory provides a more appropriate set of perspectives than complexity theory. Systems theory therefore furnishes a framework for the final analysis activity.

Systems theory is used to explore the inputs, throughput phase and outputs of the DRF's school-based intervention strategy. Nadler's (1998) Congruence Model approach to Systems Theory and Organisational Development has been adapted for the purposes of this theoretical analysis. The study has revealed several breakdowns, which are helpful as a diagnostic in refining strategies for further school development and improvement. Havelock (1971) used Systems Theory as a means of accounting for the difficulties associated with school-based interventions (see Section 5.5), and the relative slowness of change which tends to be common in educational institutions. The findings from my research are assessed in the light of Havelock's (1971) conclusions, in an attempt to highlight weaknesses in the system and provide recommendations for a more efficient way forward.

9.2 The heuristic framework

Section 4.3.1.1 provides a detailed account of the heuristic framework (Figure 4.1) used in the analysis of the data collected during Phases I and II of this study. Chapter 4 describes the layered approach to the investigation, reflecting the complex and integrated nature of this enquiry into experiences and perceptions of change. In this chapter, Phase III of the study, I return to the framework in an effort to synthesise the research and look at the findings in the light of the various theoretical perspectives that inform this study. With reference to Figure

4.1, the lower red layer is a representation of this process of synthesis. The pink vortex structure in the figure is representative of the case as a whole and attempts to capture the complex and fluid nature of change as revealed in the findings of the study. Merriam and Associates (2002, p. 423) speak of qualitative research as a richly descriptive process. These authors go on to explain that it is only when conducting a qualitative study that one really "learns what it means to be the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, how the design is really 'emergent' and not pre-determined". The fluid nature of this research process and the adoption of a critical realist ontological position have afforded me a clearer understanding of the sometimes hidden complexity of a process of change (Kazi, 2003).

This research has involved the DRF, various community members, teachers and principals, and schools as organisational entities. The aim of my research was to provide insights necessary for a deep understanding of a particular school-based intervention, in terms of both the approach to change and teachers' experiences thereof, within the broader context of rural education in South Africa. Chapter 8 explored the human dimension of the study, using change theory to describe and analyse the DRF's approach to change (see Section 8.3). The role of teachers, in terms of their participation in and experience of the intervention process, is documented in Section 8.5.

In this chapter I consider the intervention as a whole and draw on organisational development theories to understand the operation and functioning of schools, particularly in the light of a change intervention. Section 5.2 outlines relevant literature within the OD domain, whilst Sections 5.2.2-3 explore the notion of schools as organisations. When looking at a school organisation as a whole, I needed to consider the broader context, the processes associated with the change intervention put in place by the DRF, and the people involved (Chapters 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8 cover this ground). It is now, in Phase III and towards the end of the research journey, that a synthesis is possible, tying together the context, the intervention and the human elements involved in the case. Organisational development theories have provided the theoretical lens to enable this process of synthesis.

In this study the more traditional approach to understanding the functioning of organisations, systems theory, has been examined (see Section 5.3), whilst the literature pertaining to complexity theory, a more contemporary paradigm making headway in the Social Sciences domain, is also reviewed (see Section 5.4). This chapter delves into the question of the appropriateness of each OD theory to this particular case study. In the end systems theory is

seen as providing a more appropriate theoretical perspective for synthesising findings about the DRF school-based intervention as a whole.

9.3 Complexity theory

9.3.1 Concept and uses

Davis and Sumara (2005), Lemke and Sabelli (2008) and Kuhn (2008) have analysed the relevance and applicability of complexity theory to educational organisations. As detailed in Section 5.4, complexity theory is a recently arrived paradigm in the social sciences that offers an alternative view of the world from more traditional and linear approaches (Kuhn, 2008). I considered complexity theory as a framework in this study, because it is contemporary and because it seemed appropriate to the multilayered nature of the research.

Espinosa and Porter (2011) have argued that traditional linear frameworks of organisational analysis are no longer appropriate in the 21st century, in that they are unable to capture the complexity of the modern organisation. Section 5.4 notes the appropriateness of complexity theory to the postmodern world in which we live, a world characterised by a global economy and a highly networked society in the "connectionist or knowledge era" (Halal, 1998; Miles, 1998; Halal & Taylor, 1999, Hogue & Lord, 2007). It is with this in mind that I argue against the appositeness of complexity theory as a framework for synthesising the elements of this study.

9.3.2 Complexity theory as a theoretical framework

Complexity theory seems apt for organisations that increasingly have to function with speed, flexibility and innovation to keep up in a competitive global context. While schools are undoubtedly complex organisations, I maintain that complexity theory does not provide the most suitable way of construing the schools in this study. My argument is based on the evidence presenting itself in the research process.

- **The micro and macro context**

Henrickson and McKelvey (2002) suggest that complexity theory fits the dynamics of social, managerial and organisational behaviour associated with high velocity, knowledge-type environments. But the DRF is located within a developing rural African context, the Umzinyathi district municipality, which is described in some detail in Chapter 3. The chapter highlights the fact that a high percentage of the population remains uneducated in this region.

The poverty index is high, with Umzinyathi being referred to as one of the most deprived municipal districts across South Africa (Deprivation Index Survey 2008/9). Widespread infrastructural and amenity backlogs are the norm, with few homesteads reporting access to running water and electricity. Mobile phone usage is limited due to its cost but also due to the lack of a nearby telecommunication tower, meaning that phone signals remain poor and unreliable. With this in mind, access to the Internet is compromised, and further limited because of poor access to the national power grid. Thus schools in this district cannot be regarded as part of a sophisticated, highly connected knowledge era. To a great extent the community and its schools remain isolated and separated from the knowledge and connectionist era associated with the Western world and complexity theory.

This study is grounded in a critical realist ontology and therefore recognises the reality of an external world beyond each individual's consciousness. Boughey and Niven (2012) note how the role of a realist researcher is to identify a deeper layer of generative mechanisms that may not be immediately obvious. Bhaskar's (1979) critical realist theory has assisted me in delving deeper into the less obvious and intangible context shaping the conditions observed in the Umzinyathi schools. The lack of sophisticated technology and infrastructural amenities is largely attributed to South Africa's complex socio-historical context, in terms of which former apartheid homeland areas like most of Umzinyathi Municipality still bear the brunt of inequalities. Despite efforts since 1994, statistics attest to the poor living conditions rural dwellers in this area face, as a consequence of separate development policies dating back over the previous two centuries (see Chapters 2 and 3).

- **A tribal authority**

Complexity theory offers a host of approaches to understanding the social structure and organisation of institutions such as schools (Manson, 2001, p. 414). As explored in Section 5.8.2 and Section 8.2.4, Complex Leadership Theory (CLT) is frequently used as a contemporary approach to leadership within organisations. The merits and applicability of CLT in relation to this study are explored in Sections 5.8.2 and Section 8.2.4. I conclude that, given the system of governance and culture that prevails in this community, the application of complexity theory is basically inappropriate.[21]

[21] See the reference to Westaway's work (2012) in Section 7.3.2. Westaway argues that "the areas of our country that were reserved for African groups in terms of the 1913 Land Act, are still, after 1994, governed distinctly and differently from the rest of South Africa" (p. 116).

- **Organisational bureaucracy**

The South African National Curriculum Statement is strongly rooted in the democratic principles which underpin our country's Constitution. To quote selectively from the Social Sciences CAPS (RSA, 2011c, p. 5) document:

> The *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) Grades R – 12 is based on the following principles:
>
> - Social transformation: ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of the population;
>
> - Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors;
> - Credibility, quality and efficiency: providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries.

While the NCS strongly supports democratic ideals and values of inclusion, credibility and efficiency as revealed in the curriculum statement, the results of this case study reveal an Education Department and school administration system that operate otherwise. Both the KZN DoE and school leadership teams have a top-down leadership approach, in terms of which individual teachers have little say in the running of their schools. In South Africa today, schools remain hierarchical structures, effectively run by SMTs and SGBs with overarching input from district officials, all of them following instructions and demands from national government. Section 8.2.4 analyses CLT within the context of this case study, while Section 8.4 provides insight into the various human obstacles to the change process focussed upon in the study. Again, complexity theory views leadership as a dynamically integrated system (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 302), while I argue that the national system of leadership and bureaucracy in South African education is not a dynamically integrated system. This is reflected within each school, where leadership structures remain top-down and, in my view, fairly static and one-dimensional. The following quotations from various interviews and focus group discussions point towards such a one-dimensional managerial and governance system:

- *So right, let's have a turnaround strategy for all the teachers.* ***What is it that they are going to do****? And then we do a follow up…****We have said*** *with our prep, our preparation, teachers have to submit Monday morning and we check the prep*. [IT#8, 2012]

- *The* ***huge amount of paper work*** *prevents the management team from attending to the real tasks at hand*. [FG#2, 2012]

- *The DoE appoints staff* ***without knowing our needs****. Today a Foundation phase teacher arrived, but we don't need a Foundation phase teacher*. [IT#10, 2012, p. 5]

- *With a very* ***top-down approach*** *teachers felt the DoE has* ***little understanding or empathy*** *of their real needs – particularly within a deep rural environment. "There needs to* ***be more research done at ground level*** *to know exactly what we need to do to build that empowerment"*. [FG#1, 2012, p. 7]

- *Changes imposed by the DoE are very top-down and involve* ***little consultation*** *and almost no training – or in some cases the training is too late. For example, The Circuit Manager whom I interviewed at the DoE office in Dundee admitted to me that the DoE has* ***been late in rolling out CAPS training*** *this year, and as a result the teacher unions were taking it upon themselves to train and support teachers in this regard*. [IT#7, 2012]

The organisational bureaucracy in school managerial systems in this case study points towards a larger system that is controlling and restricting, yet without being particularly efficient. The system is restricting the potential for creative and innovative ways of running a school that could be realised if a complexity theory approach was adopted. But this would make no sense in the context of the traditional leadership and cultural systems which predominate in this region. I therefore look towards systems theory to structure the overall synthesis of the DRF's school-based intervention process.

9.4 Systems theory

Systems theory helps us to understand the inter-relatedness of elements constituting our environment, and in so doing develop a richer understanding of a particular situation. Systems theory views organisations as open systems in active exchange and interaction with their environments (French & Bell, 1999, p. 82). Through my observations and interactions with teachers, principals and other community members I came to recognise the complexity of change within a rural school environment. I therefore saw systems theory as a more appropriate and relevant OD lens from which the DRF's school-based intervention could be

explored as a whole. The reason for this is that I came to the realisation that the Umzinyathi community was closer to a more definite structure and bureaucratic paradigm. Traditional value systems and leadership styles are more aligned to a systems theory approach, despite systems theory being seen as less suitable to current societal trends in the Western world (Manson, 2001, p. 406).

As elaborated upon in Section 5.3, schools as organisations lend themselves to the systems theory approach. Organisations such as schools are open systems, since, according to French and Bell (1999, p. 82), all open systems are "input-throughput-output mechanisms". Through the analysis of my data in Phases I and II of the research, I conclude that the work and intervention strategies set in place by the DRF are output driven. By this I mean that the DRF has **definite goals** and **a plan of action** as to how they envisage each of their 17 schools changing and hopefully improving (refer to Section 7.4 for a discussion of the DRF's EDP which explores the goals and school-based intervention plan of action).

The DRF's EDP (see Appendix C) is comprehensive and speaks to the various goals towards which the organisation (in concert with other stakeholders) is working. In terms of the systems theory approach, I would like to identify these goals as the **desired outputs**. In order for these outputs to be achieved a number of inputs are required as well as various throughput processes. French and Bell (1999, p. 82) each of these three system processes (*input-throughput-output*) must function optimally if the system as a whole is to function effectively.

In analysing the DRF's school-based intervention from the vantage point of systems theory, I have adapted Nadler's (1998, p. 41) Congruence Model, which demonstrates how systems theory can be applied to organisational development. This model incorporates the processes of *input-throughput and output* in depicting the school as a system. My research and understanding of systems thinking has led me to believe that while organisations are viewed as "open systems in active exchange with their environments" (French & Bell, 1998, p. 82), "their environments" tend to be very localised and as a result cannot always account for challenges to and breakdowns in organisational function. My research has illuminated several constraining or inhibiting factors contributing to the breakdown of systems operating at a broad and intransitive level, that is, locatable in Bhaskar's (1979) Real domain. This study has highlighted the importance of taking into consideration the world beyond the localised

school context (the Real), the school context (the Actual), and the teacher's individual world (the Empirical) (see Chapter 7).

I have consequently modified Nadler's model for the purposes of my critical analysis. In Figure 9.1, Nadler's adapted Congruence Model, the inputs can be classified as being part of Bhaskar's Actual domain in that they are concerned with specific actions and interventions contributing towards the function of the school organisation. These inputs are part of the local Umzinyathi community and reflect the immediate environment of the schools and community members.

I have identified and discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 various factors acting as catalysts of change within the schools, as well as factors that act as barriers to effective change. In systems thinking, certain attributes of the system, if not functioning or operating effectively, will cause 'breakdowns' in the school organisation's working towards achieving desired outcomes or goals. French and Bell (1998, p. 86) note the importance of alignment among all components of the system in order for the organisation to produce satisfactory results.

Using systems theory in conjunction with the Congruence Model I have been able to identify:

- the various components of the school organisation which appear not to be functioning correctly; and
- which elements of the organisational system appear to be poorly aligned.

This way of thinking is of particular benefit to the body of knowledge regarding contemporary change in rural schools in post-apartheid South Africa for the following reasons:

- it has assisted me in identifying various breakdowns when viewing the school organisation as a system
- it has illuminated why in certain instances the DRF has experienced and continues to experience challenges to their school-based intervention
- it has been useful in accounting for the lack of teacher involvement and collaboration
- it will help ensure that achieved outcomes and goals remain in place
- it will be helpful in creating a way forward for schools, DoE district officers and NGOs working within similar contexts across South Africa.

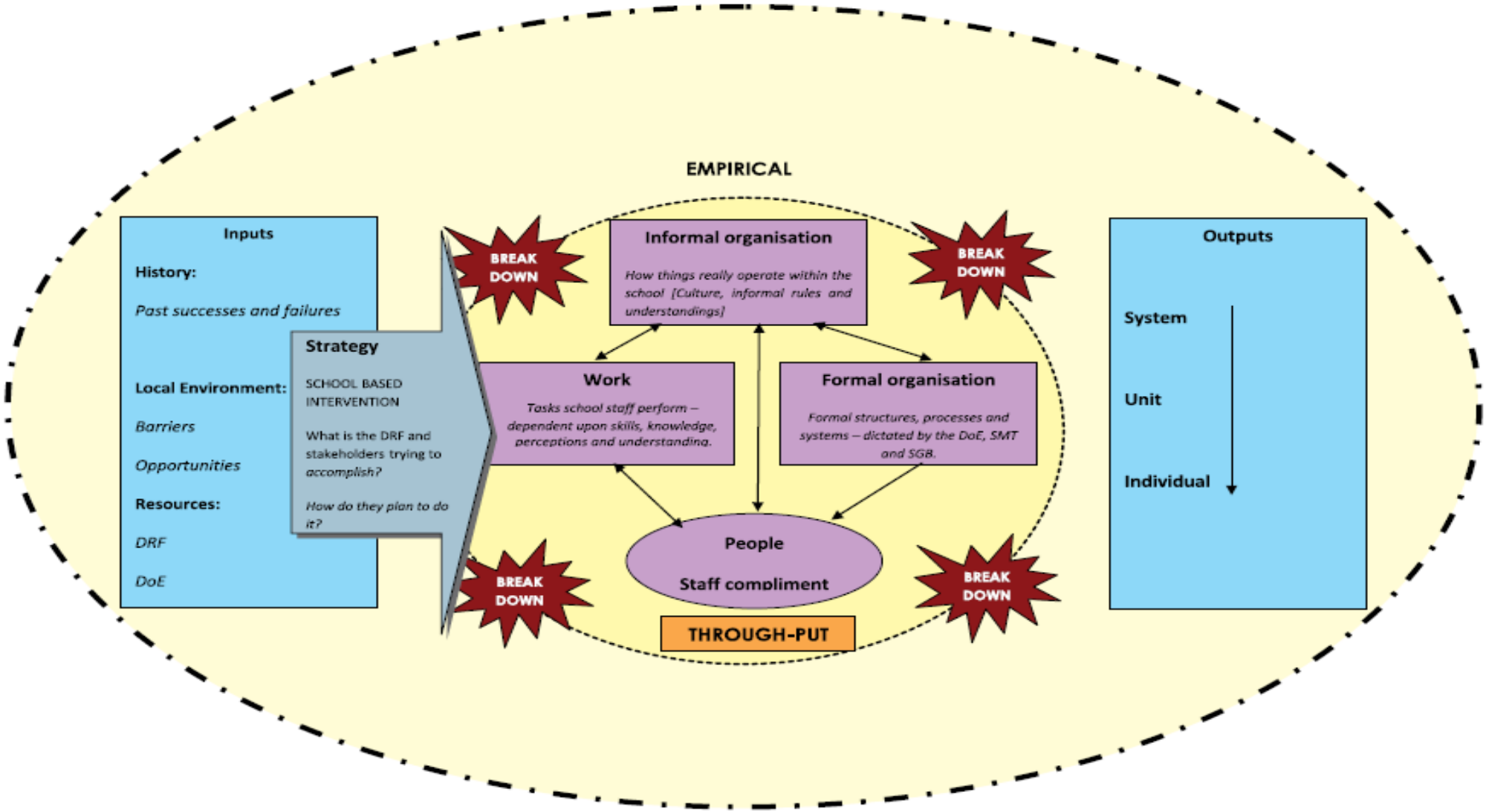


Figure 9.1: Nadler's adapted Congruence Model (1998) as an approach to Systems Theory. This model has been useful in exploring the DRF's school-based intervention from a holistic perspective. It has allowed for the identification of breakdowns in the system, which will inform adaptations to be made within the overall intervention.

9.5 Systems Theory: the inputs

Figure 9.1 represents three categories of inputs:

- the history of the organisation,
- the local environment; and
- resources.

My research has enabled me to elaborate upon these input factors and the role they have played in the DRF's school-based intervention strategy. In the majority of the cases, the inputs have in fact contributed towards breakdowns within the system, and can therefore be identified as barriers to change.

9.5.1 History

According to Nadler (1998, pp. 21-43), history as an input relates to the memories of past successes and failures within the organisation, important events in the life of the school and critical decisions that may still be affecting organisational function and the behaviour of teachers. As mentioned earlier, I have located the inputs within this model as being aligned to Bhaskar's (1979) Actual domain and am therefore reluctant to include here the role of broader historical factors. But one cannot avoid mentioning the influence that apartheid has had on organisational function today. Key historical factors that need to be taken into consideration include:

- inadequate school infrastructure and amenities;
- the impact of the Fundamental Pedagogics methodological approach to teacher training under apartheid;
- which has in many cases created a generation of teachers who do not promote free thinking, creativity and questioning skills in their classrooms and lessons.

Partly as a result of these factors, the schools in this study have a **recent** history of low performance. And it is this recent history of comparative failure that has contributed towards the establishment and development of the DRF's school-based intervention. However the legacy of this 'history' remains within the majority of school organisations and has contributed to breakdowns within the system (refer to Section 2.4 for a discussion of the apartheid legacy and education, and Section 6.4 for literature pertaining to the history of teacher education and training).

9.5.2 Local Environment

Key constraining input factors identified in this case study pertaining to the local environment include:

- the socio-economic context of the rural community
- parents; and
- transport.

The evidence from my research relating to these factors is presented and discussed in Section 7.3.1 (the socio-economic context), Section 8.4.2 (transport) and Section 8.4.3 (parental involvement). My study has revealed that these three factors negatively affect the effective functioning of the school organisation and therefore the ability of the DRF to achieve all its envisaged goals.

9.5.3 Resources

In the context of input factors, resources include people, capital, knowledge and technology. Within the resources category of inputs, I have identified two very important organisations, the provincial KZN DoE and the DRF. Together these organisations are collaborating towards achieving the improvement and upliftment of schools. While there are other stakeholders and resources involved, these two – with their capital, skills and manpower – have emerged as the most significant inputs.

From my analysis of interviews and focus group discussions, it has become apparent that the only fully functioning and operational input within the immediate Umzinyathi community is the DRF. This is no doubt why the DRF is viewed in such a positive light by teachers, principals and other community members (see Section 7.4.3). Small changes are visible as a result of the work of the DRF, and Henderson has become a constant and trustworthy figure in and around the schools. As a result community members have learnt to associate change with the DRF, and from this they derive motivation, inspiration and a sense of hope. On the other hand, the DoE at both provincial and district level has emerged as a problematic input factor and is contributing to a serious breakdown in the effective operation of the school system. Table 8.4 lists the major evidence cited as contributing towards the 'DoE breakdown'. Key areas of concern highlighted by teachers and principals interviewed included:

- inefficient planning, delivery and follow-up;

- inefficient staff recruitment processes;
- a top-down leadership process contributing to the disempowerment of principals and teachers; and
- ineffectual training and development of teachers.

This research has illuminated the negative impact that the KZN DoE is having with respect to the effective implementation of the DRF's intervention strategy, and how it is inhibiting schools from embracing change and moving forward. This research argues for **major reform** at the **provincial** and **district level** in order for schools to function as effective organisations and to be able to embrace necessary changes.

9.6 Strategy: The DRF's school-based intervention

French and Bell (1998, p. 84) refer to the concept of *strategy* as what the organisation is trying to achieve and how the organisation intends going about this. Strategy forms a part of the initial stages of the *throughput* process of the *system*. What is interesting to note in this study is that the DRF is an **outside organisation** functioning as an *input* into the overall system. As an outside organisation I suggest that the DRF:

- has largely determined the school-based intervention strategy;
- is the driving force behind the strategy; and
- has set up a process and action plan as to how the goals and overall intervention will be achieved.

This approach differs from the traditional Congruence Model as delineated by Nadler (1998, p. 41), in that Nadler's model assumes the organisation *itself* has a strategy and is working towards implementing various goals in an effort to achieve certain outcomes. Contrary to this, my study has revealed an **outside organisation** as determining and driving the strategy forward.

The DRF's strategy is a school-based intervention focussing on 17 schools within the Umzinyathi municipal district. Section 3.2.3 details the goals of the DRF's school-based intervention, while the EDP (Appendix C) details the specific areas of focus of the intervention strategy. While the DRF as an outside organisation is responsible for driving the strategy forward, the DRF recognises the unique nature of each school and has considered the

different needs of each school. This takes one into the individual school organisation. Within this domain a number of throughput factors are operating in each unique school organisation.

9.7 The school as an organisation – the throughput processes

According to my adapted version of Nadler's Congruence Model (Figure 9.1), a number of throughput factors operate within a school organisation at the empirical level.

9.7.1 People

The school organisation's workforce includes the management team, the administration staff and the teachers. People's knowledge, skills and levels of experience will contribute to the quality of their performance and the operation of the organisation. The workforce's perceptions, expectations and understanding of various matters will have an impact on the way in which the organisation is run and administered.

9.7.2 Work

Work relates to the various tasks and jobs management teams, administration staff and teachers are required to perform each day in order to ensure the successful delivery of quality teaching and learning. This is reliant on the knowledge, skills and expertise of the staff complement. In addition, perceptions, past experiences and levels of understanding will impact upon the quality and efficiency of the work done.

9.7.3 Informal Organisation

According to Nadler (1998, p. 41), the informal organisation relates to the 'informal rules' and culture within a particular school. The informal organisation reflects the reality on the ground and how the school runs on a daily basis. School culture forms an important but intangible part of the informal organisation of the school (see the discussion in Section 5.2.3-4).

9.7.4 Formal Organisation

The formal organisation includes formal structures, processes and systems necessary for the effective running of a school. These formalised structures and systems have been outlined by the DoE/DBE through a variety of policy documents and statements.

My research has highlighted a number of breakdowns within this through-put phase which are impacting upon the following:

- the overall performance of the school organisation and its ability to achieve its goals;
- the ability of teachers to involve themselves and take ownership of the intervention strategy, and
- ultimately the sustainability of the DRF's intervention strategy.

As argued earlier in this section, all the elements of the model (French & Bell, 1999) need to be aligned and functioning coherently if the system is to produce satisfactory outputs. While the DRF has been very successful in achieving several goals thus far (see Section 7.4.3, Table 7.3), I am concerned that the breakdowns this research has revealed in the school organisation as viewed in terms of a systems model, does **threaten** the **continued effectiveness of the work** of the DRF and the **long term sustainability** of the intervention initiatives.

Unless the critical input and throughput elements within the empirical domain start to **function effectively** towards a common goal of school improvement, deep and sustained change will never occur. As soon as the work of the DRF ceases, little change aside from some infrastructural improvements will be noticeable.

Such concerns are central to the minds of many community members, particularly Henderson, volunteer workers in the area, some principals and the DoE district official. These concerns are reflected in the excerpts below:

- *You know the real concern is that we may actually not make it. There is this possibility that by providing all this 'stuff', we are taking away the community's incentive to do it for themselves. Therefore undermining their spirit of independence*. [IT#1, 2011, p. 3]

- *I am very worried when the DRF's office expires and they terminate our relationship. I am worried that the DoE will not be able to maintain the good standard and momentum they are having because they are fully supporting our schools in every respect; in terms of human resources, they are developing the teacher in the classroom, the manager in the office as well as the community around the school. And then when all that runs to its term, I am not that sure schools will be able to maintain this*. [IT#7, 2012, p. 3]

- *Individuals are starting to see the work of the DRF and volunteers in the area and in doing so are continuing to ask for more. A sense of dependency is being created which is of concern*. [FG#1, 2012, p.8]

9.7.5 Breakdowns within the throughput process

My research has revealed a number of breakdowns in the throughput phase of the school organisation. At this point I am drawing a general conclusion based on my findings, yet I would like to reiterate that each of the 17 schools forming a part of the DRF intervention is unique. Each school has its own informal organisational structure and process. While I acknowledge that some schools are performing better than others, the evidence gathered suggests that the majority of schools are faced with one or more of the following breakdowns within the throughput phase. Figure 9.2 captures three possible breakdowns within the throughput phase of the school-as-organisation:

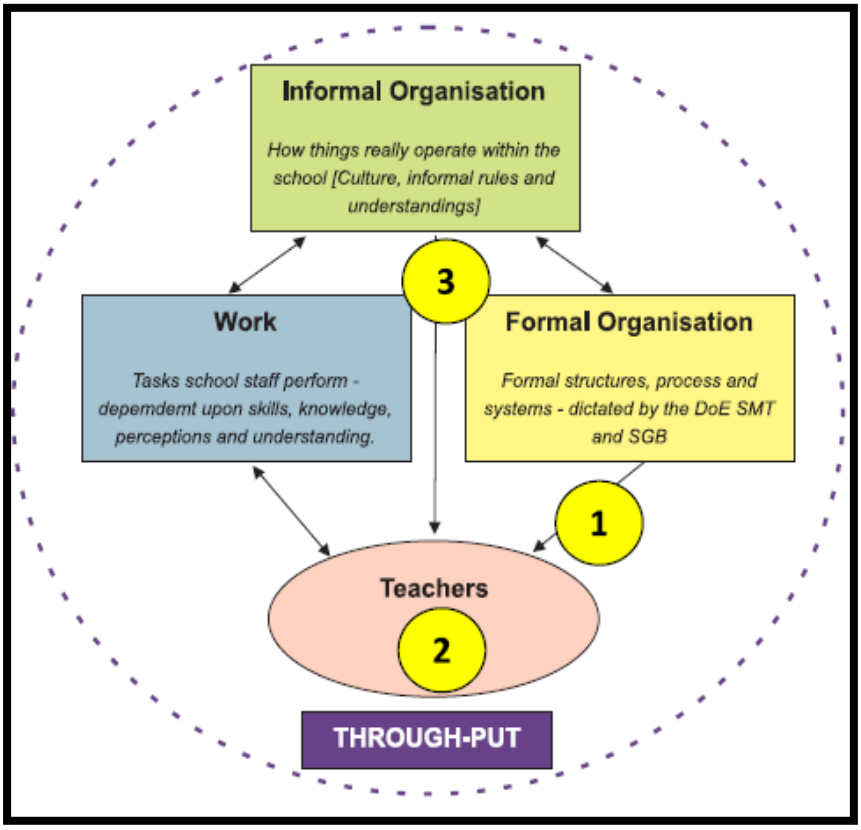


Figure 9.2: An in-depth analysis of breakdowns in the through-put phase of a school organisation

- **Number 1**

With reference to Figure 9.2, Number 1 in the diagram reflects the one-way interaction between formal organisational structures such as the DoE/DBE and the individual school management structures. Quinn and Spreitzer (1997, pp. 37-49) have conducted a vast amount

of research on leadership and empowerment processes within organisations. According to their research, the top-down approach associated with leadership in schools and, in this context, the DoE/DBE (as illustrated in Figure 9.2), is classified as 'mechanistic'. Mechanistic processes involve only a select group of people making decisions, with strict boundaries in place and management having tight control. Within such an inflexible approach to leadership and management within schools, teachers have little ability to involve themselves in the intervention strategy beyond the delivery thereof; and this despite their keenness to get involved (see Section 8.5). I argue strongly that for a school-based intervention strategy to be successful and sustainable teachers have to have input, they need to have buy-in and a belief in what they are working towards. While school management must remain accountable for decisions and actions taken, teachers need to be empowered to contribute towards the effective running of the school organisation.

- **Number 2**

With reference to Figure 9.2, Number 2 in the diagram is representative of the staff complement. In this study I have argued that teachers and management teams lack the skills and knowledge required for the efficient running of a school organisation as well as curriculum implementation, i.e. the *work* component of the throughput phase. This lack of skills and knowledge restricts teachers' participation to a very superficial level and prevents them from engaging and contributing meaningfully to the process of change (see Section 8.5).

A large number of teachers and principals reported on staff-related issues that are retarding or preventing the effective implementation of school improvement interventions. These issues include:

- a lack of suitably qualified staff;
- high staff turnover rates; and
- insufficient staff to cope with the demands of running a school.

The extracts provided in Box 9.1, have been paraphrased from the interviews with principals and focus group discussions with teachers in February 2012:

Box 9.1

- *Teachers are under qualified.*
- *Teachers need to develop professionally in order to cope with and implement change.*
- *Teachers sometimes have negative attitudes towards change.*
- *Reporting is inaccurate and invalid – there is a sense that facts and figures are being tampered with to ensure DoE guidelines and requirements are met. There is a sense that some serious 'window dressing is occurring'.*
- *As soon as teachers are qualified and capacitated, they move on and seek work in nearby urban areas.*
- *Regular staff turnover impacts upon change and development within schools.*
- *Leadership and management is a problem in some schools. This often leads to a high attrition rate of teachers – up to 60% in some schools.*
- *The role of the principal has become increasingly more complex. The role of the principal is multifaceted.*

The DRF is aware of the fact that staff development is critical to the sustainability of its intervention strategy. As a result the organisation has invested a lot of time and money in the training of school staff beyond what the DoE/DBE has offered: "*The DRF is developing the teacher in the classroom, the manager in the office and the community around the school*" [IT#7, 2012, p. 3]; "*A lot of the work the DRF is doing is trying to skill people, so that people can reach that point of empowerment*" [FG#1, 2012, p. 8]. The DRF's training and staff development strategy is slowly bearing fruit, with changes beginning to emerge in teachers' attitudes and understanding of education policy and the change processes at work. This will take time, however, and is not helped by high staff turnover rates (Section 8.5 explores the question of teachers and change and the positive impacts of training and development).

- **Number 3**

In Figure 9.2, Number 3 draws one's attention to the informal school organisation. Here I argue that if sustainable change is to be achieved, the school's culture, 'informal rules' and the awareness of the staff have to shift into alignment with the requirements of National Policy and the intervention strategy driven by the DRF.

The transition to a new education policy has drawn strongly on Western ideals, integrated with elements of social justice and democracy. In addition, the new curriculum focuses on the development of highly skilled pupils who will be equipped to cope with and integrate into a global society. The new education policy and curricula are thus in direct conflict with the culture and context of rural schools that place a high value on traditional beliefs and practices, as observed in the Umzinyathi community. Conflict and misunderstandings have developed as result, affecting teachers, principals, parents and pupils. I have discussed and accounted for the impact of deep cultural practices and value systems in Section 7.3.2. This is not only as a result of National Policy, but also through the work of the DRF and the changes they are trying to achieve. The quotation below, from one of the American volunteer workers involved in the DRF schools, captures the essence of this point:

> *"I have experienced an unconscious resistance to change on the part of the community. In many respects the work and intervention strategies of the DRF are trying to alter or change the value systems that have been fed to the community over generations. The value systems of the community are holding back change"*. [IT#1, 2011, p. 3]

A number of principals spoke about the culture amongst teachers and their attitudes towards professionalism and responsibility. Key areas requiring change with respect to the overall professionalism of teachers include the following:

- punctuality
- high rates of teacher absenteeism
- preparing lessons and marking work after school (not during lesson times)
- the importance of lifelong learning and ongoing professional development
- responsibility and accountability
- greater levels of commitment.

Altering a school's culture is complex and difficult, due to entrenched value systems, beliefs and practices which have been fed into several generations of teachers. Cultural and value systems are often intangible and go unnoticed by those working within the organisation. I believe that this is probably the most challenging element when it comes to addressing the breakdown point within this level of the throughput process.

I believe that, in formulating policy, educationists have not given sufficient consideration to traditional patterns of thought and practice in their approach to school transition, policy and modern curriculum development, particularly within a rural school context. While I believe that the DRF is working towards a more integrated approach, drawing to some extent on the community's ideas and belief systems through various partnerships and community leadership structures (discussed in Sections 8.2.1-2), further effort may be required in this regard in order to ensure the sustainability of the intervention strategy.

9.7.6 The impact on the intervention of breakdowns in the throughput process

In the previous section I highlighted three key breakdown points in the throughput process of many schools within the Umzinyathi District (refer to Figures 9.1 and 9.2):

1. Formal organisation ⟶ People level (staff complement);
2. People level (staff complement) ⟶ Work
3. Informal organisational level – 'culture of the organisation' impacting upon **all** elements of the throughput phase.

I draw the following conclusions from my findings, in the light of Nadler's (1998, p. 41) Congruence Model, an application of systems theory:

- There is direct conflict and resistance between the levels and processes operating at a *formal level* and those at an *informal level* within the school organisation.
- The staff in the organisation determines the informal organisation, or rather the organisational culture.
    - The staff's knowledge, skills, experience and perception influence how the work or tasks are executed on a daily basis.
    - This in turn has an influence on the informal organisation.

By recognising the number and complexity of difficulties that beset the throughput phase of a school, one begins to understand why in this particular case study, an external organisation, the DRF, has had to be the driving force behind the school-based intervention strategy.

Concerns have been raised as to whether the DRF is in fact taking away the incentive for schools and teachers to work towards change and identify intervention strategies themselves.

The DRF is seen to be "*undermining the spirit of independence of schools, teachers and communities*" [IT#1, 2011, p. 3]. On the contrary, the community and schools have been identified as doing very little in the way of change other than being "*good at asking for things, but not very good at taking action or responsibility for themselves*" [IT#1, 2011, p. 6]. The school community is seen as transferring the responsibility directly onto the DRF, rather than being active participants and initiators of change themselves. Consequently, within the community the DRF has developed the reputation of being a 'provider', despite this not being their original intention or goal. It will take time for such a perception to be reversed and for communities to build the confidence in their own problem-solving and solution-driven initiatives. I argue that changes will need to take place at the point of breakdown in the *informal organisational level* of the school in order for teachers to become **drivers** of their own **intervention strategies**. This will require a greater sense of professionalism, responsibility and, ultimately, accountability on the part of each teacher.

9.8 The output phase

Outputs relate to the performance of a school organisation at three levels (refer to Figure 9.1):

- the school organisation as a whole,
- various units making up the school (e.g. Academic achievement or school management); and
- at the level of the individual (e.g. teachers and pupils).

In order for the school organisation to achieve its goals and intended outputs on an ongoing and sustainable basis, all elements need to be functioning together. My adapted version of Nadler's (1998) Congruence Model has proved to be a useful analytical tool for locating the shortcomings within the rural schools in the Umzinyathi district municipality. Using the Congruence Model has also been valuable in identifying the challenges the DRF is having to contend with in terms of the successful implementation of its school-based intervention strategy.

9.8.1 The school organisation as a whole

In Section 5.2 I reviewed the literature pertaining to OD within the context of a school organisation. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) emphasise the importance of understanding the "sociology of the school" (p. 19) when trying to get to grips with the way in which a school

and its various components function as an organisation. This has assisted me in understanding this case study from a broader perspective and looking beyond the immediate context, the "sociology of the school" taking the researcher into what Bhaskar (1979) calls the domain of the Real.

More specifically, at the level of the Actual and the Empirical, Marishane and Botha (2011) insist that the different elements making up an organisation must function coherently towards a common goal. In my view this is the strategy of the DRF, which has recognised a number of elements in the school organisation as requiring assistance and intervention. This is outlined in Section 7.4.2. Together these individualised components or "units" of the school organisation need to come together and work cohesively towards achieving a fully functioning school organisation. The ultimate goal or output of the DRF is for their 17 supported schools to operate as effective and fully functional educational institutions, where pupils are able to achieve and compete fairly with other pupils across the country.

9.8.2 The units of a school organisation

The outputs of the school can be dealt with more specifically by focussing on the individual units which make up the school as an organisation. For example, in the DRF's EDP, "Academic, curriculum and resources" have been identified as a specific area of focus. The specific outputs envisaged within this particular unit would probably be concerned with the improvement of pupils' academic results. In order to reach this output, the DRF has invested a lot of time and money in the training and development of teachers as well as the improvement of teaching and learning resources available in classrooms. But for this specific output to be achieved, change needs to occur at the level of the individual.

9.8.3 The individual level

In analysing the output phase of the systems theory approach to organisational change within a school, I have argued that the ultimate goal of the DRF is to ensure large-scale organisational change within schools. But in order for large scale organisational shifts to take place within schools, individualised units or target areas need to be identified as more "manageable outputs", for example, the DRF's EDP (Section 7.4.2). And in order for the various manageable outputs or units to become effective outputs, changes need to occur at the level of the individual; in most cases, that is, at the level of the teacher.

This study has explored the experiences of teachers and the roles they have played within the DRF's school-based intervention (see Section 8.5), and has argued that deep change at the within individual teachers is required for outputs to be successful, meaningful and continuous (see Sections 8.5-6).

Section 7.4.3 explores some of the successful outputs that the DRF has already achieved. Despite these successes, change is slow and sometimes difficult to observe, especially for members living continuously within the community. The following section of this chapter explores some of the reasons for the slow process of change commonly observed within school organisations.

9.9 The slow pace of intervention strategies in school organisations

In my analysis of the literature on systems theory and change processes, I came across the work of Havelock (1971), who has applied systems theory in an attempt to account for the slow pace of change and innovation in schools (see Section 5.5). Despite its dating back several decades, this work is still relevant to any attempt to account for the slow pace of change observed in schools in this case study. In this section, I draw on Havelock's findings to account for the complex and slow process of change within the DRF schools.

Figure 9.3 summarises factors considered responsible for the some of the difficulties school organisations experience when going through a process of change as a result of an intervention strategy (Havelock, 1971). Figure 9.3 has been divided into three segments in accordance with systems thinking.

System components: Factors responsible for difficulties within each component of the system.

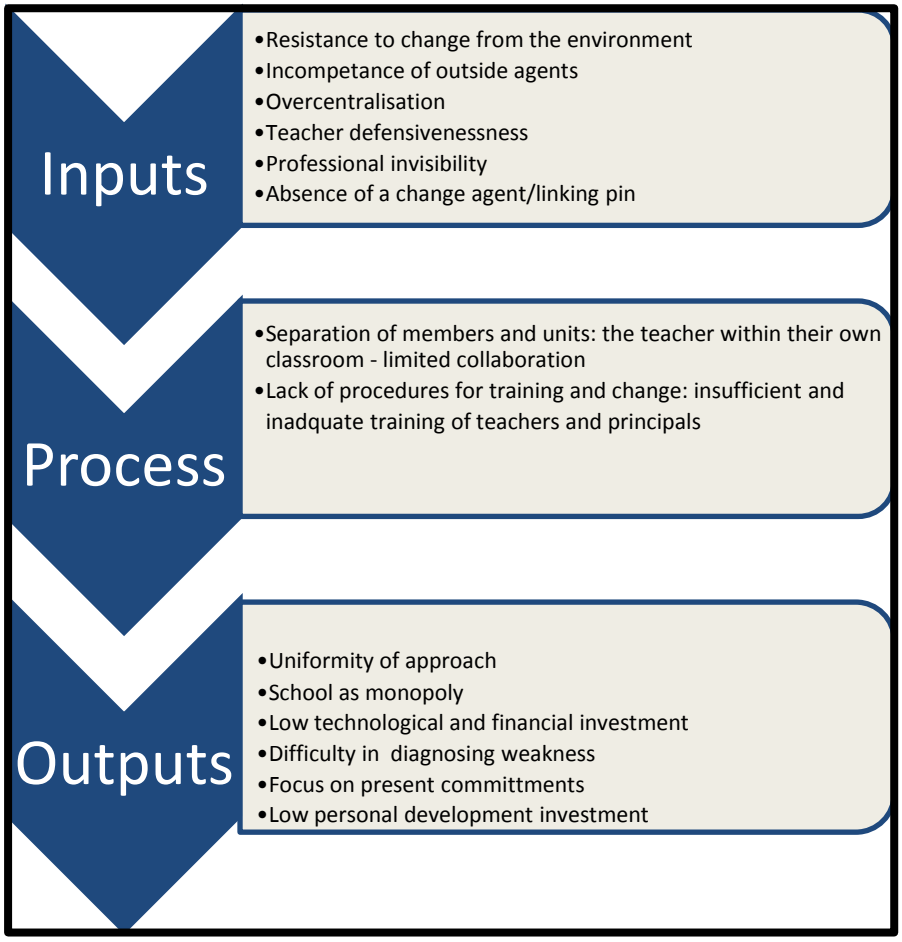


Figure 9.3: A summary of factors responsible for slow change and innovation in schools (Havelock 1971)

9.9.1 Inputs and processes

The key factors that Havelock (1971) isolates in the category of inputs are echoed in my findings. There is *resistance to change from the environment*, particularly parents who are not supportive of the school or their child's education. This is discussed in Section 8.4.3. The *incompetence of outside agents* I have identified as the ineffectual role played by the Dundee DoE District Office. The DBE plays a major role in the decision-making processes of the school, yet according to teachers and principals interviewed, it is gravely inefficient. (Section 8.4.1 explores the incompetence of the DBE/KZN DoE in assisting schools to cope with the processes of change.) *Overcentralisation* has also been identified as a problem in this case study, once more in the light of the top-down leadership structure associated with the

DoE/DBE and school SMTs. The power and decision-making structures are controlled and operated by very few people. This has consequences not only in that the DoE/DBE is an important input factor, but also for the throughput process of the system.

Teachers are important inputs into the school organisation. Havelock (1971) identifies *teacher defensiveness* and *professional invisibility* as threats to the inputs of teachers and ultimately to their work within the throughput phases of the system. Teachers frequently have changes imposed on them, as illuminated in my research, for a number of reasons. Due to the fact that teachers themselves may not have been involved in the decision making and planning around the change strategies, they may resent some of the changes and as a result be less likely to implement them in the throughput phase. A lack of implementation, or perhaps ineffectual implementation, is closely aligned with the constraining factor of *professional* invisibility, where teaching and learning take place within individual classrooms out of sight from other teachers, school managers and parents. As far as the schools in this case study are concerned, little monitoring and assessment of teacher performance is taking place. These two factors at the input level coincide with the limitations identified by Havelock (1971) within the throughput phase, namely that of *separation of members and units* and the *lack of procedures for training and change*, in terms of which he argues that innovation and change in schools will only be achieved through teachers' collaborating and learning with their colleagues.

In Section 5.7.2 I review the literature that points to the importance of teacher collaboration in the context of working towards effective change in school organisations. Section 8.5.1 discusses the issue of teachers' superficial understanding of change, which in my view could be altered through more effective collaboration among the teachers themselves. The findings of this study have revealed the need to foster greater co-operation and collegiality amongst teachers within the DRF schools. As argued earlier in this research, schools need to work towards becoming effective learning organisations (Section 5.7.1).

In Havelock's (1971) research into the challenges and difficulties associated with innovation in schools, he identifies the *absence of a change agent or linking pin* as a limitation. My research concurs with his argument, in that the key change agent is an outside organisation, the DRF. The DRF as a driving force is discussed in Section 8.3. In time it is hoped that teachers and principals will benefit sufficiently from the training processes and collaborative

involvement that the DRF is working towards to emerge as change agents or linking pins themselves.

9.9.2 The outputs

At the output level, Havelock (1971) identifies numerous factors that will interfere with the ability of schools to implement change strategies efficiently and sustainably. Figure 9.3 lists these in the lower box. The DBE is largely responsible for creating these barriers through its policies and bureaucratic practice, which in my view are not always appropriate to contemporary ways of thinking about school organisations as functioning systems. Schools forming my sample group within the rural area of the Umzinyathi district municipality face the following bureaucratic shortcomings which have impacted upon their ability to cope with change and become more innovative in their approach to the effective running of the school as an organisation. These are summarised as follows:

- Despite policy supposedly promoting diversity within schools, *innovations remain focused on/towards the majority group*.
- All the schools in my sample are non-fee paying: they *face little competition* and therefore do not have to worry about offering a better service than a neighboring school. As a result, *mediocrity is encouraged*.
- The KZN DoE/DBE allocates very little money to technology and infrastructural investment. The DRF is supportive in this regard, but with only the *bare minimum in place*, how can one really expect teachers to be agents of innovation?
- The DBE invests *little money and time in effective teacher training and development*: continuing education is often for the individual's budget. For teachers to become agents of change they need skills, knowledge, expertise and confidence.
- Few systems are in place for *critical reflection and review* of areas of weakness. Schools are defensive towards criticism. Systems of accountability need to be put in place.
- With the *increasing teacher workloads, responsibilities and paperwork* imposed by the DBE, there is less time for creative and innovative thinking and planning.

My research suggests that the DBE needs to **rethink** its approach towards:

- promotion,

- teacher development and training,
- its infrastructural and technology spend,
- reflection, review and accountability, and
- teacher workloads and responsibility.

In addition teachers need to **rethink** their approach as professionals in terms of:

- professional and ethical behaviour in schools,
- accountability to their learners and the profession as a whole; and
- their ongoing professional development and commitment to change.[22]

The DRF is up against these barriers in terms of the effective implementation and delivery of its school-based intervention, the attainment of its EDP goals and the sustainability thereof.

9.10 Conclusion

This chapter conducted the third analysis activity in the research process. Complexity and systems theory were used as synthesising theoretical lenses to examine the intervention as a whole. Complexity theory was rejected as better suited to more sophisticated, complex and dynamic organisations working within a knowledge-based society, than to isolated rural communities like that of Umzinyathi. The absence of sophisticated technology and infrastructural amenities in the community is largely attributed to South Africa's complex socio-historical context. Despite efforts since 1994, the poor living conditions of rural dwellers in this area can be construed as a lingering consequence of separate development policies dating back two centuries in our country (see Chapters 2 and 3).

In this chapter systems theory was used to illuminate the inputs, throughput phase and outputs of the DRF's school-based intervention strategy. Nadler's (1998) Congruence Model approach to systems theory and OD was adapted for the purpose.

[22] Taylor (2001, 2002) and Fleisch (2001) in their work on teacher professionalism and accountability argue for the notion of performance management systems of accountability for teachers. In their view this is necessary to get "classrooms right". Their view of teacher professionalism is captured in the idea that bureaucratic measures and high stakes accountability are necessary in the development of teachers and fostering their commitment to change.

Several breakdowns in the rural KwaZulu-Natal school system were identified. The DBE as a whole has been identified as a barrier to effective innovation and implementation of change within schools, largely as a result of its top-down, inflexible and bureaucratic approach towards the running of schools. This has created tension within the throughput phase for individual schools, where formalised DBE structures and ways of thinking do not correspond to the organisational culture and realities seen in the majority of rural schools in the study. Lastly this chapter revealed the importance of teachers becoming agents of change themselves. Opportunities for effective collaboration and teacher empowerment are necessary for intervention strategies to be sustainable. Ongoing, effective and relevant teacher training needs to be a priority for all stakeholders involved in school intervention strategies.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

> *Meaning is not discovered but constructed. Meaning does not inhere in the object; merely waiting for someone to come upon it.... Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting*. (Crotty, 1998, pp. 42-43)

10.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I provide a summary of the study as a whole and reflect on its findings in relation to the research design and goals. I then summarise the main findings from each of the three "layers" of investigation, highlighting the conclusions drawn from each layer. Lastly I reflect on the research methodology employed and how it assisted in illuminating the findings and conclusions.

The chapter is followed by a post-script featuring personal observations of teachers in the Umzinyathi community following a visit to the area after the completion of Phase III of the research.

10.2 A summary of the research process

In the Umzinyathi municipal community in rural KwaZulu-Natal, the David Rattray Foundation has over the past six years been working towards the upliftment of impoverished schools through a holistic school-based intervention.

This study presents the numerous success stories of the intervention, as a result of which several schools now enjoy improved infrastructure, technology and learning resources. Teachers and school management teams have benefitted from training regarding the curriculum and school management. But the main contention in this thesis is that teachers themselves need to be agents and drivers of change if the school-based intervention is to remain sustainable. Teachers need to be empowered with the skills, knowledge and confidence to be a part of an evolving and improving education system. I argue that if teachers remain passive recipients of change, few meaningful and deep changes will occur.

10.2.1 The research design and goals: Phases I and II

This study consisted of three phases. In this section I provide an overview of the first two phases of the research process only. Phase I was a descriptive, qualitative study which took place from January to December 2011, aimed mainly at contextualising the case. During this phase I spent several days in the field interacting with members of the DRF and other local stakeholders. I also spent time in schools recording observations and thoughts in my research journal. The DRF provided me with extensive documentation pertaining to the organisation which I spent several months reading and analysing. During Phase I of the research, my main goals were to *describe* and *understand*:

- the emergence of the DRF as an NGO working towards change within the local rural school community; and
- the broader context of the case.

In working towards achieving these goals, it was imperative that I develop an understanding of the DRF as an organisation and its approach to change. This enabled me to answer my first research goal, which was to identify and understand:

- *The DRF's approach to change.*

Phase I concluded with Analytical Activity 1, which involved analysis of interviews and documents pertaining to the creation and development of the DRF as an NGO working towards change in the local school community. Analytical Activity 1 provided the platform from which Phase II of the study was initiated.

Phase II of the study took place from January to December 2012, and consisted of two distinct, but inter-related analytical processes, namely Analytical Activity 2 and Analytical Activity 3. During Phase II, I made a second fieldwork trip in February 2012, conducting interviews and focus group discussions with the DoE District Office in Dundee, school principals, teachers and volunteer workers. During Phase II of the research process, the main goals of the research were to:

- describe and analyse the approach to change used by the DRF in relation to models of change described in the literature; and
- to examine teachers' experiences and participation in the processes of change.

In order to achieve these goals, a number of key areas relating to the role of the DRF within the school community as well as the roles of teachers working towards change needed to be explored. My second fieldwork experience during Phase II was aimed at finding out some of the assumptions that the DRF and the school teachers have brought to the change process. The research also served to establish who the driving forces were behind the various change strategies, and to reveal a number of obstacles or barriers to the change process which appear to be threatening the long term sustainability of the DRF's work.

10.2.2 Analytical activities

From the analysis of interviews and documents during Analytical Activity 1, three distinct themes repeatedly emerged:

- the broad context of the case;
- actions and interventions associated with the DRF
- the human dimensions.

This proved to be a critical juncture for the methodology employed in this study. I realised that my initial thoughts about the subject of the study, rooted in an interpretivist paradigm, were no longer valid. Analytical Activity 1 allowed me to see the importance of looking *beyond* the immediate context, and hence a realist ontological position was adopted.

10.2.3 A synthesis of the conclusions drawn from each layer

Chapters 7 and 8 explore the layered approach I adopted for the analysis and interpretation of my findings in both Phases of the research. In this section, I provide a brief synopsis of the conclusions which I have drawn from each layer.

- **Layer 1**

Layer 1 is representative of Bhaskar's (1979) domain of the Real. This layer shed light on the broad socio-political, cultural and educational landscape in which this case study was located. Analysis of Layer 1 of this study illuminated the following aspects of the broader context of the case study:

Transitive factors (*those of which community members are conscious)*

- Schools located within the Umzinyathi rural municipal area can be classified as "isolated learning communities" (Smith, 1984) in that these schools are

separated socially, politically and intellectually from mainstream thinking, developments and processes. This study revealed how the **relative isolation** of schools makes school-based interventions and changes complex and time-consuming.

- Multifaceted socio-economic factors linked to the family unit, a lack of modern amenities and limited income generation opportunities indicate that life is challenging for the average family. My findings have revealed that for many families in the Umzinyathi area, life is about basic survival, and as a result change is not a priority. Therefore the ability to engage in change processes meaningfully within this rural community is **stifled by socio-economic constraints.**

Intransitive factors (*these are generally invisible or unknown to the individual*)

- The study has revealed how culture, tribal governance and traditional practices, construed as intransitive factors, affect the way people act and participate within their community.
- Hofstede's (1991) work regarding "cultural dimensions" has been a useful theoretical tool in this study (see Sections 5.2.5, 7.3.2.1 and Table 7.2). Applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions to the context of this research revealed the following cultural attributes of the community concerned:
    - large power-distance relationships,
    - a collective society,
    - a dominant feminine culture, and
    - a weak uncertainty avoidance.
- Such cultural characteristics mean that elders and people with status in schools, such as principals, are highly respected and will not be questioned or challenged. My study revealed how this was problematic for teachers in that their involvement and participation in change processes was duly **inhibited and restricted** by the above-mentioned cultural dimensions.
- The Nquthu and Endumeni rural districts, in which the DRF's 17 support schools are located, remain under tribal authority and are governed in accordance with tribal governance structures that are not entirely democratic (see Section 7.3.2). This research has revealed that teachers and parents and guardians feel the **need to respect tribal authorities and cultural practices**.

This is creating many **tensions**, particularly within schools, which are required by policy to function as "democratic institutions". These tensions include:

- The modern democratic ideals and neo-liberal values advocated by education policy have essentially been **superimposed** onto a rural community which still values traditional practices and ways of thinking. Within the area of study, respect for elders and people of authority is highly valued. As a result:
- School management teams seldom challenge education district officials. Rather they act like puppets, doing as they are told. As a result school management teams remain **disempowered**.
- Teachers are not empowered to question, take the initiative or lead change. They are perceived as accountable to the school management team, which makes all the decisions on their behalf.
- Parents are inhibited by the power of school management and will seldom challenge school principals and teachers with respect to matters such as professionalism, accountability and delivery.

- The findings from this study suggest that unless school management teams, teachers and parents start to take a **more active role** in leading change and accept greater responsibility for their roles in the education of our young people, **very little change and improvement** will be seen within the schools in the Umzinyathi rural community. I imagine that this finding can be applied to other similar rural contexts across South Africa.

- South Africa's apartheid history has shaped the terrain of education and continues to bedevil attempts to change it. The apartheid system deepened divides, producing an environment and society with huge inequalities in infrastructure, resources and capacity (Christie 2008, p. 135). The deprivation in the area of this study has meant that the DRF has been mainly involved thus far in infrastructural and resource development. In the majority of cases, the infrastructural backlog needs to be resolved (tangible

changes), before long term meaningful intangible changes can take place (shifts in the school culture, teacher attitudes and accountability, etc.). This study has revealed how infrastructure and basic service delivery at schools plays an important role in the regular attendance of pupils. Furthermore a sense of pride and care is fostered in schools where the **community has been involved** in the improvement of infrastructure.

- **Layer 2**

Layer 2 is representative of Bhaskar's (1979) domain of the Actual. Layer 2 of the analysis focussed specifically on the DRF, exploring the various initiatives it has undertaken to improve and develop the 17 supported schools. I attempted to describe and understand the DRF's school-based intervention strategy from its inception to its current position. The analysis of Layer 2 of the study revealed the following:

- The DRF's approach to its school-based intervention is suitably holistic, focusing on the school as an organisation rather than on isolated elements.

- The success of the DRF's interventions to date can be attributed to the organisation's recognition of the complex educational landscape, shaped as it is by various historical, political and socio-economic factors. In other words, the DRF appears to have an understanding of the "Real" domain, and this has contributed to the overall success of the various intervention projects.

- The DRF is based within the rural community in the Umzinyathi district municipality. This means that members of the organisation are not considered 'outsiders'. The DRF is a known entity and has been a permanent fixture in the community for more than six years. It does not have the reputation of a 'quick-fix' temporary organisation. This study has revealed the importance of **driving change from within a community**, as opposed to change being externally imposed.

- The DRF has worked towards actioning their school-based intervention effectively and efficiently. Through the DRF's consistency and continuous

support, together with the visible changes it has brought about, the schools and the community have developed both respect for and trust in the organisation.

- The **role of trust** has featured as a prominent feature in this research. With the efflux of time and the development of relationships a sense of trust develops. This study has shown how trust has contributed towards the success of the DRF's school-based intervention and ongoing work with schools and teachers in the area.

- The DRF has forged several successful partnerships within the local community as well as with expert organisations and people with particular skills and/or resources necessary for a particular intervention. Particularly important is the unique partnership between the Umzinyathi community, the KZN DoE and the DRF. **Effective collaboration** within such **partnerships** has contributed to the successful outcome of many of the DRF's interventions.

- The DRF's focus on community participation and involvement in their school-based intervention has allowed for the bridging of the divide between traditional views and practices and more Western ways of thinking and problem solving.

- The DRF has recognised the importance of empowering community members and school personnel to become drivers of change themselves. But this study has revealed several complex challenges to this evolution. This is an important finding, because sustainable long-term change depends upon community members becoming leaders and driving change themselves.

- At this point the schools and the District Office of the DoE in Dundee remain dependant on the DRF as a driver of change within the community.

- **Layer 3**

Layer 3 is the final and innermost stratum of my findings. It is concerned with the human dimension. This layer of analysis gave me insight into the individual's world, his or her lived experiences and understanding of processes at work, and hence corresponds to Bhaskar's (1979) Empirical domain. In this study I have argued that this is the level at which *deep and meaningful change* will occur. It is also my view that change needs to occur within this layer for the DRF's school-based intervention to remain *long-term* and *sustainable*. In a discussion of the findings of this innermost layer in Chapter 8, I described the following:

  - Effective leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Fullan 2001, 2003) and collaboration through partnerships (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992; Dufour, Eaker & Dufour, 2005; Dufour et al., 2006; Stoll et al., 2006) are fundamental components in school-based change processes.
  - This study provides evidence that a progressive and forward-thinking traditional authority has enabled change in many situations.
  - Henderson (CEO of the DRF) and Mazibuko (Tribal chief) have been identified as key leaders and drivers of change within this community.
  - In my view the DRF's success can be attributed, at least in part, to the successful partnership and dynamic leadership shown by these two gentlemen.
  - The collaboration between Henderson and Mazibuko has indicated the importance of solid relationships and mutual trust in implementing lasting change interventions (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997; French & Bell, 1999; Fullan, 2001).

In Section 8.4, I identified a number of 'human obstacles' hindering the success of the DRF's school-based intervention. The following key human obstacles were illuminated in my research:

- The KZN **DoE** was cited as an obstacle to effective change in schools (see Section 8.4.1, and Table 8.4). Maladministration, inefficiency and poorly trained staff were revealed as key areas of concern in this study.

- **Transport** was also identified as a barrier to change in this study. I classified transport as a human factor since it is controlled and executed by human action. Transport – the basic logistics of getting to and from work – is always on teachers' minds, and appears to be affecting their ability to think innovatively and creatively beyond the basics. This in my view is preventing them from engaging effectively in change processes.

- The absence of **parental involvement** and support for their children at school was also revealed as a barrier to change in this study.
    - Within the Umzinyathi rural community, parental support comes with many challenges, since in many homes parental figures are often deceased or not present at all (Siyanakekela Report, 2009).
    - Principals and teachers recognise the important role parents can play in the development of their children and are desperate for support from the family unit.
    - In this study I argue that schools themselves need to be playing a more active role in empowering parents and guardians and fostering their ongoing support and active responsibility in raising their children.

Section 8.5 focused specifically on the roles and experiences of teachers within the DRF's school-based intervention, addressing the second research goal of this study, which was:

- to examine how **teachers** within the Umzinyathi district municipality understand change; and
- to examine their experiences and participation within the DRF intervention.

The findings of this study have revealed that

- teachers are on the path to transformation and
- the DRF's school-based intervention has contributed to *greater engagement* and *participation* of teachers as well as
- development of their knowledge and understanding of their professional *roles* and *responsibilities.*

However, one of my central arguments stemming from the findings of the research is that teachers' knowledge and understanding of the DRF's school-based intervention is

superficial. I believe that the majority of teachers have **not fully engaged with**, **nor fully comprehend** the various intervention and change processes at work.

- Teachers in the DRF schools are committed to change through their attendance at workshops and training sessions. While there is openness and a willingness to learn, one of the greatest challenges remains the translation of the skills or knowledge gained **into action**.
- In my view teachers in the DRF schools have not fully internalised the process of change and as a result, sundry acts of 'window dressing' are occurring.
- Since this community is classified as an "isolated learning community", there are **few teacher experts**, adding to the difficulty of teacher development.
- Teacher training and development needs to be an ongoing process, led by those within the community and **not outsiders.**
- In my view training may have been too simplistic, only focussing on the conceptual knowledge elements, to the detriment of broad, complex and multi-layered knowledge development (Turner & Bisset, 1999, cited by Shalem, 2003).
- Teacher training and development needs to be meaningful to a particular context (Elmore & Burney, 1997).

In this research (Section 8.5-6), I argue that **few** teachers are actively involved in the decision making, debate and discussion around school-based change. I believe that the majority of teachers remain on the **receiving end** of interventions. Teachers are required to implement interventions and changes that they know little about and have played almost no role in formulating. My interpretation of the findings from this study suggests that teachers **want to be heard**, and **want to participate** in school intervention and change processes. In order to gain an understanding of *why* there has been only limited involvement and participation on the part of teachers despite their intentions, I looked again to Bhaskar's (1979) ontological domains. Key findings that were illuminated from a realist ontological position were as follows:

- The Empirical domain: the teacher
    - Teaching is about *bureaucratic compliance* and conforming to the regulations as outlined by the DoE polices.
    - Therefore there is little room for creativity, critical thought and individuality.
    - Many teachers demonstrated poor English language skills and had very superficial subject knowledge. This is not helped by the fact that few seem to be subject specialists.

- The Actual Domain: actions and interventions
    - The DRF has identified the importance of involving teachers within their holistic school-based intervention. An entire section of the DRF's EDP has been devoted to teaching and learning. This is described in Section 8.6.2.
    - Despite the intentions of the DRF to involve teachers, they appear to remain recipients of change.
    - Within this community teachers are not viewed as agents of change.

Analysis and understanding of the broad factors operating beyond the world of the teacher and the immediate community have assisted me in clarifying *why* it is difficult for teachers to become agents of change within the particular context of this research. My analysis of the Real domain with respect to teachers revealed the following:

- Cultural factors together with inadequate teacher training and development have contributed towards many teachers' superficial knowledge of their teaching subjects and understanding of change.
- Teachers are faced with a number of **tensions**, which are pulling them in a variety of ways and impacting upon the manner in which they are involved in and affected by change.
- Education policy and new curriculum documents are based on principles relating to human rights, democracy, modernity and global connectivity, which are in direct conflict with patterns of thinking, social hierarchies and traditional ways of life within the Umzinyathi community (see Sections 2.5, 6.3, 6.4.1 and 7.3.2).

- Teachers' personal identities which have been shaped by cultural factors and the previous apartheid regime are now in conflict with 'policy images' dictating the roles of teachers in post-apartheid South Africa (see Section 6.5).

10. 3 Phase III: lessons learned

Merriam and Associates (2002, p. 197) cite Erikson (1986), who argues that since the general lies in the particular, what we learn in a particular case can be transferred to similar situations. Stake (2000, p. 442) explains how case study researchers are able to pass on to others some of meanings they have made of events, observations and relationships. In this section I highlight the lessons learned from this study, in the hope that they may be of use and value to other researchers and educationists.

In Chapter 9 the findings of Phase I and II of the study are integrated, synthesised and explored critically through the theoretical lenses of complexity and systems theory. This integration and synthesis constitutes **Phase III** of the research process. Section 9.3 provides an argument for the incompatibility of complexity theory within this particular rural school context, particularly since complexity theory is an OD approach better suited to modern, sophisticated, interconnected and knowledge-based environments.

Systems theory provided a more appropriate theoretical perspective for the synthesis of Phases I and II, its linear nature being better suited to the research context in which this study was conducted, and enabling an understanding of the intervention strategy as a **whole**. Systems theory allowed me to analyse the DRF's school-based intervention from a vantage point that enabled various 'generic' lessons to be formulated, that can be applied to other NGOs working towards educational change within similar rural contexts.

The lessons learned from this study shed light on:

- the **role of an NGO** in working towards the upliftment and improvement of the standards and quality of education in schools located within a rural context, and
- the **involvement, participation and experiences of teachers** within the change intervention strategies.

- This study has also revealed the *complex* and *repetitive nature* of a **change process** (Fullan, 2007). Consequently change processes are *time consuming* (Fullan, 2007). Change processes are associated with a certain degree of *anxiety* and *fear* (Ruddack, 1991; Fullan, 2007; Schein, 2010), which add to the difficulty and complexity of any intervention process (see Sections 5.6, 7.3, and 8.5-6). This anxiety and fear is further **exacerbated** when teachers, principals and other community members are *disempowered*, as was revealed in this case study.
- The results and 'final outputs' of a change process take time to become obvious. It is the noticeable changes that motivate one to continuing striving to develop and improve. **Perseverance** is required on behalf of the group actioning an intervention, as well as those involved in the change process when signs of change are not always immediately obvious.

- School intervention strategies need to take into consideration the school as an **organisational whole.** Systems theory helped me to view school organisations as "open systems in active exchange and interaction with their environment" (French & Bell, 1999, p. 82).

- School interventions will always be **motivated** by desired *outputs or goals*. To reach these desired outputs, various inputs and throughput processes are necessary. The **success** of a school based intervention is dependent upon the **sum of the input-throughput-output processes functioning** optimally and coherently towards a common set of outcomes.

- Within the broader educational context in South Africa, National policy envisages sound 'outputs' or educational goals; but this study (and others) have revealed serious shortcomings in the conceptual understanding, application and implementation of policy (Jansen 2000; Sayed, 2001); that is, there are numerous **shortcomings** within the **input and throughput phases** of school organisations.

- With respect to the above point, systems theory has proved to be a *useful tool* in identifying where specific **breakdowns** have occurred in a school organisation. This is of particular value to any school, or organisation working towards educational intervention and improvement.

- Organisations **including the DBE** working towards school-based interventions need to consider their strategies within the **context** in which development and change will be occurring. Teacher training and development, workshops, support material and so forth needs to be *applicable* and *accessible* to the particular context of the schools requiring an intervention. In this study, the success of the DRF as an organisation working towards school improvement is partly attributed to the fact that the DRF is based within the community itself, and has an understanding of the needs of the community.

- Teachers can be regarded as the golden thread tying the school organisation together. Teachers play an integral role in the input phase, throughput processes and final outputs of every school. For this reason I have argued strongly for the **involvement** and **empowerment** of teachers in every intervention and change initiative. Teachers will only become agents of change if they feel they are 'owning' the change process.

- For teachers to be active participants in organisational change interventions, they need to have a **well-developed, broad and multi-level knowledge** (Turner & Bisset, 1999, cited by Shalem, 2003) of the school as an organisation, and as operational within a broader educational landscape. Teachers cannot be active participants on their own, nor do they work within a vacuum. Teachers as change agents need to be aware of working in collaboration with others (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Moloi, 2005; Dufour, et al., 2006; Stoll et al., 2006); in addition, they require a finely tuned **knowledge of the context and culture** affecting their school as an organisational whole.

- The **long term sustainability** and effectiveness of a school-based intervention is reliant on the work of teachers and the school management team.

10.4 Methodological choices – a critical reflection

This research provided me with insight into how methodological decisions affect the crafting of the research process, the analysis of results and the presentation of findings. A qualitative approach proved useful in that this research was concerned with documenting and

understanding a change process in which individual teachers, principals and various community members were involved. At the outset an interpretive paradigm underpinned by a relativist ontology was selected. However my first field work experience helped me to recognise the significance of the broader context in which the Umzinyathi district municipality was located. This facilitated my shift towards a realist ontology (see Section 4.2.1.1). This research has highlighted the importance of using a realist ontology in order to understand the broader and complex context in which teachers and schools are located. The study has illuminated how various intransitive factors, in particular, are limiting the degree to which change in possible in this area (see Section 7.3.2).

Bhaskar's critical realist domains (1979, 1989, 2011) were integral to the formation of the heuristic framework used in the data analysis (see Figure 4.1). The adoption of a layered analysis process allowed for rich and meaningful data to emerge from the study, enabling an understanding of the DRF's school-based intervention and ultimately navigating me through the three research goals that I identified at the outset of the study (see Section 1.4).

10.5 Conclusion

This study was a unique exploration of a particular school-based intervention within a rural school context in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The case study produced interesting findings with respect to the complexity of a process of change. It provides a useful model for understanding such a process, which requires further investigation in other comparable contexts.

The multilayered nature of the case study allowed me to move beyond the immediate case into a broader, more complex domain. Crotty (1998, pp. 42-43) reminds us how meaning and understanding are constructed by human beings as they engage with a world they are trying to interpret. In this study, I believe I have *gone beyond the world* which I was initially attempting to interpret, and have illustrated the importance of understanding the greater context when working towards school-based change interventions. Bhaskar's (1979, 1989, 2011) critical realist domains provided a useful analytical framework that allowed me to move beyond the individual experiences of teachers and community members of the Umzinyathi district municipality.

To the extent that a rural school environment was unfamiliar to me, this research was both challenging and fascinating. Being a non-community member conferred on me the advantage

of being able to observe the work of the DRF from the perspective of an outsider. However this also proved to be very challenging, since I was unfamiliar with the isiZulu language, culture and general way of life. In this regard the time spent within the community, in schools and interacting with teachers, principals and community members was invaluable. Through my field work experience I have come to truly respect and admire teachers working in this region.

This research has illuminated:

- The **complex educational landscape** that teachers and organisations are trying to make sense of, in an effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our country.
- The important role that NGOs have to play in **partnership** with schools and the DBE in working towards initiating and facilitating school-based interventions and improvement projects.
- The importance of **change being driven within** a community as opposed to being imposed externally.
- The need to **empower and involve teachers** as active participants in school change processes, to ensure the long-term sustainability and continued effectiveness of school-based interventions.

Post-script: towards the future

I returned to the Umzinyathi community to conduct a teachers' workshop three months after the completion of my data analysis process. The workshop was characterised by direct involvement and participation on the part of the teachers concerned, which was different from the previous workshops I had conducted in 2010 and 2011, in which teachers had remained relatively passive. Their more active involvement was noticeable from the outset of the workshop. First, the teachers themselves identified key areas of need in their own schools, according to which further workshop sessions were planned. To the extent that teachers were able to critically engage with their own experiences and knowledge of teaching and learning, and identify areas requiring intervention, this was clear evidence of self-aware, reflexive teaching practice. Three years before this had not been the case: when teachers were asked about their practice and where support was required, many of them simply asked for tangible interventions and support, such as a photocopier or a fax machine.

The teachers had, it appeared, been empowered to engage with their own teaching practice, and had acquired the confidence to speak up about it. The commitment that the DRF had shown towards training and developing teachers, through the use of the same external educational consultant over the past five years, had in my opinion played a significant role in this process and achievement.

Further evidence of changing attitudes among teachers was the fact that this was the largest workshop attendance to date. In addition, teachers took the time to respond appropriately and engage with me on issues relating to the organisation and smooth running of the workshop. In general teachers responded with interest, asked questions and debated issues. Previously, very few teachers had even responded to the invitation.

In sum, I observed a shift in the teachers' ability to engage with educational change. They appeared to have progressed beyond the superficial level of understanding described in this thesis. Without the **sustained work over time** of the DRF in providing the necessary opportunities and support for teacher training and collaboration, this new sense of vocational commitment would, in my view, not have been possible.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CASE AUDIT: INVENTORY

DATA FILE 1:

Document 1: DRF School Evaluation 1A: Together Schools Concept document 1B: Umzinyathi Project Schools Report 1B.1: Sustainable School Concept document 1B.2: Handprint document
Document 2: Siyanakekela Baseline Study Report 2A: School Baseline study reports 2B: DRF-Siyanakekela presentation 2C: DRF School Survey Report
Document 3: Fieldwork Experience, Phase I: May 2011 3A: Permission to conduct research: KZN Department of Education 3B: Information for participants including consent documentation 3C: Semi-structured interview schedules: pilot and final 3D: Interview transcripts and analytical memos 3E: Compiled notes and further evidence of analysis from interviews
Document 4: DRF strategic planning and conceptualisation 4A: DRF Strategic Plan 4B: DRF background and goals of foundation
Research Journal
DVD: Electronic Data File (see Appendix B for inventory)

DATA FILE 2:

Document 1: Interviews with School Principals: Phase II 1A: Principal information and consent forms 1B: Interview transcripts and analytical memos 1C: Analysis of findings: Phase II of study
Document 2: Focus Group Discussions 2A: Initial participant scoping documentation 2B: An example of the official invitation sent to the DRF schools inviting teachers to be a part of the focus group discussions. Information and consent documentation. 2C: Copies of teachers' completed consent forms. 2D: Interview schedules, focus group discussion transcripts and analytical memos.

Document 3: Personal Communication
3A:
3B: Ben Henderson
3C: Community members
3D: Critical friend

APPENDIX B

DVD INVENTORY

Electronic data file

File 1: Education Development Plan [EDP] DRF EDP checklist (Excel doc) MoU with Schools DRF EDP
File 2: Minutes of meetings Minutes of the meeting [MM] MM1 = 18 August 2004 MM2 = 2 May 2005 MM3 = 26 April 2006 MM4 = 16 August 2006 MM5 = 29 November 2006
File 3: Recent documents DRRM#1 (DRF's recent minutes – 13 March 2007) NL#1 (News letter number 1) TD (Training document, March 2009)

APPENDIX C

Extract from the DRF Education Development Plan [EDP]

1. It is the belief of the DRF that all children should receive the best all-round education possible, an education that
   - creates an enquiring mind,
   - supports individual differences and proclivities
   - develops self-discipline and initiative,
   - is achievement driven
   - gives a child command of the fundamental processes (reading, writing, oral and written expression and mathematics),
   - teaches compassion, honesty, accountability, integrity, courtesy, good citizenship, ethics and sensible values,
   - instills respect for self, others and the institutions of good government
   - provides guidelines on health and self-development, as well as
   - supplies vocational guidance,
   - explains the proper use of leisure in the context of self-development,
   - allows the child to compete fairly in the tertiary education or job markets and
   - prepares a child for entry into the adult world as a responsible, capable and contributing member of society.

2. The belief of the DRF is that these conditions can more easily be achieved in a safe and nurturing environment, with competent and caring teachers who have available to them all the facilities' and equipment necessary to carry out their role.

3. All children at school should be in a safe environment with access to clean drinking water, toilet facilities and medical care. Classrooms should be sized to permit individual attention for each learner. Each teacher should be adequately trained, properly skilled and sufficiently experienced to be able to carry out their assigned role. Each School Principal should be similarly trained, skilled and sufficiently experienced to manage and guide their school to successfully achieving its objective – a well-educated, confident child, despite any disabilities.

4. The schools with which the DRF work are all Government Department of Education schools and the DRF has no input on the selection of teachers, principals and other staff. The DRF can only support, complement and supplement the efforts of the Dept by working with the people and facilities that are in place.

5. With these limitations in mind, the Foundation believes that improved learner achievement can come from a school equipped with, or that achieves or delivers the following:

   a) **Safety & Security**
      (1) Securely fenced, well maintained, hazard free grounds with supervised access control.
      (2) A weapons, drugs and alcohol-free environment within the school grounds
      (3) Children free from all forms of abuse, physical, sexual or psychological, including neglect, in their school environment
      (4) No unremedied traffic hazards in the area or on approaches to school

(5) Provision of safe transport to and from school/home where appropriate

b) Infrastructure/Environment

(1) Safe and secure, well maintained and cared for, properly equipped, well lit classroom buildings that provide a reasonably balanced temperate and dry learning environment.
(2) Sufficient classrooms to maintain a classroom density of approx 25 children per class, with at least one spare classroom
(3) Buildings are electrified throughout
(4) Have adequate and differentiated supervised play areas (with shade)
(5) Approaches are well signposted and school emanates a sense of pride
(6) There are sufficient litter bins/trash cans
(7) Grounds and buildings that are adequately signposted with doors clearly marked
(8) An equipped and capable maintenance team
(9) TV, DVD Player, data projector, landline, fax and Internet links
(10) A clean, tidy, fully functioning, well-maintained assembly hall which can be used for assembly, meetings, examinations, plays, cultural performances, etc.
(11) A staff common room where staff can meet, plan and discuss in private their work and progress.
(12) Has adequate and organised tidy, clean, functioning and secure storage for school equipment (which is used only for current, working school equipment.)
(13) Desks, chairs, and classroom equipment in good and functioning condition
(14) A properly equipped Principal's office
(15) A secure and shaded car park for school and staff vehicles

c) Water & Sanitation

(1) Clean drinking water.
(2) Infrastructure in place to harvest and store rain water
(3) Access to sufficient clean, hygienic, properly equipped toilets with water and soap to wash hands

d) Health & Nutrition

(1) On site or close access to a clinic, plus easily accessible First Aid kit on site and personnel adequately trained in its use.
(2) Has a vegetable garden to teach and supplement the NSNP
(3) Provides instruction on personal hygiene, diet and basic health care
(4) Properly manages the National Schools Nutrition Programme, ensuring food intended for the children is not diverted elsewhere or wasted
(5) Has a clean, hygienic kitchen, staffed by competent, knowledgeable staff able to produce, a well-balanced and nutritious meal on time
(6) School actively discourages the sale of "junk food" to the children

e) Academic, Curriculum & Resources

(1) Gives vocational guidance
(2) Provide educational trips (at least once per annum)
(3) No Grades are combined in the same classroom
(4) Offers a broad range of subjects
(5) Offers a broad range of additional activities (music, drama, sports, societies, clubs, etc)
(6) A functioning computer lab with a competent teacher teaching computer skills to a competent standard
(7) A functioning science lab with a competent teacher teaching Science knowledge to a competent standard
(8) Has a broad range of sports equipment, all in good condition and regular use
(9) Learning and Teaching Support Materials accessible to all teachers and in regular use by knowledgeable school staff
(10) Regular assessments of both learners and educators carried out (as determined by DoE)

(11) Committed teaching staff dedicated to teaching and adherence to Dept guidelines
(12) Teaches values of honesty, accountability, integrity, courtesy, good citizenship and ethics.
(13) All children wear school uniforms (with assistance from school to poor parents)
(14) Provides an orderly, well stocked, supervised and relevant library and careers guidance centre (for FET Phases) regularly in use by the students
(15) Identifies and provides counseling support to children in need

f) Sports, Culture & Community Interaction

(1) Makes provision for supervised sports activities and similar outdoor activities
(2) Has good relationships with, and the support of, the surrounding community as well as the parent group.

g) Leadership/Management/Governance

(1) Principle is enthusiastic, energetic and involved, leading by example
(2) The school prepares an annual budget to adequately, but not wastefully, cover their annual needs
(3) The grounds are clean and neat at all times
(4) School structures are at least in line with Departmental guidelines (SGB, SMT, ILST, etc.)
(5) SGB and SMT has a full understanding of their roles and are capable of carrying them out
(6) Holds and minutes all meetings at least at the frequency set out by the Department.
(7) Has a teacher for each class, plus provision for adequate cover in the event of unexpected absences
(8) Children are competently supervised and protected at all times while in the care of the school
(9) School vision, mission and goals are prominently displayed at the school
(10) School timetable and policies are displayed within the school
(11) Staff turnover under 10% p.a.
(12) Children are well disciplined
(13) Individual leadership, self-expression and a questioning attitude are encouraged
(14) No graffiti or willful damage on school buildings
(15) Has good relationships with the local Dept of Education
(16) All school records are kept up to date (attendance, sickness, residential conditions, special needs, etc.), preferably on SA-SAMS
(17) School finances are regularly audited and the school holds a financial reserve
(18) No stealing, bullying or other signs of disrespect
(19) Networks with other schools
(20) Social workers make regular visits, psychosocial support is available to all students
(21) Teaching staff regularly receive update training
(22) All teachers can use a computer
(23) Administrative and other non-teaching staff are properly trained in their roles
(24) The educators and school staff work as a team
(25) Uses SA-SAMS
(26) School has good time-keeping practices
(27) School has an annual School Improvement Plan with accompanying Action Plans

h) Achievement

(1) School has a results-oriented focus
(2) Student attendance level is in 90%+ range
(3) Educator attendance level in class is in 90%+ range
(4) Relevant examination pass rate is good: 85%+
(5) Achieves thorough and appropriate levels of competency in Literacy, Maths and English (>80%)

i) Eco-friendly

(1) School has and implements an eco-friendly policy
(2) School has a recycling policy, managing waste in a responsible manner
(3) School has a policy, and teaches children, to conserve water, electricity and resources
(4) Children taught to be eco-friendly & considerate

APPENDIX D

Examples of the letter of information and consent documentation used in the study.

A full record of completed consent documentation is available in DATA FILE 2: Documents 1 & 2.

Teachers' roles and participation in a change process:

The case of a school based intervention in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

School reform is a major focus area within the international educational arena. Locally South African schools exist within a destabilised context and have a complex legacy of disparities associated with the apartheid regime. The entire educational environment is in a state of flux as social, economic and political forces shape our schools. Hargreaves and Fullan (2009, p. 5) note that education is entirely about change, and that effective change is concerned with learning and figuring out the most constructive way forward for the greatest good.

The overarching research question formulated in the project proposal is to investigate the roles and responsibilities of teachers in a change process. The purpose of my research is thus to document and understand the intervention strategies devised by the David Rattray Foundation (DRF) for rural schools and to detail the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the various intervention strategies at play.

I would like to state at the outset of this investigation that in no way is it my intention to bring the David Rattray Foundation in disrepute. My role as a researcher is to objectively document the work that the Foundation has done with a specific focus on the roles and participation of teachers in this change process. However I would like to make it clear, that in the final Master's thesis report some of the research findings will be positive and some may be negative. It is hoped that the findings will serve as means of indentifying new challenges and hopefully adopting ways to address these positively and constructively for the good of everyone. Full copies of the final report will be made available to the Foundation Board members and any other interested parties.

24 Paddington Place

Alliway Road

Lonehill

10 May 2011

The David Rattray Foundation

Post Office Rorke's Drift

KwaZulu-Natal

3016

Dear

I am grateful that you and members of the David Rattray Foundation (DRF) have granted me permission to conduct my research for my Masters in Education on the work that the Foundation is doing with respect to the rural schools within the local Nquthu and Mvoti Districts.

As part of ensuring that my study is valid and ethical it is imperative that I inform you of my intentions and requirements as we embark upon this research journey. I am registered as a PhD student within the Educational Faculty at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (student no. 9730507). Professor Di Wilmot, the Dean of Education together with Professor Pat Irwin are my supervisors who will be guiding me through the research process.

My research interest lies within the educational upliftment interventions put forward by the DRF within member schools of the Nquthu and Mvoti Districts. Being a teacher myself, I am especially interested in understanding the roles and participation of the teachers working within these schools with respect to the changes and intervention strategies devised by the DRF.

My research will take place it two phases. At the outset, this May I would like to gather data and documentation that helps me to understand the history and context of the DRF as well as the work and intervention strategies the DRF has been involved in within the various schools in the Nquthu and Mvoti Districts. An example of the kind of documents I require will include the Foundation's mission statement, minutes of meetings, school audits, records/programme of teacher training etc.

Thereafter I would like to conduct an interview with you individually about your involvement in the DRF and the change process.

The second phase of my data collection process will take place early next year once schools have commenced. In this part of my research I would like to understand the roles and participation teachers, heads of department and principals have played in the various interventions and change processes which have unfolded as a result of the work of the DRF. This will take place through focus group discussions in which a group of teachers (4-8 teachers) will discuss questions I pose to the group as well as conducting individual interviews with select teachers and principals. I am very aware that there may be language barriers in some instances and as I am not able to communicate in isiZulu I may have to seek the use of a translator.

Finally I would also like to interview the Education District Manager in Dundee with respect to his involvement with the various schools as well as the DRF.

In order for me to conduct any research within schools in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, I am aware that I require formal permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. I have downloaded the various permission documentation forms and guidelines which I together with my supervisors will submit during the course of this year.

I trust that this is in order and that you will not hesitate to raise any concerns with me at any stage of the research process.

Yours faithfully,

Sally James

073 160 8532

sallyjanejames@gmail.com

Teachers' roles and participation in a change process:

The case of a school based intervention in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

CONSENT FORM

I hereby agree to participate in the research regarding the work that the David Rattray Foundation is doing within the Nquthu District, KwaZulu-Natal with a specific focus on the role of teachers within this change process. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can with draw from this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in anyway affect me negatively.

- I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally or the David Rattray Foundation.

- I have received the contact details of the researcher, Sally James and will contact her should I feel the need to speak about any issues that arise from the interview.

- I understand that this consent form will not appear in the research report and that my answers will remain confidential.

- I understand that I will be given a written transcript of my interview in the days post-interview to validate my responses to the questions asked.

Signature of participant:_____

Date:_____

REVISED PROPOSAL FOR TRAINING & SUPPORT IN THE DAVID RATTRAY FOUNDATION SCHOOLS, UMZINYATHI DISTRICT, KZN

1. INTRODUCTION

The magnitude of the beneficiaries of the project has necessitated a review of the initial proposal submitted earlier on. This submission is subsequent to the meeting with the DOE officials and principals of the DRF schools in Dundee on 20 March 2009.

2. SCOPE OF THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Focus Areas

- Curriculum planning and implementation
- School management and community inclusion

Beneficiaries

Fourteen (14) schools located in the Nquthu and Endumeni Circuits as follows:

Circuit	Ward & Ward Manager	Schools & No. of Educators
Endumeni	Endumeni South (Mr Myeza)	Amoibe Combined (11) Oscarsberg Primary (10) Shiyane Secondary (17)
Nquthu	Hlazakazi (Mr Vilakazi)	Buhlebamangwe Primary (11) Gadeleni Secondary (11) Isandlwana Primary (13) Mampunga Primary (10) Mathutshana Primary (3) Mahlazana Primary (11) Siyanda Secondary (12) Nhloya Primary (9)
Nquthu	Nondweni (Mr Mdletshe)	Cebelihle Primary (7)
Nquthu	Mkhonjane (Dr Khanyile)	Ncepheni Primary (14)

		Ntalantala Secondary (17) **TOTAL: 156**

Methodology

The schools will be grouped into four clusters according to their proximity, with all teachers and School Management Teams (SMT) attending the curriculum training workshops in the GET and FET Phase jointly as follows:

- Oscarsberg Cluster (3 schools) : 38 educators
- Ncepheni Cluster (3 schools) : 42 educators
- Buhlebamangwe Cluster (3 schools) : 28 educators
- Gadeleni Cluster (5 schools) : 48 educators

Separate workshops will be organised for School Principals, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), and Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) where applicable.

Individual school support and monitoring visits will be done in the mornings during each week of the training workshops, with such workshops commencing at 12h00. Workshops will be from Mondays to Thursdays, and school support visits will be between Tuesdays and Fridays.

3. PROGRAMME TIMELINES and FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

With the inevitable quadruplication of each training session in terms of the four clusters, the timelines are getting extended to an average of **at least 18 weeks.** From a practical point of view this period begins in **May 2009, extending to the first semester of 2010.** It is unlikely that schools could be in a position to accommodate workshop attendance between October and November; therefore the dates suggested will be negotiable. However, Curriculum Planning and Implementation is given first priority, and the other workshops may be carried over to 2010.

Please note that the 18 weeks proposed give a narrow allowance to accommodate project meetings and training of RCLs where applicable.

This revised programme attempts to ensure that the impact of the training workshops does not lose momentum by too long breaks in between the sessions. It therefore proposes workshops and school visits being conducted **at least twice a month** once a foundation has been laid.

Planning Phase

Topic	**Target Group**	**Timelines**
Initial planning meetings and introduction of the programme	Department of Education, DRF schools	3 days (January – March 2009)

Implementation Phase

Focus Area 1: Curriculum Planning and Implementation

Topic	Target Group	Timelines
1.1 Overview of the National Curriculum Statement • Principles, structure and design features of the NCS, Learning Areas and Learning Outcomes • Unpacking Assessment Standards; Progression • Learning Programmes, Work schedules and Lesson Plans	SMTs and all Educators: GET & FET Band SMTs and all Educators SMTs and all Educators	18-22 May 2009 01-05 June 2009 27-31 July 2009
1.2 Assessment in the NCS • Purpose and principles of assessment; process of assessment • Types and forms of assessment; continuous assessment; how to implement formal and informal assessment tasks and activities • Assessment tools (for collecting and judging evidence); recording and reporting	SMTs and all educators SMTS and all educators SMTs and all educators	11-14 August 2009 24-28 August 2009 14-18 September 2009
1.3 Teaching & Learning Strategies: Using a variety of NCS-compliant methodologies to facilitate learning • Teaching v facilitating learning; lesson planning and preparation; use of		

icebreakers, individual work, paired work and group work • Class discussion method; brainstorming; case studies; role plays / dramatisation; questioning techniques; debates, etc.	SMTs and all educators SMTs and all educators	05-09 October 2009 12-16 October 2009
1.4 Classroom Management • Classroom organisation; understanding learner needs; discipline in the classroom • Teaching and learning support materials (resources); how to manage large classes	SMTs and all educators SMTs and all educators	November 2009?? November 2009??

Focus Area 2: School Management and Community Inclusion

Topic	**Target Group**	**Timelines**
• Effective school leadership and management	Principals and SMTs	Week 1 : 2010
• SGB roles & responsibilities; establishment of SGB sub-committees to involve parents	SGB & parents	Week 2: 2010
• Parental involvement in supporting the education of their children	SGB & parents	Week 3: 2010
• Discipline, Safety &	SGB & parents	Week 4: 2010

Security Policy • RCL roles and responsibilities; code of conduct; learners' rights & responsibilities • School infrastructure maintenance	RCLs SGB, SMTs & RCLs	Week 5: 2010 Week 6: 2010

CONCLUSION

The service provider has tried all possible means to squeeze as much work as possible to cater for all the beneficiaries of the project. The proposed programme will be highly affected either positively or negatively by the availability of participants to attend workshops, as well as their commitment to the prompt implementation of what they have learnt, which will be consistently monitored by the facilitator and, hopefully, the Departmental officials. The visibility of and support by Departmental officials will give the project great credibility and impact on the schools and the community. The facilitator is totally committed to do her best to make a difference in the schools and community of Umzinyathi District on behalf of the David Rattray Foundation.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

between

The David Rattray Foundation

(hereinafter referred to as the DRF)

and

[School Name]

(hereinafter referred to as the School)

1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this MoU is to identify the roles, responsibilities and relationship of each party as they relate to the work the DRF will do in the DRF schools in general, and in particular in relation to the implementation of the DRF Education Development Plan (EDP.) It will also indicate the areas and extent of cooperation anticipated between the partners.

2 Definitions/Abbreviations

SMT	School Management Team	EDP	Education Development Plan
DoE	Dept of Education	DRF	David Rattray Foundation
SGB	School Governing Body		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		

3 Background

The DRF was formed with the intention of providing assistance to the schools in the Rorke's Drift/Isandlwana area. This assistance is funded by the DRF when necessary and is generally restricted to projects which directly or indirectly contribute to the improvement of the education of the children in the DRF schools. To achieve some measure of sustainability and community ownership, these projects are carried out in partnership with the relevant school's SMT, SGB

and the DoE.

The DRF will consult with its partners and the Board of Directors of the DRF regarding the implementation of projects. All Projects require 100% funding and DRF Board approval **prior** to commencement.

4 Duration

Both parties agree that this MoU will be valid until 31st Dec 2012 (the date of expiry).

5 DRF responsibilities under this MoU

The DRF will also consult with the DoE and the School on any work or assistance required, plan the resulting interventions to best suit the school and will assist with building partnerships with other parties that may benefit the school. The DRF will use its best endeavours to raise its portion of whatever funds are necessary to carry out any agreed projects. The Foundation will drive the implementation of projects and will keep the Dept and the School informed of progress and any anticipated changes to scheduled activity.

The DRF will try to achieve the highest possible standards with each project.

The DRF will try to minimise any adverse effect the various DRF projects may have on the normal school routines or activity.

6 The School's responsibilities under this MoU

The School is expected to proactively take care of all materials, equipment, buildings, etc. that are supplied to it from whatever source. This means keeping the existing School facilities and equipment well maintained, in good working order and planning for their replacement. Grounds should be litter-free at all times, broken windows repaired within a reasonable time, and all general work carried out as, when and how needed. The school should secure its property at all times and display responsible asset management.

All scheduled meetings between institution-based organisations (SMT, SGB, ILST, etc.) should take place at the recommended (by DoE) and agreed frequency, with minutes kept by the School of all discussions and decisions.

The school will keep the DRF informed of any relationship with other NGOs, or any other development work that is scheduled to take place at or for the school.

The school will make every effort to have the appropriate person, or a substitute, attend all relevant DRF meetings, courses or discussions.

Once a project has been approved and authorised, the School and its community is expected to exercise every effort to assist with the completion of the work that is required to be done.

The school will at all times exert every effort to deliver the best all-round education (including extra-mural activities such as sports) possible to the children attending the school, keeping proper records of their achievements and progress (preferably on SA-SAMS.)

The School hereby confirms that it believes in the philosophy outlined in the DRF EDP and will do everything in its power to achieve these mutually agreed objectives and standards.

The school will make available to the DRF their examination results (as a primary measure of progress) and be prepared to discuss these with the DRF.

7 Understanding

It is understood that this document states the intentions of the parties only, is not legally binding in any way and that either party can withdraw from the partnership at any time.

It is also understood that the school will always have the right of refusal of any proposed project planned for implementation at that school.

8 Funding

All funds raised by the DRF remain the property of the DRF who will exercise appropriate management and financial controls in accordance with its legal obligations as a Not-for-Profit Section 21 Company.

The School will also conduct fund-raising exercises to be able to make their contribution towards the costs of any DRF interventions if requested.

9. Monitoring & Evaluation

The parties agree to meet at an appropriate frequency and date agreed upon at the commencement of a project to review the progress, address any concerns and discuss any and all aspects of the project that are considered relevant. The parties agree to address the topics raised at such meetings in a meaningful and constructive manner beneficial to the project and the parties involved.

10. Effective Date and Signature

This Memorandum of Understanding comes into effect on the date of signature of all the parties (or their representatives) and shall remain in force until the date of expiry.

Signed for and on behalf of the **David Rattray Foundation:**

Name:_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Witness:_____ Date: _____

For and on behalf of the **School:**

Principal Name:_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Witness:_____ Date: _____

SGB Chairperson Name: :_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Witness:_____ Date: _____

Wits School of Education

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CASE AUDIT

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE:

A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF A SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION IN RURAL KWAZULU-NATAL

By

Sally Jane James

To whom it may concern

I have checked the data files and case record relating to the above thesis. This is to confirm:

1) the existence of all the documents referred to in the thesis;
2) the accuracy of all such references; and
3) the ethical appropriateness of the way in which the references have been used in the above thesis.

Mrs James has collected and collated this data in a very professional and meticulous manner. The recording and compilation of the case record is efficiently done and supports her thesis, which makes for interesting and informative reading.

Mr. Clinton David van der Merwe

Geography Lecturer & PGCE Coordinator, 22 August 2013