

**TITLE: An investigation of the pedagogic and contextual factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa: A study of selected public schools in the Western Cape.**

**LUCINDA LUCILLE DU PLOOY**

**Student Number: 8507649**



**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape.**

**Supervisor: Prof. Nazir Carrim**

**NOVEMBER 2015**

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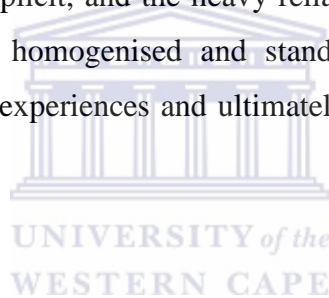
**ABSTRACT**

Poor performance by South African students especially in literacy and numeracy are at a level of national crisis. Theory, as well as international and national systemic tests, show that the reasons for this is both multiple and extremely complex. In this study I investigated the problems relating to learner achievement levels in South African education. The main question arising from this problem, which I addressed, is: What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa? My conceptual focus is on pedagogic practices and the socialization of identity, and how these relate to learner achievement levels, working from the premise that children from different social classes experience schooling differently. My focus is on the classroom, phase and school contexts, whilst locating these in the wider national, continental and global contexts. The disciplinary approach used in this study is in the domain of sociology of education, drawing specifically on the work of leading sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein. Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus', 'field' and 'cultural capital' helped in understanding structure and agency, and the interiority and exteriority of social relations, whereas Bernstein's 'code theory' and his work on curriculum, pedagogic practices and pedagogic discourse was used to describe how formal knowledge is realized and transmitted, and its effects on different social groupings.

Methodologically, this study is located within a qualitative interpretivist research paradigm. Research was conducted in three purposively selected public primary schools in the Western Cape using a qualitative multiple case study research design. The bounded cases were Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals. The rationale for selecting these particular cases stems from the fact that research in these particular areas of schooling is lacking. The significance of the study lies in the fact that previous research on learner achievement used teacher behaviour as a predictor for achievement, whereas this study focused primarily on learner behaviour and the learners' views on their own achievement.

The study employed in-depth data collection procedures including questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and various document related sources.

The contextual analysis reveals that there is clearly a need to understand the nature of the learner, what they bring into school and how they make sense of schooling. Furthermore, it shows that the ways in which learners exercise their agency is reinforcing underachievement. It further reveals that teachers are under pressure to get learners to adhere to the middle-class ethos of schooling and as a result are pushed into the regulative discourse compromising the instructional discourse within pedagogy. Pedagogically, the analysis reveals that teachers are under pressure in terms of curriculum coverage having to work within restricted time-frames, and having to meet the requirements of the ANAs that they do not see the possibility to relax framing in terms of pacing. As a result they are leaving their learners behind. Furthermore, the unnecessary strong framing at the level of pacing, not making the evaluation criteria explicit, and the heavy reliance on systemic testing, as in the case of the ANAs, is creating homogenised and standardised learner identities, which translate into differential learner experiences and ultimately differential learner achievement levels.



## **KEYWORDS/PHRASES**

Learning

Learner achievement/performance

Code theory

Pedagogic practices

Pedagogic devices

Pedagogic discourse

Habitus and Habitat

Field

Capital

Social class

Sociological reflexivity

Qualitative research



## DECLARATION

I declare that

**An investigation of the pedagogic and contextual factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa: A study of selected public schools in the Western Cape.**

is my own work, that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this work has not been submitted previously in its entirety, or in any part, at any other higher education institution for degree purposes.



.....

L. Du Plooy



November 2015

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Neville and Avril Mocke, my children Adrian, Dean, Kelsey and Nicholas and my grandchildren Blake and Riley Alexander. Your unconditional love, constant support and encouragement made this long and difficult journey worthwhile. I also dedicate this thesis to my sister, Prof. Lorna Holtman, who believed in me enough to put me on this journey.



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My research journey on route to completing my doctoral degree will not be complete without acknowledging the assistance of a range of people. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the following people:

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2. My supervisor- **Prof. Nazir Carrim**, whom I thank wholeheartedly for his encouragement, patience, commitment and invaluable critical guidance from the inception to the completion of this research. Thank you for playing a vital role in the development of my “intellectual habitus”.
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4. *The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.*
5. My immediate family- My children- Adrian, Dean, Kelsey and Nicholas, who understood that doing a PhD is hard work and for allowing me to withdraw from my duties as mother and homemaker.
6. My mentors-Prof. Lorna Holtman, Prof. Cyril Julie, Prof. Aslam Fataar, Prof. Vuyo Nomlomo and Prof. Beverly Thaver – I appreciated your encouragement for me to ‘just get on with it’, for ‘corridor chats’ which opened up many debates and added to my intellectual growth.
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*“Life’s greatest accomplishments are those that at first seem impossible” (Unknown). I thank all of you for helping me on my research journey and for making the impossible possible*

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADD- Attention Deficit Disorder  
ANA – Annual National Assessment  
ANC- African National Congress  
CAPS- Curriculum and Assessment Policy  
CIRC- Curriculum Implementation Review Committee  
COSATU- Congress of South African Trade Unions  
CUMSA- Curriculum Model for South Africa  
DBE – Department of Basic Education  
DET- Department of Education and Training  
DNE- Department of National Education  
DOE- Department of Education  
ERS-Education Renewal Strategy  
ESRC- Economic and Social Research Council  
HOR- House of Representatives  
IPET- Implementation Plans for Education and Training  
LSEN- Learner with Special Educational Needs  
MLA- Monitoring Learner Achievement Progress  
NCS – National Curriculum Statement  
NEPI- National Education Policy Investigation  
NTB- National Training Board  
OBE – Outcomes Based Education  
OT – Occupational therapy  
PIRLS – Progress on International Reading Literacy Study  
PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment  
RNCS- Revised National Curriculum Statement  
SACMEQ – Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality  
TIMMS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study  
WCED – Western Cape Education Department

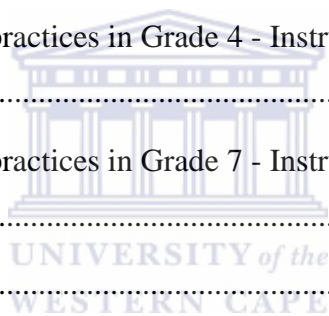


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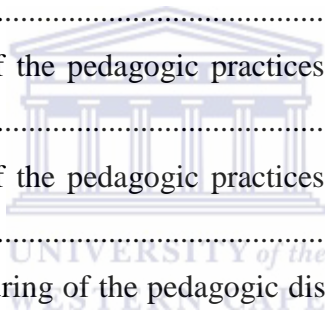


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## CHAPTER 1

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa. Studies (Fleisch, 2008; Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold, 2003 and Jansen and Christie (1999), *inter alia*), reveal that the factors that have contributed to learner achievement levels in South Africa thus far have been multiple and complex. This study attempts to understand this complex educational phenomenon from the learner's perspective, in relation to the views of their teachers and principals. It appears that very few studies take into account the learners views and perspective for their own academic success or failure.

The contribution of this thesis is twofold: firstly, it focuses on the contextual factors that account for differential learner outcomes, and secondly, it focuses on pedagogy and pedagogic relationships, especially how pedagogy is experienced by learners and teachers in different school contexts and how this in turn accounts for differential achievement levels.

The study is located in three selected primary schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. The empirical field is Grades 1, 4 and 7, the entrance levels to three phases of primary schooling. Research on learner achievement in South Africa favours Grades 3, 6 and 9 the exit levels to the three phases of schooling.

This introductory chapter starts with the background and rationale of the study, presents the general research problem, the research sub-questions and presents research into the possible reasons for learner achievement levels in South Africa thus far. It also provides the general theoretical and methodological approach adopted. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of the thesis.

#### 1.1 Background and rationale

Researchers have reached consensus that South Africa's education system is in deep distress (Fleisch, 2008; Bloch, 2009; Jansen, 2002; Sayed & Motala, 2012; Soudien, 2006, 2013). Most studies turn to benchmark testing to depict this worrying state. Critics do however caution against using the scores of these tests to interpret the performance of learners. Bloch (2009) warns of the cultural implications of benchmark testing. According to him, "there are

language barriers that may reflect how he or she [referring to learners] answers questions set at an international level”. Pereira and Du Toit (2012) hold a different view. For them, “measuring learners’ achievement through standardised testing can be a useful determinant of educational policy reform”. They however warn that

testing is not useful if it becomes a scheme of high stakes accountability that promotes aggressive individualism in schools or a whipping stick to punish poor performers (Pereira & Du Toit, 2012:52).

One should however not lose sight of the fact that these tests are non-high stakes examination written in non-examination periods and what is happening in most cases is that researchers mainly focus on the results and not on the tests themselves. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) was criticised for various reasons which led to the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) with its own set of problems. Dempster and Reddy (2007) analysed TIMMS (2003) by looking at three readability factors (sentence complexity, unfamiliar words and long words). They found that these items were inappropriate for learners with limited English proficiency which then could account for poor results of these learners. Even though their findings do not fully account for South African learners’ poor performance, they do point to the fact that we should approach these results with caution. Despite these warnings, benchmark testing remains a major topic of discussion in the educational arena, especially to depict learner achievement levels.

So what do these tests show us? International, cross-national and national tests in which South Africa participated reveal shocking results, indicating that “South African schools are failing” (Bloch, 2009:9). This is evident from South Africa’s involvement in TIMMS in 1995, 1999 and 2003. The focus of these tests was on mathematics and science, and over a period of 8 years, between 1995 and 2003, South Africa’s results remained largely the same. The country’s average score was 275 for mathematics in 1999 and 264 in 2003 (maximum score was 800), whereas the international average was 487 in 1999 and 467 in 2003. Similar results were recorded for science. In 1999, South Africa’s average score was 243, compared with the international average of 488, and in 2003 the average score was 244 compared with the international average score of 474 (OECD report, 2008:53-54). Even more alarming was South Africa’s poor performance in the Monitoring Learner Achievement Project (MLA) in 1999. The MLA study was conducted in several African countries and measured the competencies of Grade 4 learners in numeracy, literacy and life skills. Out of the 12

participating countries, South Africa scored the lowest in numeracy, fifth lowest in literacy and third lowest in life skills (OECD report, 2008:54). South Africa's participation in the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) projects, which focused on the literacy and numeracy of Grade 6 learners, once again revealed South African learners' poor performance. South Africa, as a newly formed democracy, opted not to participate in SACMEQ I in 1995. However in SACMEQ II, in 2003, in which South Africa did participate, South Africa was placed 9th out of the 14 countries that participated. Four years later, in 2007 in the SACMEQ III project South Africans were placed 14th out of the 15 countries that participated. What appears alarming is the fact that, even though international and cross-national tests scores warned about South Africa's poor performance in numeracy and literacy, these tests were only used to inform departmental reforms after 2008, though it was documented by Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold as early as 1998 and Moloi in 2000.

In addition, South Africa's poor performance in literacy was confirmed in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006. PIRLS tested over 30 000 learners in Grade 4 and 5, and on average the Grade 4s scored 13,2 % and the Grade 5s 18,2% (Howie et al., 2008). As noted by Fleisch (2008:22), "unlike almost all previous cross-national studies, the 2006 PIRLS study offered learners the option of taking the test in any of the 11 official languages". Fleisch (2013) adds that "PIRLS was a powerful signal of this crisis". The crisis he was alluding to was the crisis in primary education. Similar results are evident from national systemic tests undertaken in South Africa. Soudien (2013:112) notes that, before the large number of national benchmark tests was undertaken, "the most authoritative index of quality in the system was the matriculation or school-leaving examinations". Howie (2012) confirms this by noting that "national examinations have the highest stakes at school level and were used as the only measure of the quality of education prior to the inception of the national assessments and international studies" (Howie, 2012:86). The results of these high-stakes Grade 12 examinations were often found unreliable, even though they yielded improvements from 49% in 2000 to 73% in 2003 (Soudien, 2013, citing Kanjee, 2005:79). This unreliability of the Grade 12 examinations was reiterated by Soobrayan (DBE, 2011) who observed that "there has been insufficient, credible measurement of the quality of teaching and learning below Grade 12". From 2001, South Africa embarked on a series of systemic tests which also yielded worrisome results. The first official report on primary school learner achievement levels was released in 2003, known as the Systemic Evaluation Foundation Phase Mainstream National Report. These assessment tests, written by 51000

randomly selected Grade 3s in 2001, revealed that South African Grade 3 learners “had a very poor grasp of elementary mathematics as reflected in the average score of only 30% on the numeracy tasks. In addition, the average score for the reading and writing domain was 39%” (Fleisch, 2008:4). The test scores for Grade 6, which was published in 2005, were more alarming. Grade 6 learners’ mean scores were 35% for language, 27% for mathematics and 41% for natural science. The Moloï and Strauss report (2005, cited in Soudien, 2013:113) looked in depth at the competence levels of learners who had participated in these tests. They ascertain that:

the model of competence level for reading for Grade 6 learners in South Africa was at level 3 (basic reading) and was achieved by 19.1% of learners in the study. Only 26% of the learners could read above a level 4 (independent reading). In mathematics, the model level of attainment for Grade 6 learners was level 2 (emergent numeracy) which was attained by 44.4% of learners. In addition there were 7.8 % of learners who achieved only level 1 (beginner numeracy). All together this left less than 50% of learners reaching competence levels higher than emergent numeracy (Moloï & Strauss, 2005:68-69, cited by Soudien, 2013:113).

These tests revealed that not only are foundation and intermediate phase learners unable to read, write and count at expected levels, nor execute tasks that demonstrate skills associated with literacy and numeracy (DOE, 2008:4), but that, in terms of quality, the education system for the majority of South Africa’s learners remains inadequate (Soudien, 2013; Sayed & Motala, 2012). According to Soudien (2013:112), “there is substantial evidence to show that, while formal access has been achieved, substantial access or what is sometimes referred to as ‘epistemological access’ is still some way off” (Soudien, 2013:112). This is reiterated by Sayed and Motala (2012) who add that “while physical access is not a major education problem in South Africa, meaningful learning remains an elusive goal for many, particularly the marginalized, and the poor ...” (Sayed & Motala, 2012:105).

Both Soudien (2013) and Sayed and Motala (2012) point to the fact that good quality education is still out of reach of so many South African learners. There are multiple reasons for this. For Sayed and Motala (2012:105), it could be attributed to “how learners are taught, the bifurcated class-divide nature of South African schooling, and the lack of crucial and active parental involvement in schooling”. I will return to some of these issues in Chapter 2 (see 2.2) when I delve more deeply into the South African context and the changing structure of schooling in South Africa.

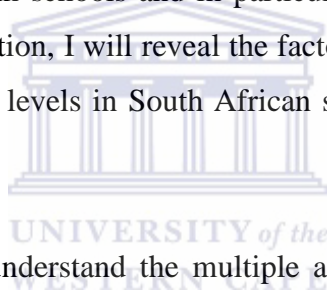
The Annual National Assessment (ANA) is an attempt by the Department of Basic Education to measure the quality of schooling in the lower grades because “over the last few years there has been a strong realization that to improve Grade 12 results, the performance of learners in the lower grades have to improve” (DBE, 2011). According to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga (2011):

ANA is expected to have four key effects on schools: to expose teachers to better assessment practices, make it easier for districts to identify schools in most need of assistance, encourage schools to celebrate outstanding performance and empower parents with information about their children’s performance (DBE, 2011).

The ANA test scores reveal and confirm the poor performances of primary school learners in South Africa. In the ANA tests that took place in February 2011, the national average of the Grade 3 tests was 35% for literacy and 28% for numeracy. In the Grade 6 literacy tests, the national average was 28% and the tests scores for mathematics 30% (Cape Argus, July 2011). The 2012 report revealed that the Grades 3 and Grade 6 mathematics mean scores stand at 43% and 19% respectively, and the mean scores for literacy at 48% and 37% respectively (DBE, 2012). Pausigere and Graven (2013) who studied mathematics teacher practicing identities in relation to ANA tests found that ‘whilst the teachers [in their study] felt a need to ‘keep an eye’ on the ANA tests to inform their practice they had reservations and critique on the administrative technicalities, standards and the validity of the ANA tests’ (Pausigere & Graven, 2013:12).

Some of these teachers questioned the validity of the tests, noting that, because teachers marked the tests themselves, it could lead to marks being ‘inflated’, while others argued that some of the instructions and language used in the test papers were not ‘easily accessible’ to learners. In addition, some teachers felt that these tests “placed unnecessary pressure on teachers to finish the syllabus” (ibid). Despite these concerns raised by teachers in Pausigere and Graven’s study, systemic testing like the ANAs is not likely to disappear very soon, as it remains a crucial part of measuring learner performance, especially in primary education. Benchmark testing can be useful to pinpoint the level of student performance against certain school variables at a single point in time but are less useful in explaining why students in some classrooms achieve more than others (Carnoy, Chisholm & Chilisa, 2012:52). My research intends exploring these issues, amongst others.

In addition to these systemic results, the work of Fleisch (2008), Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold, (2003) and Jansen and Christie (1999), amongst others, warn about the crisis. Fleisch offers numerous reasons for “why South African primary school-children are underachieving in reading and mathematics” (Fleisch, 2008: v). His review of the research on learner achievement levels identifies various reasons for underachievement amongst disadvantaged school children in South Africa: long-term health problems, poverty, learning in an additional language, use of poorly-planned code-switching, socio-economic background of parents, inadequate access to and use of classroom resources and the lack of teachers’ conceptual knowledge, *inter alia* (Fleisch, 2008:v). These reasons point to the complex nature of the phenomenon under study since, according to Fleisch, we “do not know the extent to which each of these factors contributes to school failure and in which combinations” (Fleisch, 2008:139). I argue that Fleisch’s findings are based on reviewing existing literature and not on classroom-based empirical research, and therefore it does not allow us to understand why learners at certain schools and in particular classrooms are underachieving (Du Plooy, 2010). In the next section, I will reveal the factors that other studies have thus far attributed to learner achievement levels in South African schools, with specific reference to primary schooling.



This study therefore sought to understand the multiple and underlying issues surrounding learner achievement levels across different phases of schooling: foundation, intermediate and senior phases. There is insufficient classroom-based empirical research on the foundation phase of schooling (Hoadley, 2005), and less so for the intermediate and senior phases. My analytical focus thus is on these three levels of schooling: the foundation, intermediate and senior phases, especially on Grades 1, 4 and 7, since research in these particular areas is lacking. One way to understand the phenomenon under study is to understand the role of context in performance. Here I argue that the ‘context’ in which the learner learns is multilayered: the first layer being the classroom, followed by the phase and school, then the community, region, province and nation, and finally the continent and global contexts. I am particularly interested in the first layer, the classroom, phase and school contexts, whilst locating these in the wider national, continental and global contexts. To assist me in understanding the complex nature of the phenomenon under study, I drew on the seminal work of Bourdieu (1986, 1990a, 1990b) who deals with concepts, such as ‘habitus’, ‘field’ and ‘cultural capital’, and Bernstein’s (1973a, 1973b) ‘code theory’, and his work on curriculum, pedagogic practices and discourse. Bernstein’s descriptions of how formal

knowledge is realised and transmitted and its effects on different social groupings, Bourdieu's theoretical framework that helps in understanding structure and agency, and the interiority and exteriority of social interactions provided me with the analytical tools to answer the research question and subsequent sub-questions, which follow.

## **1.2 Key research question**

The key research question which this study explores is: What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa? A study conducted in three selected public schools in the Western Cape.

The research question is unpacked in the following sub-questions:

1. What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling?
2. In which ways are learner achievement levels influenced by the curriculum, more specifically curriculum change?
3. What is the nature of pedagogic practices in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling, and how do these account for learner achievement levels in these phases?
4. How does the role of the teacher, in the pedagogic relationship, influence learner achievement levels, and how are such influences experienced in practice by learners?
5. How does the learner's racial, class and gender identities relate to his/her achievement levels?

## **1.3 The aim and objectives of the research**

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels across different phases of schooling.

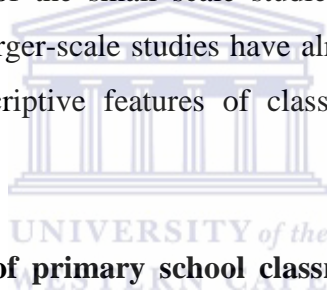
This broad aim is divided into the following specific objectives:

1. To offer a comprehensive overview of the theories, debates and concepts relating to learner achievement levels.
2. To provide an analytical account of factors influencing learner achievement levels in South African education.

## 1.4 Research into the possible reasons for learner achievement levels in South Africa thus far

As mentioned, this study's central focus is on the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa, especially primary education. Thus far, the identifiable factors that are argued to have contributed to learner achievement levels have been identified by various South African theorists, such as Taylor et al. (2003), Fleisch (2008), Christie (2008), Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Van Rooyen (2009), Hoadley (2012), amongst others.

In a recent study, Hoadley (2012) offered a review of classroom-based studies in order to discern what the existing knowledge-based around teaching and learning in South African primary schools were. What is useful about this comprehensive review is that it gives one insight into small, medium and large-scale studies undertaken between 2002 and 2012 in South Africa and provides one with an extensive knowledge-base from which to draw on. Although most of the findings of the small scale studies cannot be generalised, they do confirm what the medium and larger-scale studies have already alerted us to. The following table (Table 1) shows the descriptive features of classroom-based research findings in primary schools.



**Table 1: Descriptive features of primary school classrooms derived from small-scale studies**

FINDINGS	KEY STUDIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of cognitive demand</li> </ul>	Adler et al., 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominance of concrete over abstract meaning</li> </ul>	Schollar, 2008; Ensor, 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of opportunities for reading and writing</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow pacing</li> </ul>	Reeves et al., 2008; Pretorius & Machet, 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collectivised as opposed to Individualized learning</li> </ul>	Hoadley, 2003; Ensor et al., 2002
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The erosion of instructional time</li> </ul>	Hoadley, 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple complexities related to Language, especially second language teaching and learning</li> </ul>	Chisholm, 2005 Probyn, 2009; Setati & Adler, 2000; Desai, 2001;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of explicit feedback to learners</li> </ul>	Brock-Unte & Holmarscottir, 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of coherence</li> </ul>	Reeves, 2005; Hoadley, 2008
	Venkat and Naidoo, 2012

Source: Hoadley (2012:197)



The following factors, presented in Table 2, emerged from the school effectiveness and

**Table 2: Dominant descriptive features of primary school classrooms from medium and large-scale studies**

FINDINGS	KEY STUDIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of print material in classrooms, especially textbooks</li> </ul>	Taylor & Moyane, 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of opportunities for reading and writing</li> </ul>	Taylor & Moyane, 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom interaction patterns that privilege the collective (chorusing)</li> </ul>	Taylor & Moyane, 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of cognitive demand</li> </ul>	Taylor & Moyane, 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak forms of assessment and lack of feedback on students responses</li> </ul>	Taylor, 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow pacing</li> </ul>	Taylor, 2007

Source: Hoadley (2012:192)

According to Hoadley (2012:187), when viewed cumulatively, one could draw two strengths from the literature highlighted in the tables (Table 1 and 2) above: first, there appears to be consistency across studies regarding what is going on in classrooms in terms of teaching and learning and, second, “is that the research has recently begun to identify very specific features or dimensions of classroom practice, which appear to affect student learning”. She however warns that one of the problems in classroom-based research has been “the inability of research to show the impact of teaching and learning on learner achievement, relative to other factors, such as management and teacher professionalism” (Hoadley, 2012:197).

Previous studies by Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold (2003), as well as Fleisch (2008), offered a meta-analysis of large and small-scale studies that illuminated reasons for learner achievement levels in South African primary schools. Taylor et al. (1998, 2003) categorised the findings that could account for poor learner performance into three categories: firstly, contextual factors, such as family background in terms of family socio-economic status; secondly, resource factors, in terms of learner-teacher ratio, teacher educational levels and cognitive resources available at school, noting that these factors “generally mirror the socio-economic status of the catchment area of the school”, and, lastly, management and leadership

factors at school, district and higher levels (Taylor et al., 2003:68). The latter has been elaborated on by Taylor (2008:21-23) in his conference paper, “What’s wrong in South African Schools”, in which he points to the role of school management and leadership, adding that what appears to affect learner performance is “the lack of instructional leadership”. For him, ‘instructional leaders’:

- Maintain a climate in the school that values teaching and learning;
- Develops a culture of reading and writing;
- Ensures curriculum coverage; and
- Offers curriculum support to teachers.

Taylor’s (2008) findings were confirmed by Bush et al. (2009) who used a ‘snapshot’ approach in their research. They observed that “most principals have a weak grasp of teaching and learning; they lack the awareness of the requirements of the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS), and do not have a clear system for evaluating and monitoring teaching and learning (Bush et al., 2009:6).

Much has been written on the first category (Contextual factors) identified by Taylor et al. (2003:68), who note in their survey of contextual factors that “it is clear that race, parental income, settlement type or home area, and family structure will affect schooling outcomes in South Africa”. They add that all these factors have one thing in common, that is ‘social capital’, and that most of the studies they surveyed were informed by the work of Coleman (1988) who, as early as 1966 in the Coleman Report on Equality and Educational Opportunity, pointed to the contentious findings that schools did very little to alter a students’ life chances, attributing poor performance to the personal and family characteristics of the students (African American minority students in the US) to social background, and especially to the inequalities imposed on children by the socio-economic environment of their homes and neighbourhoods. Taylor et al. (2003) were referring to the studies done by Thomas (1996) and Crouch and Mabogoane (2001), who attributed learner achievement levels to the educational level of parents or communities, and Van der Berg and Berger (2002) and Crouch and Mabogoane (2001), who ascribed learner achievement levels to parental income and household wealth. Howie (2002), in addition, found a strong correlation between language used in the home and mathematics tests scores.

In section 1.1, I alluded to the reasons Fleisch (2008), in his meta-analysis, gave for poor learner performance in literacy and mathematics in primary schools in South Africa, illuminating similar findings to that of Taylor et al. (2003). His analysis however takes it a step further by focusing on both the levels of achievement, as well as the patterns of achievement, which he used as a way to understand the topography of inequality in reading and mathematics performance (Fleisch, 2008:viii). According to him, the patterns of achievement appear as a 'bimodal distribution', noting that "if all the achievements of average primary school learners were plotted on a frequency distribution, two humps will appear" (Fleisch, 2008:3). Furthermore, according to Fleisch (2008:3), the first 'big hump' is an indicator of the scale of underachievement in disadvantaged schools, where the majority of children cannot read with meaning in any language and are not numerically competent. The second 'small hump' is likely to reflect the performance of children who attended former 'white', 'Indian' and independent schools, and gained achievement levels comparable to those of students in Germany and the United States. These patterns of success and failure have been raised by others (Fataar & Patterson, 2002; Christie, 2008; Jansen, 2013). Fataar and Patterson (2002) used the functional-dysfunctional continuum as a way of analysing a school's functionality, pointing to the link between a school's material context and its institutional culture, and how this in turn could account for differential learning outcomes. They refer to 'functional' schools as schools

...that possess the organizational resources, the managerial and leadership capacity and sufficient motivated teaching corps to respond with creativity to change. The learning environment in such schools are shaped by systematic order and a universally set of rules and obligations. Teachers at these schools are not affected by stress brought on by policy changes, but they operate in terms of an institutional culture and leadership structures which enables adaptation and the incorporation of innovation... (Fataar & Patterson, 2002:16).

They describe dysfunctional schools as schools

...characterized by disorderly, if not chaotic environments. Teachers are faced with the daunting task of having to innovate and implement system change against the background of numerous socio-economic problems. ...the school is confronted with having to deal with student welfare concerns emanating, for example, from disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances or disrupted family structures. Through a combination of historical disadvantage, and the impact of working class and youth cultures, teachers

in dysfunctional schools are caught up in the daily grind of survival (Fataar & Patterson, 2002:17).

Similarly, Christie (2008) shows the patterns of success and failure by noting that

in some classrooms, there is active instruction by teachers who have a strong content knowledge and a range of pedagogical skills and resources. At the extreme, there are classrooms where teachers are absent and students copy notes from the board and from each other, in routines that have very little substance or content (Christie, 2008:184).

Jansen (2013), who views schools as ‘cultural spaces’, warns that changing long-sedimented institutional cultures is extremely difficult. According to him:

Schools are more than physical spaces that accommodate teachers and children or pedagogical spaces where teachers teach and children learn. They are also cultural spaces that socialize teachers and learners into particular ways of seeing, believing and acting on the world around them (Jansen, 2013:85).

He also speaks about two extremes in terms of schooling, by noting that schools in predominantly ‘white’ suburbs possess deeply embedded cultures of teaching and learning, and respect of authority, which clearly show in the results at all levels, whereas schools predominantly, in ‘black’ townships, “were it not for automatic promotions in especially the foundation years, failure and drop-out rates would have been higher” (Jansen, 2013:88). Confirming what others have mentioned before, a recent report, OECD: Economic surveys South Africa (2013), states that the education system remains ‘dualistic’:

with on the one hand a small number of former white schools that collect tuition fees to supplement teaching and other resources and on the other hand no-fee schools that, relying entirely on government funds, do not have enough teachers and generally perform poorly (OECD, 2013:38).

The Report further identified “shortages of learning materials, teachers, support staff and well-trained principals across most of the school system as being among the causes of poor outcomes”. Spaul (2012) warns that “modeling a single education system when there are two can lead to spurious results”. It could account for the disparities that exist in the international, cross-national and national benchmark tests scores alluded to earlier.

The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit’ (NEEDU), an independent unit responsible for the administration of schools in South Africa, focuses on evaluation and

development and reports directly to the Minister of Basic Education. In their first report, the unit confirmed the factors identified thus far but identified ‘teacher leave’ as a crucial problem in South African schools. They elaborated on their observations of the state of literacy and numeracy in the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3), commenting on the high levels of teacher absenteeism, late-coming and disruptions to the time-table as problematic, noting that:

Teacher leave is a problem of a different sort. Two independent sources have estimated that on average teachers stay away from school for the most, four weeks a year ... 10% of the school year and this could have a significant depressing effect on the quality of learning outcomes (NEEDU, 2013:29).

This issue of teacher tardiness (absenteeism, late-coming and ineffective teaching) is endorsed by Mclure Pattilo (2012:26) in her study on what she labels the ‘quiet corruption’ which she observed is more salient in some schools than others.

In addition to this issue of teacher tardiness, NEEDU found that, in their study of 133 schools, in the Foundation Phase, “South African teachers generally exhibit poor subject knowledge in language skills and mathematics. This is arguably the fundamental problem in South African schools” (NEEDU, 2013:30). They add that in 70% of the schools they observed there was a mismatch between the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) and the home language of teachers and learners in three of the districts they did their research (NEEDU, 2013:31). Christie (2008), whose views dovetails with that of Fleisch (2008) and Taylor et al. (2003) *inter alia*, in terms of contextual and family factors and teacher competencies, sums things up eloquently by pointing out that what will make a difference is:

what students bring with them to school from their homes and families, which schools they attend, how their schools function and how effective their teachers are, what happens inside classrooms, in terms of teaching, learning and assessment (Christie, 2008:164).

The following table (Table 3) sums up the discussion in this section, categorising the key findings of research conducted thus far and their concomitant reasons for learner achievement levels in South Africa.

**Table 3: Summary of the key findings of research and their concomitant reasons for learner achievement levels in South Africa thus far**

Home background and Community factors		School related factors		Classroom related factors	
Findings	Key studies	Findings	Key studies	Findings	Key studies
<b>Poverty, socio-economic status of family-parental income/household wealth</b>	Crouch & Moabogoane, 2001; Van der Berg & Berger, 2002; Taylor, 2003; Christie, 2008; Fleisch, 2008; Bloch, 2009.	<b>School culture: functional and dysfunctional schools</b>	Carrim, 1998, 2013; Fataar & Patterson, 2002; Fleisch, 2008; Christie, 2008; Bloch, 2009; Jansen, 2013; OECD Report, 2008, 2013.	<b>Inadequate use of classroom resources</b>	Fleisch, 2008; Taylor, 2008.
<b>Health Issues</b>	Taylor et al., 2003; Fleisch, 2008.	<b>School management and leadership – lack of instructional leadership</b>	Taylor et al., 2003; Taylor, 2008; Bush et al., 2003	<b>Low levels of cognitive demand</b>	Adler et al., 2002; Taylor & Moyane, 2005
<b>Family structure</b>	Taylor et al., 2003			<b>Language of teaching and learning/ poorly planned code switching</b>	Setati & Adler, 2000; Desai, 2001; Fleisch, 2008; Probyn, 2009; NEEDU, 2013.
<b>Educational levels of the parents</b>	Thomas, 1996; Crouch & Mabogoane, 2001.	<b>Infrastructure and inadequate resources/ disparities amongst schools</b>	Taylor et al., 2003; Fleish, 2008; Christie, 2008; OECD Report, 2013	<b>Lack of opportunity to learn (curriculum content coverage, content emphasis, exposure)/ giving explicit feedback/ slow pacing</b>	Reeves, 2005; Carnoy et al., 2012; Hoadley, 2005; Mloi & Strauss, 2005; Taylor, 2008
<b>Home area and settlement type</b>	Taylor et al, 2003.			<b>Lack of teacher conceptual knowledge and</b>	Hoadley, 2005; Taylor, 2008;
<b>Educational level of parents and/or community</b>	Thomas, 1996; Crouch & Mabogoane, 2001.				
<b>Mismatch between home language and Language used for teaching and</b>	Fleisch, 2003; Jansen, 2013; Howie, 2002; NEEDU Report, 2013.				

<b>learning</b>				<p><b>pedagogical know how</b></p> <p><b>Collectivized vs individual learning</b></p> <p><b>Teacher tardiness (absenteeism, late-coming and ineffective teaching)</b></p>	<p>Fleisch, 2008; Christie, 2008; OECD, 2013; NEEDU, 2013</p> <p>Hoadley, 2005, 2008; Ensor et al. 2002</p> <p>NEEDU, 2013; Mclure Pattilo, 2012</p>
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Drawing from the table above (Table 3), a number of conclusions could be made:

1. The reasons given thus far for learner achievement levels in South Africa are multiple and complex. We however do not know with certainty which factors in which context appear to be more salient than others.
2. Prior to 1998, the majority of studies concentrated on contextual factors, such as home background, community factors, and socio-economic status of parents. There appeared at the time to be a lack of empirical classroom-based research studies (Hoadley, 2012).
3. The classroom-based research mainly focused on what the teacher was doing or not doing in the classroom (from observations of teachers and teachers perspectives), which is somewhat limiting and one-dimensional. Very few studies examined what learners are doing or not doing (focusing on the learners perspective) that could account for learner achievement levels in South Africa.

Given this strong knowledge-base and the complexities surrounding this educational problem, what then is the significance of my study?

## 1.5 The significance of my study

My study is significant for a number of reasons: firstly, it took place when South Africa's education system was transitioning from the old National Curriculum Statement (NCS -based on RNCS) to the new NCS (based on CAPS). Interestingly, at the time of conducting the empirical research from 2012 to 2013, one would find one phase (the foundation phase) implementing the new curriculum, whereas other phases (intermediate and senior phase) within the same school still followed the old NCS, bringing an interesting dynamic to the outcomes of this study. Secondly, my empirical focus was on three particular grades, namely Grades 1, 4 and 7, the entrance levels to each phase. Studies conducted up to this point mainly focused on or highlighted learner achievement in Grades 3, 6 and 9, the exit levels to a phase (Taylor et al., 2003; Fleisch, 2008; Hoadley, 2005, *inter alia*). Thirdly, the conceptual focus of my research was on learners in relation to their teachers and principals, highlighting learner perspectives on why they are achieving at certain levels, in addition to the perspectives of their teachers and principals. It appears that studies up to this point have focused more on teachers, their practices and perspectives when researching learner achievement levels in South African education. Moloi, Dzvimbo, Potgieter, Wolhuter and van der Walt (2010) did a thorough search on EbscoHost of articles published from 2007 to 2010 -- using the descriptors: academic achievement, student perceptions, educational success-- but their search yielded no studies on learner perceptions regarding what they contribute to their academic success (or failure) at school. They concluded that, during the past three decades, researchers have relied heavily on presage-product studies of teacher behaviour as predictors of learner achievement (Moloi et al., 2010:476). Mc Crory Calarco (2011:862) affirms what the previous researchers have found, noting that "the great irony in education is that children are the principle beneficiaries of schooling yet their role in the process is understudied and poorly understood".

Fourthly, unique to my study is the complete Pilot Study Report (see Appendix G). This is something new to qualitative studies, as not many qualitative researchers report fully on the pilot phase of their research. The lessons learnt during this phase of my research may be useful for other novice researchers doing research in similar settings and using similar data-collection instruments.



## 1.6 Methodological Approach

Methodologically, this thesis is positioned within a qualitative interpretivist research paradigm, which “does not concern itself with the search for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather seeks to produce descriptive analysis that emphasise deep, interpretive understanding of a social phenomenon” (Henning, 2004:21). To understand this deep and complex educational phenomenon required an in-depth data-collection process, which in this study comprised of four distinct stages. **Stage 1:** Pilot Study - This study was conducted at one school prior to the data-collection process with the purpose of testing and refining the questionnaires, observation schedule and interview schedules that were used in the data-collection process. **Stage 2:** Three schools were purposefully selected, following the required ethical procedures. Schools were selected based on the following criteria: socio-economic differentials, resourced and under-resourced schools and schools comprising of different racial compositions. Two questionnaires were conducted (see Appendix D): one was used to collect information from teachers prior to the interview process, and the second was used to determine the socio-economic status of the learners. **Stage 3:** Direct classroom observations - Close attention was paid to pedagogical practices and relationships in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling, especially Grades 1, 4 and 7. My reasons for selecting different phases and grades are mainly because learner achievement demands differ per phase and grade, learners’ ages differ and, as noted previously, research in these particular areas are lacking. In order to do the classroom observations, I made use of a classroom observation schedule (refer to Appendix E), which was based on the schedule designed by Hoadley (2005), and which in turn is informed by the theoretical framework of Basil Bernstein. Only literacy and numeracy lessons were observed and considered for analysis, since these are normally used in systemic evaluations internationally and nationally. **Stage 4:** The interviewing process - The principals of the three schools, selected teachers and learners were interviewed to determine their views on learner achievement levels, see how they grapple with issues surrounding curriculum changes, and ascertain what their expectations are, *inter alia* (see interview schedules in Appendix F). I used semi-structured interviews, since they allowed for greater flexibility than structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are conducted on the basis of “a loose structure consisting of open-ended questions that define the area to be explored, at least initially, and from which the interviewer and interviewee may diverge in order to pursue an idea in more detail” (Britten,

1995:251). The semi-structured interviews were useful in determining the meanings that principals, teachers and learners attach to their situation.

Sample size is a crucial methodological consideration when doing qualitative research. As pointed out by Masson (2010:1): “sample size for qualitative studies are generally smaller than in quantitative studies ... since more data does not necessary mean more information”. I therefore ensured that the sample size and data collected are defensible. The unit of analysis is the learners, in relation to teachers and principals.

Stark (2005:459) notes that “qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict”. I therefore followed the correct ethical procedures throughout the research process, so that the confidentiality and anonymity of and consent from the research participants were assured throughout the research process and in the thesis that emanated from the study. Where minor children are involved in the study, written consent of their parents or guardians were obtained. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED), the principals of the selected schools and the school where the pilot study was conducted, were approached for written permission to conduct the research at their respective schools (see Appendix A). Following the key principles of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2005), I ensured that all participants were informed about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, and what their participation in the research entailed. As researcher, I made sure that no harm came to the research participants as a result of the research process and in the writing up of this thesis. A more comprehensive account of the methodological trajectory of this study is offered in Chapter 4.

## **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

A study of this nature which seeks to understand a complex educational phenomenon requires one to set boundaries. The research context of this study is within the domain of sociology of education. Theoretically, this study is framed around the work of two prominent sociologists, Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. As previously noted, the seminal work of Basil Bernstein provided me with the conceptual lenses to understand how different pedagogic practices could account for learner achievement levels, whereas the seminal work of Pierre Bourdieu provided the conceptual tools to understand how a learner identity is constructed or framed and how the learner’s race, class and gender identity could account for his or her

achievement levels. Empirically, this study's unit of analysis was limited to four learners, in relation to their teachers and principals, in each of the following grades, Grade 1, 4 and 7, at three selected public schools in the Western Cape. Research in this empirical field in South Africa is scarce, especially research that illuminates the meanings learners give to their situation.

## **1.8 Structure of this thesis**

This study is presented in 8 chapters. Chapter 1 is this introductory chapter which provides an overview of the study, the background and rationale, the research questions, and the aims and objectives of the study. It also provides a discussion of research into the possible reasons for learner achievement levels in South Africa. Here the focus is on what has thus far been viewed as the identifiable factors that are argued to have contributed to learner achievement levels in South Africa. This is followed by the delimitation of the study, a discussion of the significance of my study and an outline of the thesis.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the South African context, where I look at the changing face of schooling in South Africa post-1994, and provide a chronological overview of curriculum reform in South Africa between 1994 and 2014. The chronological overview of curriculum reform in South Africa situates this study within the broader reform context of South Africa. This is followed by Chapter 3, the theoretical framework of this study, where I engage more deeply with the seminal work of both Bourdieu and Bernstein. Chapter 4 presents the methodological framework of the study. I make a case for why this study adopted a qualitative multiple research design and provide detailed accounts of the methodological trajectory of this study. Chapter 5 and 6 are the findings chapters. In Chapter 5, I provide an account of the background contextual factors which characterise each school. In this chapter, I worked largely with the concepts or theories of Bourdieu to provide an understanding of how context actually influences people's dispositions, how 'cultural capital' is distributed amongst different schools and the influence it has on the way in which certain dispositions have been embodied and interiorised by the actors in these schools, given their exteriorisation. Furthermore, I looked at ways these actors construct their agency within these schools, in other words how they make sense of their external reality. Then in Chapter 6 my focus is on pedagogy. More specifically, I explore how my findings relate to the nature of pedagogic practices and relationships within these schools and across three grades, Grades 1, 4 and 7, in order to understand how pedagogy could account for different learning outcomes.

Here I use the ‘pedagogic codes’, based on the work of Bernstein, to show my own observations in these classrooms to describe how pedagogy in each of these selected schools and across the three selected grades is actually delivered and experienced by both teachers and learners within these classrooms. Chapter 7 is the analytical chapter, offering an analysis and discussion on the findings that emanated from Chapters 5 and 6, while Chapter 8 presents the overall conclusions of this study and recommendations for further academic enquiry.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 1 I alluded to the manifold problems facing the South African schooling system, as indicated by the various international, cross-national and national tests, as well as literature which speak to the possible reasons for learner achievement levels in South Africa thus far. Both these discussions (see Chapter 1, 1.1 and 1.4), point to the fact that the reasons for the poor state of South African schooling are both multiple and complex. In Chapter 2 then, I discuss the South African context where the focus is twofold: first, I turn my attention to the changing structure of schooling post -1990 and secondly, I provide a chronological account of curriculum reform between 1990 and 2014. It goes without saying that 21 years into democracy that the South African education system has undergone numerous and somewhat drastic changes, which could account for the state of South African schools. More importantly for this study, it could provide me with insights into the complexities surrounding learner achievement levels in South African education. Furthermore it situates my study within the broader reform context of South African Education.

#### **2.2 Brief overview of the changing face of schooling in South Africa**

The successful dismantling of the previous Apartheid educational dispensation was one of the biggest successes for South Africa (Carrim, 2013), given that schooling in this era was mainly divided along racial and ethnical lines (Carrim, 1998; Hoadley, 2005). Schools at the time largely mirrored the society in which they were housed (Hoadley, 2005). The segregation of schools and its administrative bodies was captured by Carrim (1998) in the following way:

‘white’ education was controlled by the ‘white’ House of Assembly, so-called ‘Indian’ education by the House of Delegates, so-called ‘coloured’ education by the ‘coloured’ House of Representatives, mainly urban African education by the Department of Education and Training and African ethnically separate departments by ‘homeland’ educational system (Carrim, 1998:303).

For Carrim, 1998, and others (Soudien, 2013; Sayed & Motala, 2012) establishing a single, non-racial educational system was no easy task, since it entailed “changing all these educational bureaucracies, as well as their entrenched practices and personalities” (Carrim, 1998:3003). Here Carrim (1998) was referring to the fact that, as he puts it

each racially divided department was a separate educational bureaucracy, with its own regulations, laws, modes of operation, staff contracts and history (Carrim, 1998:303).

My interest is in 1990 onwards, since 1990 marked the opening of schools to all races and the end of segregation. Drawing largely on the work of Carrim (1998; 2013), I trace the changes that lead to the restructuring of schooling in South Africa. In October 1990 the then ‘white’ minister of ‘white’ education, Piet Clase, announced the opening of ‘white’ only schools to ‘black’ students. This coincided with other changes like the unbanning of political organisations, like the ANC (African National Congress) (see, Carrim, 1998:303-308). ‘White’ schools were allowed to select one of three models: Model A which allowed them to open as private schools, Model B where they could open as state schools but have an open admission policy, and Model C which allowed them to convert themselves into semi-private and semi-state schools where teachers’ salaries will be paid by the state and other operational schools, which existed from 1992 until 1996 when the South African Schools Act (Act 84, 1996) was passed.

According to the Act “all schools in South Africa are now classified as public (state/government) schools or ‘private’ schools’. What was evident was that, even though Model C schools opened their doors to non-‘white’ students, they still through their school governing bodies (SGB), which determined the admission policy of the school, managed to uphold their ‘white’ cultural ethos, maintaining ‘white’ as superior and into which ‘other’ had to assimilate” (Carrim, 1998, drawing on Carrim & Sayed, 1991, 1992; Metcalfe, 1991).

Carrim (2013), drawing on a project undertaken by the University of the Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit, which looked at trends and patterns of school segregation, asserts that:

...desegregation of schools is happening but with marked trends of movement of learners in one direction only: ‘black’ learners into predominantly ‘whites-only’ schools and African learners to previously ‘white’, ‘Indian’ and/or ‘coloured’ schools. Nationally, ‘white’ ‘Indian’ and ‘coloured’ learners do not move into African schools. It is also the case that

‘Indian’ and ‘coloured’ learners enrol only at previously ‘white’ only schools (Carrim, 2013:41).

This one directional movement suggested by Carrim (2013), is evident in the schools selected for this study. The schools in my study, as previously mentioned (see Chapter 1, section 1.5) were selected based on certain criteria: socio-economic differentials, resourced and under-resourced schools and schools comprising of different racial compositions. The fact that I could make this selection based on these criteria is evident that not much has changed since 1996 in terms of movement between schools as suggested in the fore-mentioned quote. Of the three selected public schools, one is a former ‘white’ ex-Model C school where only a few ‘white’ learners remained (mainly due to what is known as the ‘white’ flight), while the majority of learners attending the school in terms of race are ‘coloured’ with only a few African learners. Another is a so-called ‘coloured’ school where learners are predominantly ‘coloured’ and there are a few African learners in each class, and then one is a so-called African township school which only has African learners. What is evident therefore is that forms of racism and division still exist even though Hoadley (2005) points out that schools are largely stratified along ‘class lines’, as confirmed by Carrim (1998) who states:

what macro structural initiatives therefore, do is desegregate educational institutions in South Africa; they do not deracialise them: They do not deracialise such institutional settings because they do not address the complexities and specificities of ‘race’ and racism on the micro level of the school, as experienced by people themselves (Carrim, 1998:318).

Which schools learners attend is largely dependent on ‘parental choice’ which is motivated by a number of reasons. Parental choice is “complex and informed by a number of factors but the existence of adequate resources” seems to play a crucial role in that choice (Carrim, 2013:42).

Thus far, I briefly looked at the changing structure of schooling in South Africa, following then, in the next section, is a comprehensive overview of curriculum reform in South Africa. I start in 1990, followed by an in-depth discussion on curriculum reform around four distinct ministerial periods: 1994-1999: Minister Sibusiso Bengu, 1999-2004: Minister Kadar Asmal, 2004-2008: Minister Naledi Pandor, and 2008-2014: Minister Angie Motshekga.

### **2.3 Chronological account of curriculum reform in South Africa between 1990-2014**

The new democratic South African government, which came into power in 1994, was faced with the mammoth task of addressing the deficiencies and injustices inherited from the Apartheid government and its predecessors (OECD, 2008; Du Plooy, 2010). Redressing these inequalities necessitated massive political, economic and social reforms (Kallaway et al, 1997; Cross, Mungadi & Routhani, 2002; Christie, 2008). In this section, I pay close attention to ‘educational reforms’ in South Africa, by providing a chronological account of the various curriculum changes that occurred between 1990 and 2014. My reasons for doing this, is twofold: firstly, to situate my study within the broader education reform context of South Africa and, secondly, to gain a deeper understanding of how these changes impacted on the South Africa educational landscape.

I start this discussion from 1990 onwards, since the year 1990 marked significant changes in the political landscape in South Africa (Jansen & Christie, 1999). In the period prior to 1990, the apartheid National Party was the sole participant in educational policy development, which was mainly underpinned by its apartheid ideology (Cross et al, 2002). From 1990 onwards, policy development became a priority for the new democratic government. Christie argues that “policy-making around this time had a double task: to dismantle the past apartheid laws and practices and to put in place foundations for the future” (Christie, 2008:128). My interest is in the changes made to the education system, especially in terms of the formulation of new education policies and the role-players involved, so as to understand why South Africa opted for certain policy options and the effects these had on schooling in South Africa. Later in this section, I draw and expand on the work done by Sayed and Motala (2012), and Sayed and Kanjee (2013) on curriculum reforms that took place from 1994-2014. These researchers offer a comprehensive overview of policy changes revolving around four ministerial periods, as noted, but first I turn my attention to the early 1990’s the period prior to 1994.

With the unbanning of political organizations in 1990 ‘policy discourse’ became the order of the day (Christie, 2008:122). Various policy initiatives followed, informed by different actors. In 1991 the outgoing apartheid government issued its own policy vision in the form of a Curriculum Model for South Africa (CUMSA) followed by the Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS). CUMSA arose out of the need “to make education more relevant, rationalise



the curriculum, eliminate unnecessary overlapping of subject content and redress shortcomings” (Committee of Heads of Education Departments, 1992:2). The ERS, on the other hand, was meant to be

a wide-ranging plan to renew and restructure the South African education system in order to improve existing deficiencies, to make education more affordable, and create education and training opportunities for the ever-growing population (DNE, 1992:5).

According to Cross et al. (2002:173), the ERS faded into the background with the appearance of thirteen National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) reports in 1992. NEPI, which comprised of actors from the broad anti-apartheid, mass democratic movement, including activists, academics, trade unions, the business sector, labour and civil society groupings, was “the first major attempt to offer a new conceptualization of the education system in the early 1990’s” (Cross et al, 2002:174). This was followed by the ANC’s Implementation Plans for Education and Training (IPET), which provided the basis for the 1994 ANC Policy for Education and Training also called the ‘Yellow Document’ (Christie, 2008; Cross et al., 2002). Both the outgoing government and the ANC’s early attempts at restructuring the education system failed since according to Cross et al., (2002:175) “it failed to move beyond the visionary and symbolic expressions of the ANC’s commitment to equity, redress and redistribution ideals”. Jansen (1999:146) uses the term ‘political symbolism’ as a way to describe these early attempts at restructuring the education system, where “the preoccupation of the state was with its own legitimacy”. One reason for this was highlighted by Jansen (1999, 2002), amongst others (for example, Kallaway et al., 1997, and Christie, 1999), who pointed to the global influences on policy formation in South Africa. Kallaway notes that:

In South Africa educational politics has increasingly been reduced to a matter of policy implementation. In the name of change and redress, and because of the need for politicians to produce demonstrable innovations in a short period of time, a range of policies, often hastily borrowed from foreign contexts without adequate research into the success and effects, have been bundled together with insufficient consultation or research (Kallaway et al, 1997:1).

Many of the educational policies following this period was drawn from “state-of-the-art thinking on Western schooling” (Christie, 1999:281) adopted without much consideration for the context in which it will be taken up. What the country experienced during this period and

in the periods that followed was a “the proliferation of Green and White Papers, and corresponding Bills and Acts” (Jansen, 1999:146). The extent of this change was noted by Sayed and Motala (2012). They assert that between the period 1994 and 2011 there were approximately

7 White Papers, 3 Green Papers, 26 Bills (of which 17 were amendment Bills), 37 Acts (of which 46 were amendments to existing laws), 11 sets of regulations, 59 government notices and 29 calls for comments blanketed the education sector from basic to higher education (Sayed & Motala, 2012: 116).

I argue these extensive policy changes, did little to positively alter the local conditions of schooling (Du Plooy, 2010). National and International test scores (see Chapter 1) point to the fact that the majority of South African children still do not have access to meaningful education despite the many changes that took place at the time.

I now turn to the ministerial periods as used particularly by Sayed and Motala (2012:106-109) and Sayed and Kanjee (2013:7-10), and others, to illuminate the policy changes and their effects on schooling in South Africa, with specific reference to primary schooling.

**1994-1999: Minister Sibusiso Bengu**

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' below it.

The focus of this period was on policy development, more specifically on development of frameworks to address the historical inequalities of apartheid and at the same time creating a broad-based vision for a new South African education system. According to Carrim (1998), between 1994 and 1996 the following policy documents, reports and acts were published that aimed at transforming the entire educational system in South Africa as he puts it:

Not only is the whole Apartheid system, from pre-school to university level, being restructured, it was also being fundamentally redefined. From only serving ‘white’ minority interests in the past, it is being redesigned to serve all South Africans in the current disposition (Carrim, 1998:305).

The policy documents, reports and acts he was referring to that redesigned and redefined the educational landscape in South Africa were:

- Education Employment Act (1994), which has an impact on the nature of teacher employment;

- Education and Training White Paper (1994, 1995), which outlined the macro principles of education;
- National Education Policy Act (1996), which outlines the competencies of the national minister and, by implication, the powers of provinces;
- South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995), which establishes qualifications and certification authorities;
- The Hunter Commission Report (1995) on school organisation, governance and financing;
- White Paper on Organising, Financing, Governance of Education (1995, 1996);
- The South African Schools Act (1996)
- National Audit of Teacher Education, reviewing teacher training provisions and future needs;
- National Commission on Higher Education, reviewing tertiary educational provisions and needs; and
- National Management Task Team, reviewing educational management and needs (Carrim, 1998: 304-305).

Of these many policy documents, the one most relevant to this discussion is the South African Schools Act (Act 84, 1996), since it led to the restructuring of the entire education system. “The Preamble of the South African Schools Act points to the reorganising in terms of democratising, deracialising and desegregating the whole system” (Carrim, 1998):

WHEREAS the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation; and WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in education provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for development of all our people’s talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination. ...WHEREAS it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa. (Department of National Education, 1996, Preamble:1) (Original emphasis).

The overhaul of the education system started with two distinct changes: first the restructuring of the entire education system marked by the dismantling of the 19 separate departments of education into one national education department, and second, the introduction of Curriculum 2005 (C2005), underpinned by outcomes-based education (OBE) principles (Christie, 2008; Jansen, 1999, 2002). This progressive curriculum in essence called for a form of learner-centred education where the teacher was the facilitator and the learner was regarded as a co-creator of learning; an active participant in his/her own learning (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). In other words, this progressive education system not only demanded of teachers to shift their

roles as the central figure of authority in the classroom to that of facilitator in a learner-centred classroom, which was according to Harley and Wedekind (2004:211), “at pedagogical odds with the practices of the majority of teachers” but it also demanded of learners to change from being passive participants in their learning to becoming fundamentally pedagogical constructors. OBE’s local roots can be traced back to the National Training Board (NTB) and the labour union, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). This is confirmed by Cross et al. who noted that: “OBE can be traced within the labour movement that sought to overhaul the education system and incorporate an integrated approach to education and training (Cross et al. 2002:176). Chisholm (2003:3) states that “since its launch in 1997, C2005, for its initiators, was the pedagogical route out of apartheid education”. This route is clearly depicted in the following table, which illustrates the stark differences between the ‘old apartheid curriculum’, with its transmission model of learning, and the then ‘new C2005 curriculum’ based on outcomes-based approach to learning (Hoadley, 2005:4).

**Table 4: The paradigmatic shift from transmission models of teaching and learning to outcomes-based education and training**

	OLD TRANSMISSION MODEL OF LEARNING	NEW OUTCOMES-BASED MODEL OF LEARNING
<b>THE LEARNER</b>	Passive learners	Active learners
<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	Graded, exam-driven Exclusionary	Learner-centred, teacher as facilitator, teacher constantly using group or team work.
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	Syllabus seen as rigid and non-negotiable.  Emphasis on what the teacher hopes to achieve.	Learning programmes are seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes.  Emphasis on outcomes – what the learner becomes and understands.
<b>TIMEFRAMES AND LEARNER PACING</b>	Content placed in rigid time frames.	Flexible time frames allow learners to work at own pace.

Source: National Department of Education, 1997: 6-7

Table 4, indicates the paradigm shift in the curriculum from content-based, teacher-centred approach to an outcomes-based learner centred one. It therefore marked the departure from the apartheid curriculum, a move from ‘fundamental pedagogics’ (racially-based teacher-centred teaching and learning strategies), to a progressive pedagogy and learner-centred teaching and learning strategies (Cross et al., 2002:179). This conceptual leap from an apartheid based curriculum to an outcomes-based one did not happen without major critique from academic and professional circles. Such criticism is demonstrated by Spreen and Valley (2010) who noted that:

the roll-out of the curriculum over the first several years was tumultuous, characterised by an uneven distribution of learner support materials and a wide fragmented teacher-training system often delivered by a cascade approach that was controlled through provincial departments and managed at district level (Spreen & Valley, 2010:40).

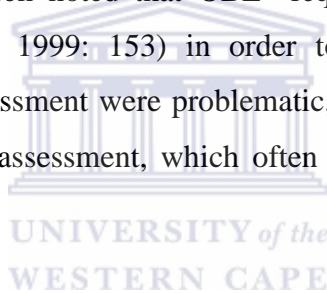
Critical debates surrounding the implementation of OBE surfaced during 1996 and 2002, to which I now turn. Jansen, as early as 1999, warned of OBE’s failure, citing 10 major reasons for why OBE as a curriculum policy will impact negatively on South African schools (Jansen, 1999:146-154). Firstly, the language of OBE was criticized for its inaccessibility to teachers who were supposed to implement it. As noted by Jansen “the language of OBE and its associate structures is simply too complex and inaccessible for most teachers to give these policies meaning through their classroom practices” (Jansen, 1999:146). This view was shared by Cross et al., who noted that “most teachers were inadequately prepared for basic teaching let alone comprehending the new curriculum (Cross et al., 2002:181). Soudien (2013) argued that for OBE to have worked, “it required of the teacher to be self-sufficient and operate with enhanced levels of independence. Learners on the other hand had to be resourceful young learners who can take responsibility for what they and their teachers would study in class” (Soudien, 2013:1). OBE as a curriculum approach overlooked profound inequalities in South African schools, and dispatched teachers on a voyage of faith, a voyage Soudien (2010:115) claimed “where failure was the only possible outcome”.

Secondly, Jansen noted that “there is not a shred of evidence in almost eighty years of curriculum change literature to suggest that altering the curriculum of schools leads to, or is associated with changes in national economies” (Jansen, 1999:148). Here he was referring to the flawed assumption that there was a link between curriculum and society, and the assumption that OBE as a curriculum policy would offer a solution to South Africa’s

economic problems. Thirdly, Jansen warned that OBE would fail simply because of technical reasons, arguing that: “OBE was destined to fail in South African education system because of the flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools, how classrooms are organized and what kinds of teachers exist within the system” (Jansen, 1999:149). Here Jansen points us to the inadequate resource status of schools as a possible reason for OBE’s failure, which Potenza and Monyokolo (1999) describe as the “lack of alignment between curriculum development, teacher development, selection and supply of learning materials”. Teachers were therefore inadequately prepared with limited resources for this new ‘poorly planned’ curriculum policy (Christie & Jansen, 1999). Fourthly, “there were strong philosophical rationales for questioning the desirability of OBE in a democratic school system” (Jansen, 1999:150). Jansen added that specifying outcomes in advance, as in OBE, is anti-democratic. OBE maintains that learners should be creative and yet the learning outcomes are specified at the start of the lesson. To Jansen, this offers a fundamental contradiction.

In the fifth place, Jansen argued that OBE as a curriculum policy will fail due to political reasons. It is problematic merely to view teachers, as ‘implementers’ of such an important policy, since according to Jansen “there is not a process, systematic and ongoing, in which teachers are allowed to conceptualise and make sense of OBE as curriculum policy” (Jansen, 1999:150). The majority of teachers therefore did not have access to information on OBE, and many received fragmented versions of the OBE curriculum, which could account for its implementation problems in most schools. In the sixth place, Jansen notes that OBE side-steps the important issue of values in the curriculum. Most of the learning outcomes contained in the OBE framework were too broad and exposed to a wide range of interpretations by teachers. The seventh criticism is that the management of OBE will multiply the administrative burdens placed on teachers. To manage OBE, in terms of continuous assessment, would require of teachers to “reorganize the curriculum, increase the amount of time allocated for monitoring individual student progress against outcomes, administer appropriate forms of assessment and maintain comprehensive records” (Jansen, 1999:151). In the eighth place Jansen asserted that “OBE trivializes curriculum content” (Jansen, 1999:152). Too much emphasis was placed on outcomes and less on the content to be taught. According to MacDonald (1998, cited in Muller, 2000:9) “schools had become about anything but knowledge”.

Another conceptual charge against OBE related to its curriculum framework. Conceptually, the notion of ‘integration’ was problematic, since it was not clear what clusters of knowledge or content should be brought together to facilitate learning, in what sequence, and at what level of competence (Muller, 2000:15). As Cross et al., (2002:181) points out “the most significant charge against the notion of integration is that it treats all forms of knowledge as if they have the same identity or structure”. More emphasis was placed on integration of learning areas without considering the resource constraints. A ninth criticism was that, for OBE to succeed, it would require an entire re-engineering of the education system. Jansen argues that OBE as a curriculum innovation requires “trained and retrained teachers, radically new forms of assessment, classroom organization which facilitates monitoring and assessment, additional time for managing this complex process, constant monitoring and evaluation, retrained education managers and principals...parental support and involvement, new forms of learning resources...”(Jansen, 1999:152), for which South African schools were not prepared. Finally, Jansen noted that OBE “requires a radical revision ...to the system of assessment” (Jansen, 1999: 153) in order to succeed, affirming that “local experiences with continuous assessment were problematic, since most teachers continued to reinforce the previous forms of assessment, which often clashed with the nature of OBE-directed teaching and learning”.



This discussion on the reasons for OBE’s failure, as expressed by Jansen, and others, provides some insight into how changes to the curriculum could have worsened South Africa’s educational system, as Jansen (2002:45), put it “the record is clear: the distance between privileged schools (mainly but not exclusively ‘white’) and disadvantaged schools (mainly ‘black’) has in fact increased as a result of the implementation of OBE”.

Spren and Valley (2010) however question whether OBE was implemented at all. They believe that OBE’s failure needs to be quantified, noting that “richer schools vastly increased their performance yet the majority of poorer schools struggled”. In addition they assert that: “One cannot examine OBE without understanding the day-to-day contextual realities of teaching and learning, continued school inequalities and issues of the poverty gap across the South African school system” (Spren & Valley, 2010: 55). Jansen (2002) and Spren & Valley (2010) point to what happens to policy-mandated reforms when they are taken up in a local terrain amidst everyday realities.

OBE’s wide-ranging critique necessitated its review between 2000 and 2002, which I will deal with in the next ministerial period.

## **1999-2004: Minister Kadar Asmal**

According to Sayed and Motala (2012:107) this period was marked by the introduction of two White Papers; one addressed the problem of access, and the other, educational needs of the most marginalised groups in South Africa. The latter referred to early childhood education and the creation of an inclusive education and training system meeting the needs of learners with special needs. They however note that progress towards these objectives had been excruciatingly slow. As mentioned, the wide-spread critique of C2005, with its OBE approach, led to its review in this period, between 2000 and 2002.

The review, headed by Professor Linda Chisholm, cited the following problems with C2005,

A skewed curriculum structure and design; lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy; inadequate orientation: training and development of teachers; learning support materials that are variable in quality; often unavailable and sufficiently used in classrooms; policy overload and limited transfer of learning in classrooms; shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005; inadequate recognition of curriculum as the core business of education departments (Chisholm, 2003: 3).

The problems cited above illuminated much of the complexities surrounding the curriculum, which Jansen alluded to when he warned of OBE's failure as early as 1999. The review process was the establishment of the Reviewed National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) which became policy in 2002 and was implemented in 2004. According to the Minister of Basic Education at the time "the RNCS is not a new curriculum but a streamlining of C2005" (DBE, 2002). The RNCS, which was rewritten in plain language, and which placed greater emphasis on basic skills, content logic and logical progression, was the first move away from the original OBE introduced in 1998. (OECD Report, 2008:24). It replaced the 66 outcomes with just three; provided a more detailed content outline for teachers; and reintroduced the use of textbooks in the classroom (Pasensie, 2010:1).

The RNCS had its share of criticism, since, regardless of the wide-ranging critique of OBE, some components of OBE were still retained in the RNCS. Chisholm (2003) argues that the retaining of certain components of OBE in the RNCS was mainly due to the strong political leanings towards OBE. Here she points to the fact that although "the politics of the curriculum revolved around the weight and role of particular players: although there was a heterogeneity of actors and interest there was no direct relationship between voice and outcome" (2003:12). It appears that certain political actors (the ANC and certain teacher



unions), were the dominant influences in the development of the RNCS. I will get to the critique of the RNCS when discussing the reform changes in the next ministerial period, the era of Minister Naledi Pandor.

### **2004-2008: Minister Naledi Pador**

There were marked differences in policy activity in Minister Pandor's era compared to the previous ministers. Only one White Paper on e-education was released and only three acts were passed (Sayed & Motala, 2012). The differences are elaborated on by Carrim (2013:9) who found that, "the first era [that of Bengu and Asmal] was largely on the development, expansion and refinement of policy whereas Pandor's era was characterised largely by review of policy implementation unfolded-albeit a review confined to specific policy areas". So, during Pandor's time no major changes were made to the curriculum. However, the period was marked by a back-to-basics approach (DBE, 2008) which was informed by the widespread underperformance of South African learners in both literacy and numeracy, especially at the lower levels of schooling. From 2008 onwards, policy was largely informed by international and cross national benchmark testing, even though, as mentioned (see Chapter 1, section 1.1), others such as Taylor et al. (2003) and Moloji (2000) documented the outcomes long before this period. South African learners' poor performances, in these tests, especially PIRLS, which led to public outcry that forced the government back to the drawing board (Meier, 2011; Harrop-Allin & Kros, 2014). What emerged was the Foundation for Learning Campaign (FFLC), a four year campaign (2008-2011), aimed at improving learner performances in literacy and numeracy in all schools (DOE, 2008:4). The campaign was announced in the Government Gazette on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008 (Republic of South Africa, 2008) and launched on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008, by Minister Pandor, with its initial focus to improve reading, writing and numeracy in the foundation and intermediate phases of schooling. The effectiveness of the campaign would be tested in the first Annual National Assessment tests scheduled for 2011. Meier (2011) questioned the effectiveness of the campaign pointing out several logistical and structural challenges, including: teachers' experiences in implementing the FFLC, such as problems with the department's database which meant that the documents were returned unopened; some schools did not have any computer and photocopy facilities, and tests were sent electronically and schools were supposed to duplicate documents themselves; accommodating the FFLC in the time table of the school posed huge challenges, and teachers had to rethink how to integrate FFLC into work schedules and lesson plans

based on the NCS (Meier, 2011). Meier (2011) found that, for some well-resourced schools, the FFLC could be seen as a ‘hurdle’ – it was time consuming since according to teachers they were doing all that is expected of them in the programme in any case, whereas for under-resourced schools it could be seen as a ‘helping hand’. Like most state interventions, the FFLC did not bring about the expected results. In fact, there were only slight changes in the literacy results in the ANA 2011.

### **2008-2013: Minister Angelina Motshekga**

There were marked changes during this ministerial period, starting with a change in the organizational structure of the Department of Education in early 2009. As noted by Sayed and Motala (2012), this fourth period was characterised with new policies and significant changes being made to how the education department was being mandated at national level. The Department of Education was divided into two separate departments each with its own minister; Blade Nzimande was appointed as Minister of Higher Education, overseeing technical and vocational training, as well as adult and tertiary education, and Angie Motshekga was appointed Minister of Basic Education, where she would oversee both the GET (General Education and Training) and FET (Further Education and Training) bands, as well as early childhood education (Sayed & Motala, 2012). In 2009, the new Minister of Basic Education called for the review of the RNCS. This fell in line with the department’s commitment to ‘quality’ education, more specifically “to move towards realizing the goals set out in the NCS: ‘the development of a high level of knowledge and skills for all’ (DBE: 2010:16). This call for a review of the RNCS resulted in the appointment of the Curriculum Implementation Review Committee (CIRC), which was appointed to ensure that the “NCS is repackaged so that it is more accessible to teachers” (DBE, 2010). The final report of the CIRC recommended a five year plan for improving curriculum implementation and enhancing teaching and learning (DBE, 2010:1-70). The following table summarises the problems identified by the CIRC when they reviewed the RNCS, as well as their subsequent recommendations:

**Table 5: Problems relating to the Revised National Curriculum Statement and the recommendations made by the Curriculum Implementation Committee based on the report of the task team for the review of the implementation of the NCS**

Key problems identified	Recommendations
Streamline and clarify the policy's wide-spread confusion about the status of curriculum and assessment policies	To develop a single curriculum and assessment policy for each subject (by phase)- CAPS
There is a plethora of policies, guidelines and interpretations of policies and guidelines at all levels of the education system – making it complex and confusing	Address the complexity and confusion created by these documents as well as its misinterpretations.
Subject advisors role appears to differ from province to province, and district to district. The Department views their role as the main intermediary between curriculum policy and classroom interpretation.	To clarify the role of subject advisors by moving away from seeing their role as primarily technician and demanding of unnecessary administrative task and box ticking.
The administrative workload appeared to impact negatively on teaching and contact time	Reduce teachers' workload particularly with regards to administrative requirements and planning allowing teachers more time to teach.
Problems relating to assessment, progression requirements and performance indicators	Simplify and streamline assessment requirements and conduct regular Assessments – ANA's.
Transition and overload in the intermediate phase – in terms of transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 – w.r.t. language and the amount of subjects.	Reduce the subjects in the phase from 9 to 6 and introduce English (FAL) from Grade 1
Problems related to Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late delivery or no delivery</li> <li>• Quality of LTSM</li> <li>• No consistency in choice of textbooks</li> </ul>	Each learner from Grade 4-9 must have a textbook for each subject – National catalogue with suggested books.
Teachers and teacher training- problem of training being generic and superficial	Training at all levels on CAPS will be subject specific and targeted were needed.

Source: Department of Basic Education, 2009

One major change and one that has particular relevance to this discussion was the repackaging of NCS which marked the 'death of OBE', and the introduction of CAPS- the development of a single curriculum and assessment policy for each subject (by phase) (DBE, 2009). There still remains confusion as to whether CAPS is an "amendment, repackaged or

re-curriculation” of the NCS (Du Plessis, 2013) regardless of the departments insistence that CAPS is not a new curriculum but an amendment to the NCS Grades R-12, 2002 (Pinnock, 2011). In addition Du Plessis (2013:1) notes that what changed is mainly **what** to teach and not **how** to teach.

The immediate benefits of CAPS are intended “to reduce the administrative workload of teachers, by reducing the number of projects per learner, removing the use of learner portfolio’s, discontinuing the CTA’s for Grade 9 and reducing the amount of subjects in the intermediate phase from eight to six” (DBE, 2010:1-7). Added to this were the medium-term changes to the curriculum which indicated a paradigmatic shift from the outcomes-based curriculum in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. One of the major changes is with regard to integration, sequencing and pacing of knowledge. In OBE learning areas were integrated (boundaries between content were blurred), the sequencing of knowledge was not clear and learners could work at their own pace. However with the amended NCS: CAPS, every subject in every grade will have single, comprehensive and concise CAPS in which content is clearly insulated. The sequencing of knowledge is clear in that topics are clearly delineated for each subject as well as the number and type of assessment per term is spelt out. This in turn will mean rigid timeframes which could affect the pacing of knowledge. In terms of assessment, in the CAPS greater emphasis is placed on systemic testing with the introduction of Annual National Assessments (ANA’s) which becomes compulsory for Grades 1 to 6 and 9. The shift from C2005 to CAPS: which appears to be a further step away from OBE, can be described as a major attempt by the Basic Education Department to rectify the design and implementation problems experienced with C2005 and OBE. Sayed and Motala (2012: 107-108) confirm some of these changes in the following 6 trends that they noted were developing in this fourth period:

1. The back-to-basics approach of the previous period continued unabated.
2. Reinforcing this approach was the Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025. What comes from this is a focus on regular testing in the form of ANA.
3. January 2011 signaled the end of a 14 year attempt to focus teaching and learning primarily around outcomes rather than processes and inputs.
4. 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011- focus on the notion of ‘teachers as agents of change’ –the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South

Africa. The main purpose was to improve and accelerate both initial teacher education and continuing teacher development, with training for CAPS as its main priority.

5. Much more intense focus on skills development.
6. Amendments to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSFF). The most recent being in 2011 allowing schools to apply to the department for compensation for free exemption each year. This was followed by an increase in the number of 'No fee paying' schools.

In light of these changes the period after 2008 was branded by the Minister of Basic Education as: Action Plan 2014: Towards the realization of schooling 2025. Action Plan 2014 was gazetted in August 2010 and is seen as “a roadmap for turning around schooling ensuring we deliver quality and better learning outcomes” (DBE, 2012). It outlined 27 goals focused on raising learner test scores in Grades 1-9, increasing education and training opportunities and improving the quality of teaching, school supervision and support (DBE, 2012). It placed the pursuit of ‘quality education’ as a priority on the Department of Basic Education’s agenda. The Minister, Angie Motshekga, in her annual report (2013/2014) outlined the successes her department had achieved thus far, which included:

- ANA being administered successfully to 7 million learners;
- The development and distribution of over 150 million workbooks in the past three years to Gr. R-9 learners (Rainbow workbooks closely linked with CAPS);
- The establishment of National Education and Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU), which provides the department with evidence to use in developing of their plans and mitigating strategies as a sector;
- The Planning, Delivery and Oversight Unit, whose task it is to strengthen the NCS through CAPS, and
- New CAPS textbooks have been delivered.

What is clear from the discussion on this ministerial period is that the priority for the Department of Basic Education was on “Quality Education through strategic interventions in priority areas , such as CAPS, ongoing focus on standardised testing (ANA’s), and focus on the 3 T’s: Teachers, Time and Task (DBE, 2010).

There are a number of concerns regarding the choices made during this period. Firstly, Carrim (2013:39) warns that in South Africa, as elsewhere, what is meant by quality and, more specifically, quality education is by no means straightforward. He argues, drawing on Lawson (1994), that questions such as “Quality for what?” “Quality for whom?” and “Quality in relation to what?” need to be raised and, when they are, it is not clear what quality means. What is clear 21 years into democracy and all the interventions mainly aimed at ‘black’ education notwithstanding is that the majority of South African learners still do not have access to meaningful education, a view confirmed by Sayed and Motala (2012), when they point out that:

despite the plethora of educational policy documents, plans, strategies and interventions, the third decade of democracy in South Africa has dawned amidst clear evidence that the majority of learners are far from mastering basic and minimum competencies required of them by the curriculum (Sayed & Motala, 2012:109).

Secondly, Harrop-Allin and Kros (2014:74) contend that “the creation of CAPS was significantly influenced by the back-to-basics cry, which was a reaction to the apparent failures of OBE”. They question whether ‘back-to-basics’ is the solution for South Africa, critiquing the way knowledge is being presented by CAPS in the form of random, isolated, decontextualized elements fearing that this could resemble practices, as in Bantu Education and Christian National Education (CNE), where children ended up learning elements off by heart (ibid). Sayed & Motala (2013:114) advised that, “rather than such inherently biased and utilitarian approaches to education, what the poor need instead are varied and challenging curricula and forms of pedagogy that suit their particular contexts and circumstances”.

Thirdly, as pointed out in Chapter 1 (section 1.1), South Africa is becoming a test-driven nation, with its emphasis on regular systemic testing, while many have warned about the negative ‘unintended’ influences of testing on pedagogical practices (see Pausigere & Graven, 2013).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed firstly, to show how the structure of schooling has changed over time, and secondly, to situate my study in the broader reform context of South Africa. I have shown that, although much has been done, through various interventions and strategies, especially changes in curriculum; moving from OBE-to-NCS(RNCS)-to-NCS(CAPS) in pursuit of

quality education for all, educational choice and quality education is still out of reach for so many South African learners (Spren & Valley, 2010; Soudien, 2013; Jansen, 2013,; Sayed & Motala, 2012). Given the state of education in South Africa, blaming curriculum reforms is in my opinion ‘flawed’, this country cannot operate in an environment without policy reform. Furthermore, government policy is useful and necessary, but remains insufficient. The problem in most cases is with the implementation of policy, its decontextualisation, and how actors experience it within schools and classrooms. For implementation to work requires proper attitude and a willingness to work with it rather than against it (Howie, 2012). The crucial question is then did curriculum reform in South Africa between 1994 and 2014 manage to worsen the state of education in South Africa? Or is the legacy left behind by Apartheid, which caused vast inequalities in society, especially in how our learners are educated, too vast a problem that the state cannot be expected to overcome it? (Soudien, 2013). In this study I try to address these questions, amongst other things so as to understand the factors that contributed to learner achievement levels in South African Education.



## CHAPTER 3

### 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I briefly alluded to the theoretical framework I used to inform this study. In this chapter, I expand on the theoretical framework by engaging more deeply with the constructs offered by both Bourdieu and Bernstein respectively, in order to understand the complexities surrounding learner achievement levels in South Africa. This chapter will be presented in three sections: firstly, I engage with the seminal work of Pierre Bourdieu, his notions of *habitus*, *field* and *capital*, more specifically *cultural capital*, to understand structure and agency, and the interiority and exteriority of social relations. The constructs in Bourdieu's 'intellectual toolbox' are useful since they equipped me with ways in which to view learners and their capabilities as "culturally active agents in the process of becoming" (Carrim, 1995:35). In this study, I used the interplay between habitus, field and cultural capital to not only show how schools and classrooms through their practices perpetuate inequalities, but also to explore why certain learners' habitus, which they bring into schools are "not valued or are insufficiently valued" (Carrim, 1998:282). Furthermore, Bourdieu's constructs provided me with insights into how a learner's race, class and gender identity is constructed, and how these identities are altered or transformed according to one's positioning within the social space of the classroom, and how this in turn relate to learner achievement levels.

Secondly, I turn to the seminal work of Basil Bernstein. His work on 'educational codes', 'pedagogic discourses', 'pedagogic practices', and the 'pedagogic device' are useful analytical or conceptual tools to understand the 'what' and the 'how' of schooling (Sadovnik, 2008:321). More importantly for this thesis, it provided me with the knowledge and understanding of how pedagogic practices and pedagogic relationships operate, providing different learners with different school experiences which could account for their achievement levels.

Thirdly, I conclude by looking at how Bourdieu and Bernstein's theories come together in the analysis and are used to broaden my understanding of the complexities surrounding learner achievement levels in South African education.



### 3.2 Engaging with the theoretical constructs of Pierre Bourdieu

In this section I engage more deeply with the constructs that comprise Bourdieu's 'intellectual toolbox': the interplay between habitus, field and capital, particularly his work on cultural capital; the connection between structure and agency and the interiority and exteriority of social relations. These constructs are used to understand how learners are socialised into particular identities, how these embodied identities are framed and shaped within a particular field, in this case the educational field, and how learners, through their practices and actions, affect their positioning in this field and are affected by the constraints evident in the practices and actions of others in this field; and ultimately how this accounts for varied educational outcomes. For Bourdieu (1984) habitus, field and capital all work together to generate practices, or social action/agency. One's practices and actions are therefore the result of one's habitus and capital within a given field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu offers the following model to understand practice: [(habitus) (capital)] + Field = Practice (Bourdieu, 1984:101). So what do these terms mean? How can they be used to inform this study, or more specifically, help in understanding how the learners' race, class and gender identity relate to their achievement levels?

The concepts habitus, capital and field are used to theorise the ways in which educational systems (like schools, which constitute a particular social space or field) position students in specific ways, which then reproduces inequalities (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Wacquant (2006:9), points out that the concepts habitus, capital and field are thus "internally linked to one another as each achieves its full analytical potency only in tandem with the others". Following, therefore, is a discussion, in turn, on each of these concepts that make up Bourdieu's 'conceptual toolbox'.

Bourdieu (1977) defines the 'habitus' as

a system of durable, transposable dispositions [and it is expressed in] a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech and ...a certain subjective experience (Bourdieu, 1977:85-87).

According to Reay (2004:436) these dispositions or 'habitual acts' are evident by our feelings; how we act and think, and are inevitably reflective of the social context in which they are acquired. These unconscious schemata are acquired through lasting exposure to

particular social conditions, via internalisation of external constraints and possibilities (Wacquant, 2006:6). Wacquant explains the continuity and discontinuity feature of the habitus, noting that:

habitus is also a principle of both social continuity and discontinuity, continuity because it stores social forces into the individual organisms and transports it across time and space; discontinuity because it can be modified through acquisition of new dispositions and because it can trigger innovation whenever it encounters a social setting discrepant with the setting from which it arises (Wacquant, 2006:6-7).

This explains how the habitus tends to produce actions consistent with past experiences; there is a continuity between past and present (Swartz, 2002). Understanding the notion of 'habitus' will be useful to uncover how class, race and gender are embodied and played out, not only in individual actions and attitudes, but also in a whole range of bodily gestures (Lingaard & Christie, 2003). They add that:

the habitus is the product of both individual history and the collective history of family, class, and gender, for example, growing up in a working-class family develops particular dispositional kinds of class-based habitus, or certain embodied ways of being in the world (Lingaard & Christie, 2003:321).

The habitus, according to the above definitions and descriptions (see Bourdieu, 1977; Reay, 2004; Wacquant, 2006; Lingaard & Christie (2003), has four main features worth exploring: (1) the notion of embodiment, (2) having a collective class habitus, (3) the notion of the habitus as 'structured and structuring structures' and (4) the habitus as being fluid. Jenkins (1992), note that the habitus in the simple straightforward sense is located inside actors heads or, as Bourdieu (1990:61) explains, "these dispositions and generative schemes of classification are literally and metaphorically embodied in human beings". He further adds that "the very ways in which people treat and relate to their bodies reveal the deepest disposition of the habitus" (ibid). Therefore, attributes like class, race or gender are internalized or incorporated over time and becomes embodied within one's body, since 'the habitus as the social is inscribed in the body of the biological individual' (Bourdieu, 1990:113).

Secondly, as humans we have both an individual and class habitus - making the habitus multifaceted. For Bourdieu (1990:91), “the subject is not the instantaneous ego of a sort of singular cogito, but the individual trace of an entire collective history”. Williams (1995:585), asserts that “the habitus provides individuals with class-dependent, pre-disposed yet seemingly, ‘naturalised’ ways of thinking, feeling, acting and classifying the social world and their locations within it”.

Bourdieu (1977) does however acknowledge:

it is impossible for all members of the same class (or even two of them) to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with situations most frequent for the members of that class (Bourdieu, 1977:85).

In his well-known book *Distinction*, Bourdieu explores how the habitus accounts for class differences across a broad range of aesthetic tastes and lifestyles; differences are rooted in underlying material conditions. They are experienced, represented, constituted dispositionally as cultural distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984).

The third feature of the habitus is Bourdieu’s view of the habitus as “structured and structuring structure” (1998:72), which accounts for the interiorisation of the exteriority, and the exteriorization of the interiority. In other words, how the outside becomes internalized, inscribed in the body and how the inside (that which has been internalised) is manifested in various ways on the outside; the interaction between interior processes of the human mind (both individual and class) and the exterior (what is in the social world). Grenfell & James (1998:15) argue that ‘if the habitus brings into focus the subjective end of the equation, field focuses on the objective, where there is an ‘ontological complicity’ between habitus and field”. The habitus, according to Zevenbergen (2005:607), can therefore be viewed as a methodological construct that allows the researcher to understand the dynamic structure between social reality and the individual”. For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:127), “Social reality exists so to speak twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in the habitus, outside and inside social agents”.

A fourth feature of the habitus is that it is fluid, constantly being 'restructured by the individuals encounters with their outside world' (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1972) alludes to the restructuring and changing face of the habitus when he notes:

the habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences...,the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences...and so on, from restructuring to restructuring (Bourdieu, 1972 cited in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:134).

This structuring and restructuring of the habitus however depends on one's position in the field, the type of capital one possesses and one's agentive action. According to Luke (2008:8) certain elements like class, race and gender, including our 'experiential and historical memories, remain the same no matter how many other acquired overlays of institutional, material, social and economic capital we acquire and develop".

The four features of the habitus, referred to in the above discussion, accounts for why the habitus can be viewed 'as a complex internalized core from which everyday experiences emanate' (Reay, 2010:435). Bourdieu (1977:83), points to the dual function of the habitus in that "in its relation to objective structures it is the principle of generations of practices while in relation to a total repertoire of social practices, it is their unifying principle".

Out of all Bourdieu's concepts the habitus has been subjected to widespread criticism, mainly on the basis of its latent determinism (Reay, 2010:437). This latent determinism to which Reay (2010) refers is due to pre-reflexive level on which the habitus operates, or as DiGiorgio (2009:180) puts it, "the habitus refers to the unconscious identity one houses in one's body and mind as internalized from one's physical and social environment'. Williams (1995:558) argues that Bourdieu's model turns out to be one of (mindless) conformity". Here he was referring to the unconscious or pre-reflexive element of the habitus not leaving anything to 'individual choice'. He argues "that actors do and must know more about their social world than Bourdieu is prepared to allow, and as a consequence the role in social life of conscious, deliberative decision-making is grossly underestimated" (ibid). Reay (2010:437), in contrast to Williams (1995), contends that in Bourdieu's more recent work, in *The Weight of the World*, there is a great deal of striving, resistance and action aimed at changing current circumstances, resistance to 'the way the world is', noting that there is

“little evidence of determinism here” (Reay, 2010:437). Bourdieu, in an interview with Wacquant (1989), defends his ideas by stating:

I cannot comprehend how relations of domination, whether material or symbolic, could possibly operate without implying, activating resistance. The dominated, in any social universe, can always exert force, inasmuch as to belong to a field means by definition that one is producing effects on it (if only to elicit reactions of exclusion on the part of those who occupy the dominant positions), thus of putting certain forces in motion (Wacquant, 1989:36).

Bourdieu adds that “it is in times of crisis... that rational choice often appears to take over”. He however asserts that there is a crucial proviso: “it is the habitus itself that commands this option. We can only say that individuals make choices, as long as we do not forget that they do not choose the principle of these choices” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:45). The potential for agency arises when there is a lack of fit between the habitus and the field or as Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) notes:

...when the habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a fish in water: it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted. When the habitus encounters a field which is not similar the resulting disjuncture can generate change and transformation (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127).

Even though actors have the potential to exercise their agency, to generate ‘change and transformation, it still depends on the interplay between the habitus and the field. Kenway & McLeod (2004:528) reaffirm that the relationship between habitus and the field, more importantly between “position (in the field) and disposition [habitus] is central to Bourdieu’s understanding of reflexivity”. Furthermore, those revisiting Bourdieu’s notion of reflexivity or ‘the awakening of consciousness’, argue that the crisis emanating from movement between fields are much more routine in present-day society than Bourdieu allows (McNay, 2000 cited in Kerfoot, 2008:111), and that in the contexts of almost permanent disruption between habitus and field, reflexivity itself may become habitual and therefore not necessarily lead to transformation. Sweetman (2003) argues that:

to the extent that Bourdieu’s ‘non-reflexive’ habitus depends upon relatively stable social conditions and on lasting experience of social position his analysis may thus be said to apply more to simple-or organized-modernity, where the comparative stability of people’s social identities allowed for a

sustained, coherent and relatively secure relationship between habitus and field (Sweetman, 2003:541).

McNay (1999), in contrast to Sweetman (2003), suggests that reflexivity or ‘an awakening of consciousness’ is more likely to occur in times of crisis, such as radical changes in the field, or increased individual mobility. As mentioned, human action cannot be explained through the habitus alone since the workings of the habitus can only be understood in relation to two other constructs of Bourdieu namely, field and capital, to which I now turn.

Bourdieu, defines the field as

a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relations to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc). Each field presupposes, and generates by its very functioning the belief in the value of stakes it offers (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:97).

In the above definition it becomes clear that agents are positioned in fields in different ways. Lingaard & Christie (2003:324) note that “fields have their own structures, interest and preferences; their own ‘rules of the game’; their own agents, differently constituted; their own power struggles”. The field can therefore be seen as either a socio-historical (material) field or a discursive (implicit) field. Wacquant (2006:9) notes that the field resembles a battlefield whereby the basis of identity and hierarchy are endlessly being disputed over”. It is one’s positioning within the field (either as the dominator or the one being dominated) that either empowers one or renders one powerless. As pointed out by Adams (2006:511), “fields limit what we can do, make some actions more possible than others, or encourage a certain bodily deportment than another, but there is often an opportunity to ‘play the game’ in more than one way”. The field, as reiterated by Swartz (2002:655), “offers constraints and opportunities ... the driving force of the habitus is mediated by field, and the constraints and opportunities imposed by the fields are mediated through the dispositions of the habitus”.

Bourdieu often used the analogy of a game to describe how power operates within the field; how individuals find their dominant positions within the field (Luke, 2003). Within a given field there are ‘position takers’ (Bourdieu, 1990) who attempt to alter their positions, relative

power, and the rules of exchange (Luke, 2003). One's dominance within a field, which positions people in specific ways, depends on the amounts of field-specific resources (capital) you possess in relation to others in the field. Bourdieu (1990:80-98) argues that "the types of power that are up for grabs are the 'stakes' that give the game its character, structure and its distinct internal logic". He adds that "there are rules of the game- they act as constraints on the strategies of various players and they are rarely immutable. Rather, they are negotiated and re-negotiated constantly in the interplay between players and the structures of the game (Bourdieu, 1990: 80-89). Warde (2004) offers a summary of the notion of fields, noting that fields are integrated around:

- 1) Some particular stakes and commitment,
- 2) a structured set of positions
- 3) a set of strategic and competitive orientations and
- 4) a set of agents endowed with resources and dispositions.

Actors therefore come into a particular field with particular dispositions (habitus- internalised over time and through interacting in different social spaces), and differently endowed with particular 'field-specific capital' which ultimately determines their positions in the field. Swartz (2002:665) adds that "human practices emerge from the encounter of individual biological units with certain types of capital. Praxis is therefore the outcome of complex relationships between habitus, capital and field". In the field of education, more specifically the sub-field of the school, the field-specific capital Bourdieu was referring to, is 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1997), to which I now turn.

A key element in this thesis used to understand how learners' dispositions are constructed, framed, and accounted for educational success or failure, is Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. For Bourdieu (1997), in the field of education, and more specifically the sub-field of the school, cultural capital has the highest exchange value. As he puts it, "academic success is directly dependent on cultural capital, and on the inclination to invest in the academic market"(Bourdieu, 1997:98). There are three questions crucial to understanding why academic success is directly dependent on one's possession of cultural capital viz. how is cultural capital defined? How is cultural capital acquired? How does it work in the field of education to include some and exclude others? According to Bourdieu:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied state*, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body; in the *objectified state*, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), ...and in the *institutionalized state*, ... as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, in Sadovnik, 2007:84).

Lamont and Lareau, (1988:156) expanded on this definition by viewing cultural capital as “widely shared, high status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion”. From these definitions, one can infer that the dispositions (*habitus*) we acquire over time and space, embody one’s cultural capital or as Holt (1998:4) puts it, “in its subjective embodied form, cultural capital is a key element of the *habitus*” .

So how is cultural capital acquired, how does it work in the field of education as a mechanism of exclusion, and in turn how can it account for educational success or failure? The answers to these questions are interlinked. Dumais (2002:48) noted that “despite the heavy focus on cultural capital no real consensus has been reached among educational researchers regarding an operationalization of cultural capital”. Dumais (2002), Swartz (2002) and Jaeger (2009) have done extensive research on empirical literature which link cultural capital to educational attainment. Jaeger (2009) for example, drawing on Bourdieu’s thesis on cultural capital, proposes that:

three conditions must hold for cultural capital to lead to educational success: 1) Parents must possess cultural capital [parental socialization], 2) They must invest time and effort in transmitting cultural capital to their children [parental investment], and 3) Children must absorb and convert it into educational success [children’s investment] (Jaeger, 2009:1944).

Educational researchers (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; De Graaf et al., 2000; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Cheung & Anderson, 2003; Dowey, 1995) tend to focus only on one of these aspects, offering a one-dimensional view of the type of cultural capital parents possess and their children end up internalising that would lead to educational success. DiMaggio (1982), DiMaggio & Mohr (1985) and De Graaf et al., (2000) for instance focused on the impact on their children’s educational success of parents’ involvement in ‘highbrow cultural activities’ such as their attendance at theatres, museums, classical music concerts, and art galleries and reading books. De Graaf et al., (2000) provides empirical evidence of how children acquire linguistic and cognitive skills in the home



through parents' reading habits and literacy preferences which they regard as essential in a learning environment. Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) analysed how educational resources in the home (dictionaries, computers, a desk etc.) could account for children's educational success, whereas Cheung and Anderson (2003) and Downey (1995) show how parents transmit cultural capital to their children through the use of different types of communication or social interaction. Furthermore, others such as Lareau and Horvat (1999) and Lareau and Weininger (2004) provide evidence of how parents and children use cultural capital in their interaction with teachers and other gatekeepers in the education system to obtain preferential treatment, which in turn could account for their educational success. What is clear from the above discussion is that these researchers used different variables to determine the forms of cultural capital that could facilitate educational success. In a recent study, Nash (2002), in contrast to the previously mentioned researchers who focused more on the types of cultural capital that would improve linguistic and cognitive skills of learners, found that progress in school was strongly associated with non-cognitive personal positions of learners. He observed that "relative progress at school was strongly associated with non-cognitive personal dispositions of students' high aspirations, positive academic self-concept and favourable perceptions of the school and teachers" (Nash, 2002: 27-48). He therefore placed more emphasis on what Jaeger (2002) called 'children's investment' because for Nash (2002:27), "the reason why some students make more progress than others is almost as simple as this: some want to be educated more than others and possess an effective habitus that generates practices in accordance with that desire". This emphasis on children's willingness to be educated, or willingness to acquire an 'educated habitus' is supported by Swann (1999) who argued that:

students who succeed at school do so because in consequence of their ambitious, academic self-confidence and positive responses to the processes of schooling; they reveal a habituated willingness to be educated in accordance with the concept of the educated person that continues, despite ambiguities and contradictions to be transmitted by school (Swann, 1999:266).

Both Nash (2002) and Swann (1999) point to the fact that, in order for learners to progress in school they have to possess a particular 'educated habitus' or a desire (a habituated willingness) to want to achieve. One however must not lose sight of the fact that this desire to be educated or possess a habituated willingness is also dependent on one's habitus, especially the primary habitus that is obtained through socialisation in the home and community spaces.

Jaeger (2009) however found these studies to be limiting (one-dimensional). He observed that most researchers merely focused on the first two conditions (parental socialisation and parental investment), paying little attention to how children absorb or embody cultural capital. He therefore provided an analysis of all three conditions (parental socialisation, parental investment and children's investment) to show how they independently contribute to educational inequality, thus dovetailing with Bourdieu's initial theoretical framework. Jaeger's analysis suggests that "parents and children seek to obtain social advantage by exploiting whichever form of capital has the highest payoff in the educational field" (2009:1965).

As mentioned, in the educational field, 'cultural capital', has the highest payoff. Luke (2003) provides a practical example of how capital is exchanged within the field of education, especially when one enters with limited cultural capital:

A Torres Strait Island girl might enter Thursday Island Primary School (in a remote indigenous island community off the Australian Northern coast) with trilingual linguistic competence (typical of the three vernaculars, plus Torres Strait Creole English) but limited early print knowledge (embodied capital), access to family networks and community infrastructure (social capital), and limited family material wealth (economic capital) ... (Luke, 2003:138).

The girl in the excerpt taken from Luke (2003), would enter school with a particular habitus, endowed with particular cultural capital (acquired through early socialization in the family and through her interactions in other social spaces), which she brings to bear onto the field of the classroom where she would exercise her agency; 'actively position take' or 'learn to play the game' in her attempt to exchange and transform her cultural capital into other forms of capital. The latter however depends on the practices in the field, her position in the field and her ability to 'play the game'. It also shows how the habitus is "the mechanism behind the effect of cultural capital" (De Graaf et al., 2000:96). It further shows how education legitimises class inequalities, especially the role of class inequalities in educational attainment (Sullivan, 2002:144). Furthermore, it shows how cultural capital is used in the educational field "for social and cultural exclusion" (Lamont & Lareau, 1988:156). In Bourdieu's own words:

by doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1973:80).

Both Dumais (2002:48) and Di Maggio (1982:190) in their observations found that children from middle class families, with more cultural capital, feel more comfortable in school, communicate more easily with teachers, and are therefore more likely to do well in school. Lower class students, on the other hand, find the school environment different from their home environment and lack the capital necessary to fit in as well as the middle class students. Lareau (2003) in her book *Unequal Childhoods* concurs with the previous authors' observation by asserting that middle class parents, regardless of race, practice a form of parenting she terms "concerted cultivation," whereas working class and lower class parents practice the "accomplishment of natural growth" (2003:32). 'Concerted cultivation' places emphasis on children's structured activities, language development and reasoning evident mostly in middle class homes. Children's experiences in working class homes are less structured and there is more free play with friends and less participation in organised activities (Lareau, 2003). Lareau's observations could explain the alignment between middle class parents' practices and practices in schools, which she asserts could offer children from these homes an academic advantage. It certainly broadens one's understanding of the ways in which family and education, more specifically schools and classrooms align to produce and reproduce social inequality (Yamamoto & Briton, 2010:67).

I have fleshed out the constructs of Bourdieu, including debates on the constructs which forms the theoretical framework of my study, viz. habitus, field and capital, more specifically cultural capital. A discussion follows on the interplay between these constructs, and I look at the 'logic of practice' and how power operates within the field by turning to a fourth construct of Bourdieu's, namely his notion of 'doxa' (Bourdieu, 1977). In Bourdieu's own words: "in a determinate social function, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in agents dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of doxa; of that which is taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977: 165). He adds that doxa is seen as the "unanimity effect" (Bourdieu, 1997:110) "in social groups that share similar habituses and trajectories" (Myles, 2009:92). Myles (2009) notes that Bourdieu endowed doxa with a

number of meanings that have evolved over time. Bourdieu viewed it as ‘a natural attitude’ or as ‘a *sens of pratique*’ that is ‘taken for granted’ (Bourdieu, 1997:165).

For Bourdieu (1997:80-97), it is the informal and unspoken structures that constitute the most effective constraint on action because they operate at a level of the unconscious or semi-conscious. They constitute what he defines as the ‘prevailing doxa’, the ‘silent experiences of the world’ that ‘goes without saying’. Actors therefore internalise both the formal and informal structures, as well as the spoken and unspoken assumptions in the field. Jackson (2009:109) states that this structuring of the field is internalised by actors “by dint of their habitus, which constantly adjusts and develops in response to its conditions”. Bourdieu’s concept of doxa, according to Jackson (2009:109), “is not a set of opinions –it works on an instinctive level often viewed as a set of presuppositions that are cognitive as well as evaluative that conditions the actors responses to external stimuli”.

Notwithstanding the many ways in which this concept has been defined, one thing appears clear, that is, that people experience power differently, depending on their position in the field, which in turn depends on their habitus and field-specific capital they possess. Doxa should not only be seen as a ‘*sens of pratique*’ but for Miles (2009:92) it is also “a ‘sense of limits’ which depending on the particular habitus and its location in the type of field, is seen as defining perceptions and opinions which have not been subjected to reflexive thought”. Since doxa operates at an ‘unconscious’ level one that has not been subjected to reflexive thought, it explains “how people can resist power and domination in one [field] and express complicity in another” (Moncrieffe, 2006:37). On the one hand, the dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of doxa and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken-for-granted. On the other hand, the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa replacing it with ‘orthodoxy’ (effort to defend the doxa) or ‘heterodoxy’ (the effort to challenge doxa) (Bourdieu, 1977).

Harker and May (1990), criticised the multiple ways in which Bourdieu’s concepts, especially his notion of his key constructs: habitus, field and capital, including his notion of doxa, have evolved over time. They argue that “Bourdieu works in a spiral between theory, empirical work and back to reformulating theory again at a different level”. Jackson (2009) observed the differences in the ways Bourdieu’s constructs changed, noting that Bourdieu rarely explains the ‘field’ in exactly the same way twice”. Jackson (2009:108) found this “lack of clarity in nearly all his many explanations of the concept”, highly problematic.

Bourdieu however saw this reformulation or evolving of his constructs as a good thing; describing his concepts as “open concepts designed to guide empirical research” (Bourdieu, 1990:107). Bennet (2007:23), adds that “there are good reasons to value Bourdieu’s work for the issue it has opened up around the relationships between cultural capital, the education system and contemporary processes of class formation and differentiation”.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Bourdieu’s work remains crucial since it unveils the manifold processes whereby social order masks its arbitrariness and perpetuates itself. Bourdieu’s seminal work can be used to understand how learners are socialised into particular identities through the interplay between the habitus, field, and field-specific capital, and how these identities position one differently within schools and classrooms which could result in different educational outcomes. His work however is not sufficient to explain ‘why’ different children experience schooling differently. For this I turn to the seminal work of Basil Bernstein.

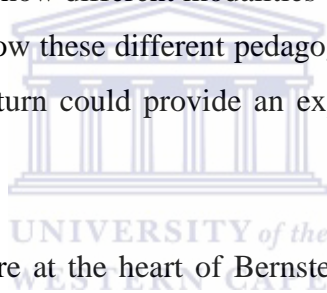
### **3.3 Engaging with the theoretical constructs of Basil Bernstein**

It should be made clear that out of all the constructs contained in Bernstein’s ‘conceptual toolbox’, constructs which he developed over a 40 year period, this study was particularly interested in the ‘internal processes’ or ‘micro processes’ of schooling, in other words to explore the nature of pedagogical practices, and the relationships between social class and pedagogic practices. More specifically, for this thesis, the aim was to determine how pedagogic practices and pedagogic relationships could account for different educational outcomes. Furthermore, it was important to understand how pedagogy or pedagogic practices produce and reproduce social class differences and why children from different social classes experience schooling differently, and Bernstein’s work provided an avenue for this.

For Bernstein (2003:197), “Pedagogic practices can be understood as a relay, a cultural relay: a uniquely human device for the reproduction and the production of culture”. He makes a distinction between “what is relayed, the contents, and how the contents are relayed” (ibid).

A pedagogic relation however “is the relationship basic to cultural reproduction or transformation”. It consists of both ‘transmitters and acquirers’ (Bernstein, 2003:198). Sadovnik (1991:59) reinforces the need for sociologists of education to explore social class differences in the curriculum by adding that it can be used to “better understand the ways in

which school knowledge is a means of limiting or making available the official forms of knowledge that are valued in society”. It is however crucial to note that one cannot understand the internal workings of pedagogy without exploring two other ‘message systems’, namely, curriculum and evaluation. For Bernstein (1973:47-69), “curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as valid realization of this knowledge”. The curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (evaluation) conveys powerful messages that shape the learner’s ‘educational identity’, his or her perception of what they can or cannot do, and what they might become (Munns, 2007). According to Mcfadden and Munns (2002), Bernstein’s analysis of schooling, in terms of the three message systems, offers a useful framework for understanding how schools operate to structure the consciousness and emotionality of students. What follows is a probing into the ‘inner logic’ of pedagogic practice. First, I turn to the constructs of classification and framing to show how power and control relations are realised, and how different modalities of pedagogic practices are formed. My interest, in this thesis, is in how these different pedagogic practices relay power relations and class inequalities, which in turn could provide an explanation for unequal educational performances.



“Classification” and “framing” are at the heart of Bernstein’s thesis and form a theoretical foundation from which to start theorising about pedagogy. They are used to analyse the underlying structure of the three ‘message systems’. According to Sadovnik (2008), “where classification is concerned with the organisation of knowledge into the curriculum, framing is related to the transmission of knowledge through pedagogic practices” (Sadovnik, 2008:566). Bernstein notes that “where classification is strong, contents are well insulated from each other by strong boundaries” (Bernstein, 1973:49). In cases where the degree of insulation between contents is strong, it is referred to a ‘collection type’ curriculum. In this case knowledge is sacred, hierarchical, and highly specialised, practitioners have strong sense of identity and subject loyalty occurs (Hartley, 2010). However, where classification is weak, there is reduced insulation between contents. In this case, boundaries between contents are blurred or weak, as in an ‘integrated type’ curriculum (Bernstein, 1973:49). Bernstein used the code  $C^+$  to indicate strong classification and  $C^-$  to indicate weak classification. If we take the subjects mathematics and history for example, then in a ‘collection type’ curriculum, these subjects are well bounded or the degree of insulation between these subjects are strong. In other words, each subject has its own unique identity, its own unique voice, and its own

specialised internal rules (Bernstein, 1996). According to Hartley (2010:9), “the stronger the classification value, the more hierarchical and ritualized educational relationships are”. The opposite holds in an ‘integrated type’ curriculum. In this case the degree of insulation between the subjects (for example, history and mathematics) is weak, broken or blurred, which means that the subjects, as well as practitioners involved in these subjects, are in danger of losing their identity (Bernstein, 1996). Hartley (2010) notes that in this case there appears to be a shift in the balance of power between the transmitter (teacher) and the acquirer (the learner). Bernstein (1996:26) points out that “when classification is strong( $C^+$ ) the rule is that things must be kept apart, and when classification is weak( $C^-$ ) things must be brought together”. He further adds that “the question we have to ask, is in whose interest is the apartness of things, and in whose interest is the new togetherness and the new integration?” (ibid).

Framing, for Bernstein, is about “*who controls what*” (Bernstein, 1996:27). Framing refers to “the degree of control teachers and learners possess over the selection, organisation and pacing of knowledge transmitted and received in a pedagogic relationship” (Bernstein, 1973:50). It therefore describes ‘the internal logic’ of the pedagogic practice: the nature of control over: the selection of communication, sequencing of content (what comes first, what comes second), the pacing of content (the rate of expected acquisition), the criteria, and the control over the social base which makes this transmission possible (Bernstein, 1996). In the case of strong framing ( $F^+$ ), the transmitter (teacher) and the acquirer (learner) have less or no control over the selection, organisation and pacing of knowledge, and when framing is weak ( $F^-$ ) then the teacher and learner have more apparent control over the selection, organisation, and pacing of knowledge transmitted (Bernstein, 1981). In mathematics for example, the framing is strong ( $F^+$ ). In this case, teachers and learners have less or no control over what is taught (the content) and how it is taught (the practice). One way in which framing can be reduced is when learners ask questions, since this will affect both the sequencing of the lesson content (what follows what) and the pacing of the content (the time it takes for the learner to realise the answer).

What is particularly interesting about the notions of classification and framing is that each transmits principles of power and control. As Bernstein (1996:19) explains: “control establishes legitimate communication and power establishes legitimate relations between

categories. This power constructs relations between, and control relations within given forms of interaction”.

It is important at this juncture to know how power and control, through variations in classification and framing values, play out within the ‘micro educational practices’; inside schools and classrooms. According to Bernstein (1996:19), “power relations creates boundaries, legitimises boundaries, reproduces boundaries between categories of groups, gender, class and race, different discourses, different categories of agents”. Furthermore, it is through power relations that boundaries between subject areas (inter-disciplinary), between school and everyday knowledge (inter-discursive relations), and between knowledge within particular subject areas (intra-discursive relations) are maintained (Hoadley, 2005). It is also through power relations that boundaries between different discourses (different categories of knowledge), different agents (teacher-student; different student groups), and context (spaces within schools) are reaffirmed.

Control, according to Bernstein, “establishes legitimate forms of communication within categories, it carries the boundary relations of power, and socialises individuals into these relationships” (Bernstein, 1996:19). For Bernstein (1996:19) “control is double faced for it carries both the power of reproduction and the potential for its change”. He adds that “a change in educational code, from collection to integrated code, caused by a change in classification and framing values brings about a disturbance in the structure and distribution of power, in property relationships and in existing educational identities” (Bernstein, 1996:63).

Changes in framing values have a marked influence on both teacher and learner identities. This is confirmed by Hartley (2010:7) who notes that “classification and framing have very marked implications for the way in which teachers and learners construct their professional identities”. In other words, if classification is strong ( $C^+$ ), learners are more likely to develop a strong subject identity (a mathematic learner and a woodwork learner). When framing is strong ( $F^+$ ), the labelling of learner as ‘conscientious, attentive, industrious, careful and respectful, is possible. This is not the case when framing is weak since “the conditions for candidature for labels will become equally trying for the learner as he or she struggles to be creative, to be interactional, to attempt to make his or her mark” (Bernstein, 1996:28). Hartley (2010) adds that if classification and framing are strong it is clear for both



transmitters and acquirers to know how well they are doing in the system and where in the academic hierarchy they are placed.

Bernstein formulated a ‘pedagogic code’ to show how “*changes in Cs and Fs will produce different modalities of elaborated codes*” (Bernstein, 1996: 29, emphasis in original).

Bernstein wrote the code as follows:

$$\frac{E}{\pm C^{i-e} / \pm F^{i-e}}$$

E refers to orientations to meaning – elaborated, and the line stands for embedding of this orientation in classification and framing values. Variation in these classification and framing values give rise to a large range of different modalities of pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 1996: 28-29).

Here Bernstein makes a further distinction between internal and external values of framing and internal and external values of classification. According to Bernstein (1996:28-29) “classification always has an external value because it is concerned with relations...the internal classification refers to the arrangement of spaces and the objects in it”.

Framing too has an internal and external value. The C/F<sup>i-e</sup> in the above formula refers to the internal and external values of classification and framing. Bernstein states that the external value of framing refers to “the controls on communications outside that pedagogic practice entering the pedagogic practice” (Bernstein, 1996:29).

Nyambe and Wilmot (2012) point out that:

external framing (<sup>e</sup>F) refers to pedagogic contexts where the external control factors such as the curriculum, policy, authorities and other macro-level structural forces constitute the locus of control over the instructional and regulative aspects of pedagogic discourse. Internal framing (<sup>i</sup>F), on the other hand, refers to pedagogic contexts where internal forces, such as the teacher, the scheme of work, etc. constitute the locus of control over the instructional and regulative discourse” (Nyambe et al, 2012:58).

Bernstein (1996:29) argues that “where the external framing is strong, it often means that the images, voices and practices the school reflects make it difficult for children of marginalized

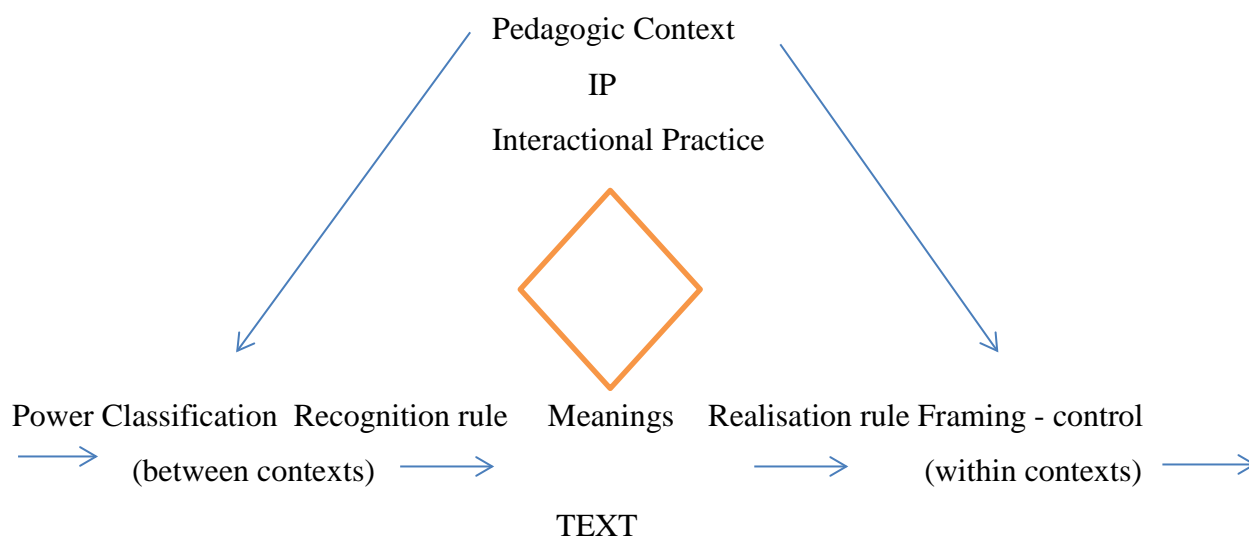
classes to recognise themselves in school”. In order to understand why this is so, one needs to turn to an earlier code formulated by Bernstein (1977), namely his work on the linguistic code, as well as two other constructs introduced by Bernstein (1996), recognition and realisation rules.

The concept ‘code’ refers to “principles regulating different meaning systems” (1973:61). For Bernstein the code the child brings to school symbolises his/her school identity since it relates to both his/her kin and local relationships. He adds “that middle-class children are socialized in both an elaborate code (context-independent and universalistic) and a restricted code (context-dependent and particularistic), whilst children in some sections of the working class strata, particularly from the lower working class, only possess a restricted code” (Bernstein, 1973:136). The ‘restricted code’ is a ‘community code’ which children use in colloquial situations with family, friends or peer groupings (Taylor et al., 2003). The ‘elaborate code’ or ‘school code’ “reflects a different set of classification principles, which transcends local context” (Taylor et al., 2003: 69). In a simple example, when asked to describe a series of pictures, working class boys used many pronouns, and their stories could only be understood by looking at the pictures. Middle class boys, on the other hand, generated descriptions rich in nouns, and their stories could be understood without the pictures (Sadovnik, 2008). Hasan (1991) also used the theory of codes to describe the type of language use or talk between working-class and middle-class mothers and their children. He found that middle-class mothers in the way they spoke and interacted with their children, socialised their children to “more personalistic, individuating modes of expression, an important dimension of elaborated coding, while working-class mothers socialised their children to more positional, group-orientated modes of expression, a hallmark of restricted coding” (Hasan, 1991, cited in Collins, 2000:69). Collins (2000:69) notes that “schools value personalising, generalising styles of expression characteristic of elaborated coding, while devaluing the socially-orientated, particularising styles of expression characteristic of restricted coding”. The fact that working class children come to school with a restricted code and middle class children with an elaborate code, implies that there are various factors influencing how children from different social groupings experience schooling. As Bernstein (1973:136) argues, “if a child is to progress through school it becomes crucial for him/her to possess or at least be orientated towards an elaborate (school) code”. This sentiment is reiterated by Hoadley (2005:52), who claimed that “the school is predicated on, and privileges an elaborate code, placing working-class children at a disadvantage in terms of the requirements of the school”.

I argue that it is useful in understanding why earlier socialisation, especially of children from working class families, appears to be misaligned with school practices, which in turn increases their risk of failure in school.

Bernstein's work on linguistic codes was and still is very controversial. According to Singh (2002:571), "Bernstein was often accused by researchers of producing 'white, male, middle class grand narratives' that constituted disadvantaged students as the deficit 'other'. Bernstein merely argued that although working class children had a functional language necessary for production, schools require an elaborative language necessary for reproducing pedagogic text, which places them at a disadvantage (Hoadley, 2005). Singh (2002:571) refers to such misinterpretations of Bernstein's work as being 'part of a research game' pointing to the fact that Bernstein work, which spans over 40 years, was mainly concerned with understanding the (re)production of social inequality through schooling.

Although Bernstein's earlier work on 'linguistic codes' helps in understanding educational inequalities, Sadovnik notes that "it does not sufficiently provide an understanding of what goes on inside schools and how these practices are systematically related to social- class advantages and disadvantages" (Sadovnik, 1991:48). Two other constructs introduced by Bernstein do provide such an explanation, namely his notion of recognition and realisation rules. For Bernstein (1996:127), "recognition rules enable the learner to recognise legitimate text, whereas realisation rules enable the learner to determine how to put meaning together and make them public". The recognition rule operates on the level of the acquirer who recognises the specificity of the context and what the context demands (Nyambe & Wilmot, 2012). The realisation rules enable the learner to "select the relevant meanings and to produce the text according to those meanings" (Morais, 2002:560). So the realisation rule enables the acquirer to speak, act and write in appropriate ways (Nyambe & Wilmot, 2012). A learner therefore needs both the recognition rule and the realisation rule to be a successful participant in any pedagogic practice or interactional practice (the practice of transmission and acquisition). Figure 1 shows how the constructs I have alluded to thus far interact within a pedagogical context:



**Figure 1: Pedagogic context**

Figure 1 illustrates how the distribution of power and the principles of control translate into classification and framing values which select recognition and realisation rules to create contextually appropriate text (Bernstein, 1996: 127-128). In other words power relations, which position subjects through the principle of classification, enables the learner to recognise the context and what the context demands; the learner can therefore read the context. However, the learner still needs to acquire the realisation rule which is regulated through the framing principle (and control), in order to make meaning (produce legitimate communication) within that context. Hoadley (2005) asserts that “classification and framing describe the structural and interactional aspects of pedagogic practices exposing the power and control relations that inhere in pedagogic practices” (Hoadley, 2005:58). Bernstein warns that without the realisation rule “these children in school then will not have acquired the legitimate pedagogic code, but they will have acquired their place in the classificatory system” (Bernstein, 1993:128). The question then remains, how do children acquire the realisation and recognition rules that are needed to progress successfully in school? The answer lies at the level of framing since, according to Bernstein (1990:126), “change happens at the level of framing”.

If change happens at the level of framing, then it is crucial to understand the rules that are regulated by framing. Bernstein (1996) distinguishes between two rules, the rules of social order and the rules of discursive order. The rule of discursive order, which refers to the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of knowledge, is known as the Instructional

Discourse. The rule of social order, known as the Regulative Discourse, refers to the forms that hierarchical relations take in the pedagogic relations and the expectations about conduct, character and manner (Bernstein, 1996:27). Bernstein offers the following formula:

$$\text{Framing} = \frac{\text{Instructional Discourse}}{\text{Regulative Discourse}} \quad \frac{\text{ID}}{\text{RD}}$$

For Bernstein (1996), the Instructional Discourse or ID, (the discourse that deals with the transmission of skills and specialised competencies), is always embedded in the Regulative Discourse or RD (the discourse that regulates values, creates order, relations and identity). The ID refers to ‘what’ is being relayed (the content) and the RD refers to ‘how’ the content is relayed. Singh (2001) asserts that because the RD constitutes the moral order of schooling it is prone to produce and reproduce extensive forms of rituals within schools. Two types of rituals are identified: conservative rituals (school uniform, assemblies, school mottoes, emblems etc.) and differential rituals (in terms of age, gender, sporting ability, academic attainment etc.). Rose (2005), suggest that

if we accept Bernstein’s view [that the dominant discourse is the regulative discourse], one implication is that the dominant function of pedagogic discourse is not so much the transmission of skills and knowledge, which is generally assumed we are teaching, but rather order, relations and identity...Learner identities that are produced and maintained by the moral order of the classroom and school are stratified as successful, average and unsuccessful. This inequality is universally construed at all levels of education, whether overtly or not, as differences in learning ‘ability’ (Rose, 2005:133).

Both Singh (2001) and Rose (2005) illuminate the nature and dominance of the regulative discourse, revealing how learners are stratified into different learner identities which could account for why some learners experience schooling as their pathway to the future, and others experience schooling as irrelevant and alienating (Rose, 2005:133). Bernstein (1975 cited in Singh, 2001:251-276), elaborates on the different subject-positioning that can result from pedagogic discourse; which subject-positions students take up and why:

- Commitment subject position- Students acquire the instructional discourse and react positively towards the regulative discourse;

- Detachment subject position– Students acquire the specific subject (instructional discourse) of the classroom lessons but are negative towards the regulative discourse (specific moral order);
- Deferment subject position- Students defer their commitment to both the instructional and regulative discourse; and
- Alienated subject position- students often do not understand and therefore reject the instructional and regulative discourse of specific classroom activities.

This reveals how classroom (pedagogic) practices engage and enable different learners unequally. The task of school, according to Bernstein (1975), is to encourage all students to adopt a subject position committed to both the instructional and regulative discourse.

Bernstein's (1990) explanation of the 'inner logic' of any pedagogic practice, which is governed by three rules, namely hierarchical, sequencing and criterial rules, further show how differences in pedagogic modes can lead to different learning outcomes for learners (Singh, 2001). The hierarchical (regulating) rules are the rules which establish the conditions for order, character and manner (regulative discourse). It places emphasis on 'what' is being relayed. Bernstein elaborates that "in any pedagogic practice the transmitter (the teacher) has to learn to be a transmitter and the acquirer (the learner) has to learn to be an acquirer" (Bernstein, 1990:65). He adds that "sequencing rules imply pacing rules; in transmitting the content something must come before and something after; the rate at which this happens is the pacing of the content" (Bernstein, 1990:66). Criterial rules (evaluation criteria), for Bernstein, are "the criteria which the acquirer is expected to take over and apply to his or her practices and those of others" (Bernstein, 1990:66). Morais (2002:560) show that evaluation criteria are crucial to any pedagogic practice. It is the means by which legitimate text is made explicit to acquirers (learners). In other words strong framing at the level of evaluation criteria "may lead children to acquire the recognition and realisation rules of the school context" (ibid). For this to happen, Morais (2002) argues, requires time or a weak framing of pacing. This dovetails with Bernstein's notion that change happens at the level of framing. Both the sequencing and criterial rules, which are discursive rules, relates to the instructional discourse. Both the regulative (hierarchical) and instructional (sequencing and criterial) rules form the basis for distinguishing between two generic types or modalities of pedagogic practices, namely visible and invisible pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 1990).

In a visible pedagogic practice (VP), the hierarchical, sequencing (which includes pacing), and criterial rules are explicit. In visible pedagogic practices the authority structure and power relations within the classroom are clear to the learner. In other words, as noted by Bernstein, “social relations are under guised and visible, the principles and signs of the progression of the transmission of content are explicit and made public (what follows what and at what rate is clear), and the criteria to be transmitted are specific” (Bernstein, 1990:52). However in an implicit, invisible, pedagogic practice (IP), these rules are implicit, meaning that “the power basis of the social relations is masked, hidden and obscured by strategies of communication” (Bernstein, 1990:52). In other words, “the principles and signs of the progression are only known to the transmitter, and the criteria to be transmitted are implicit, multiple and diffused” (Bernstein, 1990:53). Both VP and IP, despite being different types or modes of pedagogic practices, or as Bernstein terms “opposing modalities of control” (1990:73), both appear to have similar outcomes, “especially in the reproduction of power and symbolic control” (Sadovnik, 1991:54). In fact, practices in both the VP and IP could lead to social inequalities. According to Sadovnik (1991:54), “inherent in the VP is a stratification system, a practice that is intrinsically unequal”. Children who come into school with a restrictive code will find it difficult to keep up with the strong sequencing and pacing rules that underline practices in a VP, thus disadvantaging them further. On the other hand, practices in the IP, such as masked and diffused hierarchical rules, weak sequencing and pacing rules and multiple criterial rules are more reflective of the socialisation practices of middle class families (Sadovnik, 1991).

The framing rules (hierarchical, sequencing, criterial rules) that form the inner logic of pedagogic practice, as well as the modalities (visible and invisible pedagogic practices) to which they give rise, are useful observational tools to determine how pedagogy relates to learner achievement levels or differential educational outcomes. Another theoretical model of analysis, crucial to understanding learner achievement levels, more importantly differential educational outcomes and how to bring about the possibilities of change is Bernstein’s highly sophisticated construct, the pedagogic device, to which I now turn.

The pedagogic device, for Bernstein (1996:52), “acts as a symbolic regulator of consciousness; the question is, whose regulator, what consciousness and for whom?” He further adds that through exposing the ‘intrinsic grammar’ of the device one can expose the ‘hidden voice’ of the pedagogic discourse (*ibid*). It is through the workings of the pedagogic

device that esoteric and sacred knowledge is converted into pedagogic communication. Bernstein (1996) further adds that such “pedagogic communication acts selectively on the meaning potential or discourse that is available to be pedagogized; that is, knowledge that is to be transmitted and acquired” (Bernstein, 1996:41-52). So what is the pedagogic device, what are its features, and how can it be used within the realm of this thesis?

Where classification and framing and the modalities to which they give rise, deal with the way in which knowledge is ‘relayed’, the theories on the pedagogic device explain the ‘relay’ itself (Bernstein, 1996). Drawing on Bernstein (1996:41-52), the pedagogic device is constituted of three internal rules which regulate pedagogic communication, that is distributive rules, recontextualising rules and evaluative rules. The distributive rules regulate relationships between power, social groups, forms of consciousness and practice. This is done through distributing different forms of knowledge (esoteric vs mundane knowledge). Distributive rules “create a specialised field of production of discourse, with specialized rules of access and specialized power controls” (Bernstein, 1996:45). The producer of knowledge, within this field of production, is the state. Recontextualising rules regulate the formation of specific pedagogic discourse (instructional discourse embedded in the regulative discourse). Teachers can be viewed as the main ‘recontextualizers or the reproducers’ within the recontextualising field. Here knowledge from the distributive field is transformed from its original state into pedagogic discourse. Evaluative rules in turn constitute any pedagogic practice (transmission and acquisition). Here the learners are the receivers or acquirers of the recontextualised knowledge regulated by the recontextualising field. A later discussion shows the hierarchical relationship between the rules that constitute the pedagogic device. Bernstein asserts that these rules are not only hierarchically related but there are also power relations between them. The following table (Table 6) shows the interrelationship between the rules (adapted from Maton & Muller, 2006) within education.



**Table 6: Summary of the interrelationship between the rules that constitute the Pedagogic Device**

Field of practice	Production	Recontextualisation	Reproduction
Forms of regulation	Distributive	Recontextualising rules	Evaluative rules
Kinds of symbolic structure	Knowledge structure	Curriculum	Pedagogy and evaluation
Principal types	Hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures	Collection and integrated codes	Visible and Invisible Pedagogy and other modalities
Typical Sites	Research papers, conferences, laboratories	Curriculum policy Textbooks Learning aids	Classroom and examinations
Main agents within the pedagogic field	The State-producers	Teachers-reproducers and transmitters	Learners-acquirers

In the above summary, the fields of production, recontextualising and reproduction together represent an ‘arena of struggle’ in which groups attempt to appropriate and control the pedagogic device. To control the device is to have access to the ‘symbolic ruler of consciousness’ (Bernstein, 1996:206). According to Munns and Mcfadden (2007), the pedagogic device regulates the distribution of knowledge by either enhancing or constraining classroom communication, which the device makes possible. For Morais and Neves (2001:225-226), the recontextualising principle in education is active in a number of ways: in the Official Recontextualising Field (ORF) where the state operates at a generative level to regulate official pedagogic discourse (the official curriculum), which then undergoes further recontextualising in the Pedagogic Recontextualising Field (PRF) - the interpretation and implementation of the official curriculum by teachers in the classroom. It is then further recontextualised when it is ‘learnt’ by the learner. For the learner to have access to the

pedagogic discourse they have to have access to both the recognition and realization rules (see Figure 1). They can then become successful participants within a pedagogic or interactional practice. In operational terms then, the pedagogic device is a useful theoretical tool which is helpful in understanding how learners, regardless of their social class backgrounds, would be able to acquire the educational code (the key to unlocking the school code) that could lead to academic gains. In other words, the central question this thesis will attempt to explore is, how learners regardless of their social backgrounds, regardless of their ‘orientations to meaning’, get to appropriate the pedagogic device, this ‘symbolic ruler of consciousness’, that would unlock the pedagogic code required for success in schools? Bernstein (1996) alludes to the fact that the one purpose of any specific pedagogic practice, is to transmit criteria, that is, the evaluation condenses the meaning of the whole pedagogic device. Here Bernstein is pointing to the fact that change can happen at the level of evaluation. Shalem and Slonimsky (2011), argue that:

out of Bernstein’s work on pedagogic discourse a strong claim emerges that by making the evaluation criteria explicit, teachers give students the possibility of learning the legitimate text and more specifically how to give correct answers in future (Shalem & Slonimsky, 2011:756).

Their focus is on what they call ‘evaluative feedback’, that is ‘how to do it’ and ‘why we do it’. For them this is potentially the prime activity that could narrow the gap between academic knowledge [school knowledge] and the acquirer [learner] (Shalem & Slonimsky, 2011). This coincides with Maton’s (2009) argument “that for a student to learn the mindful abstractions of meaning from one context and its application within another context [acquire both the recognition and realization rule], they need to have access to principles for recontextualising knowledge, so that meaning can overcome the gravity well of specific contexts”. Shalem and Slominsky (2011) and Maton’s (2009) view, relating to the evaluative rule, dovetails with Morais and Neves’s (2001:215) argument that “teachers must use their autonomy to make evaluation criteria explicit”. They suggest a “mixed pedagogy”, namely a mixture of Visible and Invisible Pedagogy; pointing to weak pacing relations, whilst keeping most of the other classification and framing variables strong, especially evaluation. Hoadley (2005) and Reeves and Muller (2005) found similar research results in South Africa. Hugo and Wedekind (2013) however warn that:

It becomes clear that what counts is not defining what an optimal pedagogy for the working class is, but developing teachers who are able to teach flexibly across the range depending on what the situation and subject matter demand. This takes enormous expertise.

They add that:

Identification of an optimal pedagogy for the working class student in one subject, one grade or one context cannot be optimally applied to other contexts. ...Weak pacing might be optimal for working class children at Grade 8 level in Science in more developed contexts; applying this insight as a rule for working class children in general is fatal (Hugo & Wedekind, 2013:149).

Morais and Neves (2001), Maton (2009), Shalem and Slominsky (2011), Hugo and Wedekind (2013), amongst others, point to ways in which marginalised learners could gain access to the school code. Their views are useful in terms of thinking about how pedagogy could bring about the possibilities for change.

Another area that ought to be pursued, and that lends itself to ongoing debate, is whether or not to marry school knowledge/specialised knowledge and everyday/lifeworld knowledge in the pursuit of “how best to meet the educational needs of students who experience social and educational disadvantage” (Wilson & Williams, 2010:418). There remains deep skepticism about mixing two knowledge forms since Bernstein is of the view that everyday knowledge (horizontal discourse) and school knowledge (vertical discourse) are incompatible and should be kept apart, mainly because as Bernstein based his argument on the fact that these are two different knowledge structures and are thus incompatible (Bernstein, 1996).

For Bernstein (1996:171), “a vertical discourse takes the form of a coherent, explicit, systematically principled structure, hierarchically organized, or it takes the form of a series of specialized languages with specialized modes of interrogation and specialized criteria for the production of text”. The horizontal discourse for Bernstein can be defined as: “a form of knowledge usually typified as everyday, oral or common-sense knowledge ...local, segmental, context-dependent, tacit, multi-layered, often contradictory across contexts but not within contexts” (Bernstein, 1996:170).

Bernstein (1996) adds that a further difference between the two discourses can be found in its acquisition. The acquisition of the horizontal discourse, because it is segmentally structured, is equally segmented and context specific. The vertical discourse acquisition takes place via the recontextualisation principle and not segmentation as in the horizontal discourse (Bernstein, 1996). According to Bernstein (1996:172) these are two “intrinsically different discourses” which are best kept apart. Furthermore, Bernstein (1995:18) warns that “simply extracting an activity from a horizontal discourse and transferring it to a vertical discourse is no guarantee by any means that the vertical discourse acquisition will replace a previous horizontal discourse acquisition”. Moss (2001) supports Bernstein’s views on keeping the knowledge structures apart. Moss (2001:148) argues that “home into school will not go”. She found that bringing in out-of-school competencies and knowledge of media texts into the classroom led to student resistance. This is supported by Cooper and Dunn (1998) who found in their study that incorporating segments of horizontal discourse into the vertical discourse may lead to such contents being defined as non-pedagogic.

Dowling (1998) similarly distinguishes between public domain knowledge (with reference to everyday knowledge) and esoteric knowledge (with reference to school knowledge) in his analysis of school mathematics textbooks. In addition, Dowling found an uneven distribution of the types of knowledge, such as high ability learners were exposed to texts that allowed access to the esoteric domain- generalized principles are foregrounded, whereas lower ability learners were subjected to texts where the mathematics knowledge was obscured by public domain exemplars and procedural activities (cited in Hoadley, 2005:64). In these cases, according to Muller and Taylor (2000:68), “the lower ability student, paradoxically, is left free to be a local individual but a failed mathematics learner”.

Hugo and Wedekind (2013) are of the view that in the case of South Africa in particular

It is a bridge too far to expect teachers at this level to mesh specialised knowledge forms with everyday life experiences. Basic mastery of the first is needed; otherwise teachers fall into everyday life discussions that are poorly related to knowledge forms (Hugo & Wedekind, 2013:142).

According to these authors, what is required in order to mesh these knowledge forms is well educated teachers “who can teach in a rich and deep way”, a point that Zipin (2013) in response to Hugo and Wedekind (2013:142) views as “simplistic and deficit-ridden,”

disregarding “what everyday knowledge comprises and offers” (Zipin, 2013: 163). Zipin (2013) argue that: “funds of knowledge approaches have a track record of recontextualising deep life-world themes- giving them articulate and meaningful connections to disciplinary knowledge domains- in classroom teaching- and-learning” (ibid).

Tytler (2007), Williams and Wilson (2010) and Zipin (2103), amongst others, support the view of mixing the two knowledge forms. Tytler (2007) advocates that, in order to make science learning more meaningful, one should draw on children’s out of school consumption of sport, popular culture and media, and student interest, concern and perspectives. Williams and Wilson (2010:428) note that “the vertical discourse itself may be more permeable to invasion than Bernstein and others are propogating, since in ‘new times’ the structure of knowledge may well be changing”. They however found that in order to marry the two knowledge structures, one needs to “attempt to reconcile...intellectual rigor and relevance”, and at the same time avoid a ‘dumbing down’ approach, and requires “teachers who can offer students high quality learning experiences” (2010:420). Zipin (2013:162) is of the view that “rich cultural resources in the lives of both learners and teachers are what is un(der)valued in the prime stress on ‘specialised’ knowledge”. It might be useful to understand the “possibilities of interplay between strong everyday and specialized knowledge” (Zipin, 2013:165), but take it even further “we need to get into the micro fibres of conceptual integration between everyday and specialized knowledge while understanding the inner workings of conceptual integration (Hugo & Wedekind, 2013), adding to our thinking about how pedagogy could bring about change.

Bernstein’s work was criticised by Dowling (1999) and others for using ‘a very high level theoretical object’, noting that one needs to “descend through multiple layers of theory before we get something that we might validly refer to as empirical text” (Dowling, 1999:41). Here Dowling was referring to Bernstein’s evolving internal language of description, as not having any empirical bases or not able of being operationalised. According to Bernstein (2000) “theoretical models should be able to provide the principles which will identify that something [empirical phenomenon] as falling within the specification of the model and identifying what does not fall” (Bernstein, 2000:125). Most of Bernstein’s theories (internal language of description) have been deployed by his students (Pedro, 1981; Domingos, 1989; Morais et al., 1992; Singh, 2001), most of them working in underdeveloped countries, and offering an empirical foundation for Bernstein’s work. What is more important when

working with such highly sophisticated theories, is to understand “how and where the theory changes” (Hoadley, 2005:87). To understand the theory-data relation, Bernstein introduced the notion of the ‘discursive gap’ (Bernstein, 2000). Moore and Muller (2002) define the ‘discursive gap’ as lying between the internal and external language of description.

According to them:

The external language must not only be able to describe what is outside the theory in terms relevant to the theory, but also somehow be capable of recognising what is *beyond* the theory. It must submit to an external ontological imperative that allows that which is outside to ‘announce itself’ (Moore & Muller, 2002:634).

In other words, “Data, via the external language, can thus create a surplus that requires an extension of the theory to make sense of it, or do justice to it” (ibid), or as Bernstein (2000:91) puts it, “... a theory is only as good as the principles of description to which it gives rise”.

### 3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the theoretical framework used to inform this study, in particular, the theories which helped in framing the research problem, research questions and related methodological aspects of this study. Using Bourdieu and Bernstein in my study allows for a more holistic view of the phenomena under study. Both these theorists have shown an acute interest in the ways in which social inequalities are perpetuated through the practices of schooling and in understanding the complexities and multiple ways to view differentiated educational outcomes. In this thesis, I use both Bourdieu and Bernstein’s constructs methodologically, as well as conceptually.

On the one hand, I used Bourdieu methodologically to frame the way I designed the questionnaires and interview schedules (see Chapter 4) and then, conceptually, to make sense of the role of context in learner performance (see Chapter 5). In Chapter 5, I worked largely with the concepts or theories of Bourdieu to provide an understanding of how context actually influences people’s dispositions, the ways in which ‘cultural capital’ is distributed amongst different schools, and the influence it has on the way in which certain dispositions have been embodied and interiorised by the actors in these schools, given their exteriorisation. Furthermore, I looked at ways in which these actors construct their agency within these schools and how they make sense of their external reality.

On the other hand, I used Bernstein's constructs methodologically in Chapter 4, where I outline how I used the observation schedule that was first constructed by Morais and Neves (2003) and elaborated on by Hoadley (2005), based on Bernstein's work, "to characterise teachers' pedagogic practices, in the instructional and regulative contexts, through which teachers' practices can be characterised in reference to a four degree scale of classification and framing" (Morais & Neves, 2003:3). I provide detailed accounts of how the classroom observation schedules were coded and used as an analytical tool to observe language (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) lessons taught in the targeted Grades: 1, 4 and 7 classrooms. Then in Chapter 6, I use these codes to show my own observations in these classrooms to describe how pedagogy in each of these selected schools and across the three selected grades is actually delivered and experienced by both teachers and learners within these classrooms. The next chapter, Chapter 4, is devoted to the methodological trajectory of this study: an articulation of the research design employed, in-depth data collection procedures, the methods of analysis and ethical procedures followed.



## CHAPTER 4

### 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I engaged with the complex theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein, which forms the theoretical foundation for understanding the phenomenon this study seeks to investigate, namely the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa. This chapter, Chapter 4, is devoted to the methodological trajectory of this study, offering an articulation of the research design employed, in-depth data collection procedures undertaken, the methods of analysis and ethical procedures followed.

The aim throughout this chapter is to follow what Yin (2009) refers to as a ‘chain of evidence’. Yin (2009:122) likens the principle of ‘maintaining a chain of evidence’ to the notion employed in a forensic investigation noting that “the methodological process should be tight enough that evidence presented in “court” – the case study report- is assuredly the same evidence that was collected at the scene of the “crime” during the data collection process”.

Bearing this in mind, I offer detailed accounts of all methodological considerations pertaining to my study. This chapter is presented in three sections. In the first section, I make a case for employing a qualitative multiple case study research design and for situating this study within a qualitative interpretivist research paradigm. Section two comprises of detailed accounts of the in-depth data collection procedures followed in this study. The methodological trajectory of the study, which I capture in Figure 2, describes how the empirical research was undertaken, moving from the planning, design and preparation phase through to the data collection phase and then the analytical phase of the research. In the third section of this chapter, I reflect on the challenges and limitations of conducting empirical research.

The following then, is a discussion on the research design, indicating why multiple case studies both exploratory and explanatory in nature were best suited to this type of research.



## 4.2 The Research Design: Making a case for a qualitative multiple case study design

As mentioned, this thesis is positioned within a qualitative research paradigm, underpinned by an interpretivist's approach. Shelman and Webb (1988:7) note that "interpretivist research implies a direct concern with experience as it is 'lived' or 'felt' or 'undergone'". For Henning (2004:21), "an interpretivist's paradigm does not concern itself with the search for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather seeks to produce descriptive analysis that emphasises deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena". The purpose of this study was to gain a deep understanding of a complex educational phenomenon and ultimately aimed to understand the meanings that learners, teachers and principals assigned to their experiences of this phenomenon. My role as researcher, within this 'interpretivist metatheoretical paradigm', was not to control the research process but to be a 'co-creator of meaning' (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:21).

The epistemological question that I sought to answer in this section was: Why use a qualitative multiple case study design to study this phenomenon? In other words, did this study warrant the use of this research design? Henning (2004:42) found that "case studies require multiple methods in order to capture the case in some depth". They add that if there is a "bounded system with a clear unit of analysis, then the study will warrant a case design type". The latter point is reiterated by both Merriam (2009) and Stark (2005), who place emphasis on having a clear unit of analysis or as expanded on by Merriam (2009:41), "the unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, characterises a case study". Creswell offers a detailed description of what case study research is as he so eloquently explains:

case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (eg., observations, interviews, audio visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case –based themes (Creswell, 2007: 43, emphasis in the original).

In my study, the 'bounded systems' (multiple cases) are Grade 1 learners in relation to their teachers and principals, Grade 4 learners in relation to their teachers and principals, and Grade 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals. In order to capture these multiple cases in depth, I required multiple methods (questionnaires, direct classroom observations,

interviews, documents and reports). Furthermore, I used a qualitative multiple case study design, in order to explore and explain “a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context” (Yin, 2009:73). For this study, the ‘contemporary phenomenon’ under investigation is the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa, and the real life context is the community of the school, the learners’ homes in terms of their home background and the schools and classrooms, which housed these learners. Each of these contexts required a particular data collection source or a combination of sources. Data on the school community were gathered from individual semi-structured interviews with teachers (Grade 1, 4 and 7 class teachers) and principals of the three schools. The data on the school community and learners’ home backgrounds were collected by conducting questionnaires with Grade 1, 4 and 7 learners at the respective schools, as well as conducting interviews with principals, teachers and learners at the selected schools. The data on the school and classroom context were collected mainly through interviews and direct classroom observations.

Another way to validate the use of a qualitative multiple case study design is to determine whether this study ‘fits’ the design features of qualitative case studies. Merriam (2009) points to the fact that qualitative case studies can be characterized as being particularistic (focusing on a particular phenomenon), descriptive (the end product is richly described using thick descriptions) and heuristic (illuminating the readers understanding of the phenomenon under study) (2009:44). As noted, this study set out to explore and explain a complex educational phenomenon (making it particularistic), the end product, this thesis, which doubled as the case study report, makes use of thick descriptions, offering detailed narrative accounts to understand the phenomenon (making it descriptive). My intention with this study is not to generalise the findings but to extend the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study (making it heuristic).

Now that it is clear why this study warranted the use of the aforementioned research design, the following is a discussion of the strengths and limitations attached to conducting research using this design.

#### **4.2.1 Strengths of Multiple Case Studies**

Multiple case studies, which “are commonly known as collective case studies; cross-case; multi-case or multisite studies; or comparative case studies” (Merriam, 2009:49), have

important strengths. Yin (2009:54) notes that with “multiple cases the analytical benefits are substantial”. He adds that “evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as more robust”. This stance is shared by Merriam (2009:49) who contends that “the more cases included in a study ...the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be”. Miles and Huberman (1994) concur with both Yin (2009) and Merriam (2009), stating that conducting multiple cases “can strengthen the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings” (Miles and Huberman, 1994:29).

#### **4.2.2 Limitations of Multiple Case Studies**

In this section, I highlight three major concerns relating to conducting multiple case studies and elaborate on how I tried, in the research process, to overcome these concerns. The three concerns related to conducting case study research and which also apply to conducting multiple case studies are: firstly, the lack of rigor (limitation related to validity and reliability of the research), secondly, the issue of generalisation and thirdly, challenges relating to managing case study data.

Yin (2009:14), says that the greatest concern associated with using a case study design is ‘the lack of rigour’. Yin (2009) points out that “too many times the case study investigator has been too sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures, or has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the directory of findings or conclusions” (Yin, 2009:14). The lack of rigour is therefore mainly due to the ‘subjectivity of the researcher’ or, as Yin puts it ‘researcher bias’ (ibid). In order to overcome this limitation I adopted various ‘tactics’ to ensure the credibility of this study. Yin (2009:41) suggests one way to overcome the need for greater attentiveness is for the investigator to “work hard, to report all evidence fairly”. In addition, Kidder and Judd (1986) contend that to ensure rigour is to ensure the validity and reliability (credibility) within the research process. In this study, I ensured construct validity through the process of triangulation. Krathwohl (1998) found that ‘triangulation’ is one of the most common ways to ensure the validity in qualitative research. He defines triangulation “as a process of using more than one source of information, confirming data from different sources, confirming observations from different observers and confirming information from different data collection methods” (Krathwohl, 1998:276). I triangulated by using both data and method triangulation (Krathwohl, 1998). I adopted data triangulation, by confirming data from different sources (learners, teachers, principals and other key participants) and method

triangulation, by using different ways to collect the data (questionnaires, interviews, direct observations and documentary sources). The following table (Table 7) illustrates how triangulation was applied in this research, with regards to each of the research questions.

**Table 7: Application of triangulation in relation to the research questions**





Research Questions	Source of Data Collection	Data Collection Method
What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling?	Principals in each of the three selected schools Teachers in each of the three selected schools across the three phases of schooling. Learners in Grades 1,4 and 7 in the three selected schools Key informants Documentary sources	Questionnaires Semi-structured formal interviews Informal interviews Direct Observations Documentary Analysis
In which ways are learner achievement levels informed by the curriculum?	Literature Review Principals Teachers	Questionnaires Semi-structured Interviews Documentary Analysis
What is the nature of pedagogic practices and how do these account for learner achievement levels?	Teachers in Grades 1, 4 and 7 in the three selected schools Learners in Grades 1, 4 and 7 in the three selected schools	Questionnaires Semi-structured Interviews Direct Observations Documentary Analysis
How does the role of the teacher, in the pedagogic relationship, influence learner achievement levels, and how are such influences experienced in practice by learners?	Teachers in Grades 1, 4 and 7 in the three selected schools Learners in Grades 1, 4 and 7 in the three selected schools	Semi-structured Interviews Direct Observations Documentary Analysis
How does the learner's racial, class and gender identity relate to his/her achievement levels?	Theoretical framework Learners in Grades 1,4 and 7 in the three selected schools	Theories of Bernstein and Bourdieu Questionnaires Learner semi-structured group interviews Learner semi-structured Individual interviews

Furthermore, besides triangulating, another tactic to ensure rigor was to report on every aspect of the research process including the pilot phase of my research. Full reports on pilot

studies are not often found in research literature and even less in research using qualitative research methods (Prescott & Soeken, 1989; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002; Kim, 2010). Kim (2010) affirms that by offering a full report on the pilot phase of the research increases its credibility. Unique to this thesis is a full report on the pilot phase of my research (see Appendix G), which I believe would benefit other novice researchers doing research in similar settings.

In addition, Yin (2009) identified two ways of ensuring rigour/reliability in case study research, namely by using a case study protocol and by developing a case study data base. I designed a case study protocol, adapted from the template provided by Brereton, Kitchenham, Budgen and Li (2008:7-8), in the design and preparation phase of my research. Brereton et al (2008) constructed this generalised template based on the basic case study methodologies described by Eisenhardt (1989), Stark (1995) and Yin (2003). The benefits of having a case study protocol for my study were threefold: it forced me to remain focused throughout the process of conducting research so as not to lose sight of the overall research goals. At the same time, it forced me to plan and focus on the procedures that I would adopt when conducting empirical research, which is especially useful when conducting research at more than one research site, as in the case of my study. Lastly, having a case study protocol forced me to think more clearly about how the data will be 'managed, interpreted or analysed', as well as how to acknowledge and overcome my limitations as a novice researcher. Below, in Table 8, is a skeleton case study protocol based on the work of Yin (2009: 79-86). The full case study protocol can be found in the Appendices (see Appendix H) at the end of this thesis.

**Table 8: Skeleton case study protocol**

<b>Overview of the research</b> 	<b>Field Procedures</b> 	<b>Case study Questions</b> 	<b>Guide for writing the case study report</b> 
Learner achievement levels and the factors that contribute to it	Approach possible research sites for pilot study and main study based on criteria for case selection	Found in Appendix F-principal, teacher and learner interview schedules	Keep research journal for each school
Literature search to identify previous research on the topic	Apply for permission from WCED	Complete pilot study and write a complete pilot study report. Refine data collection procedures based on the report.	Receive training in SPSS –for quantitative data and ATLAS.ti–for qualitative data
Research relevant documents and reports of the DoE	Clarify case study procedures and roles especially the role of translator	Test recording devices Identify possible rooms for conducting interviews	Transcribe interview data do preliminary analysis–tabularise data
Interpretivists meta-theoretical Lens.	Contact Principals and make arrangements for conducting questionnaires and signing of consent forms	Share interview and observation dates with translator	Transcribe lesson observations then complete data collation and analysis
Draw on theories: Bernstein and Bourdieu	Prepare a data collection plan and share it with the three selected schools <i>(found in Appendix G- Case study protocol)</i>	Prepare for interviews with children using the technical techniques and communication strategies suggested by Cameron (2005) and Miller (2006).	Consult the university thesis guide to write up the thesis Also consult work of Yin(2009) for writing up case study reports and Merriam (2009) for guide to write up qualitative case study reports

In brief, to ensure rigour I triangulated, reported fully on all phases of the research, including the pilot study phase and made use of a case study protocol.

The second major concern or limitation related to case study research is that the findings cannot be scientifically generalised (Yin, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Yin (2009) argues that

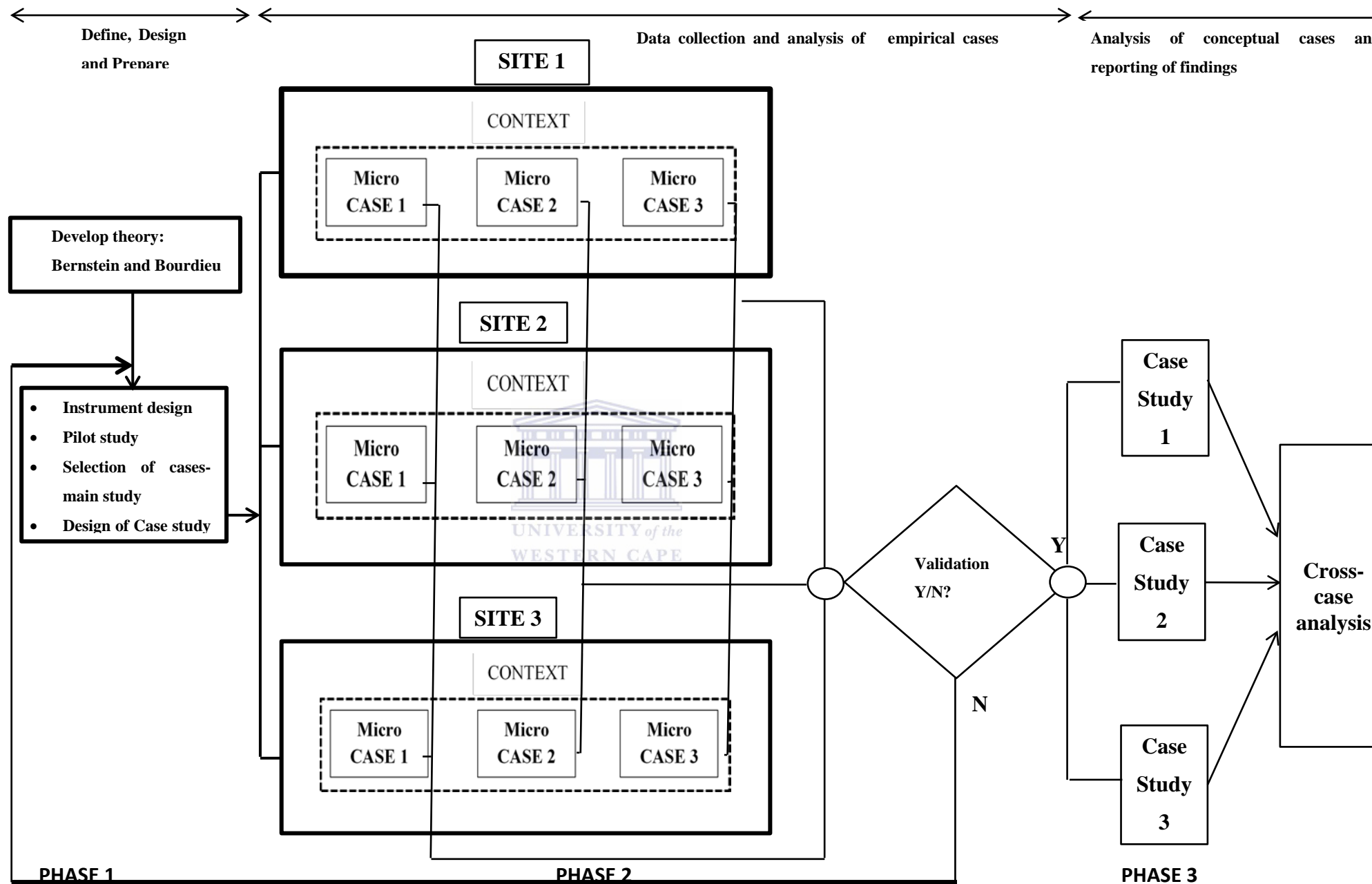
“generalisation of case study findings is limited to the case itself or types of cases” Merriam (2009:51) however claims that “much can be learned from a particular case...it is the reader, not the researcher, who determines what can apply to his or her context”. Through ‘thick descriptions’, which provide rich and detailed descriptions of data in context (or multiple context as in my research) the reader is allowed to judge whether the findings and analysis can be generalised (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Finally, a third concern or limitation of case study design, which is especially applicable to conducting multiple case studies, is the inability of the researcher to manage large amounts of data produced by doing case study research (Merriam, 2009). Bogdon and Biklen (2007) found that “doing research at more than one site can be confusing. There are too many names to remember, too much diverse data to manage” (2007:70). In this regard I found the Case Study Protocol extremely useful, especially because it allowed me to plan the research at each site and also plan the analytical strategies which I would employ, thus making the empirical research more manageable.

Now that I have discussed the research design and illuminated the strengths and weaknesses of the design, I turn my attention to the methodological trajectory of my study. I describe how the empirical research was undertaken moving from the design, preparation and planning phases through to the data collection phase and the analytical phase of the research.

#### **4.3 The methodological trajectory of the study: The phases in conducting empirical research**

This section provides a detailed account of the methodological trajectory of this study which is illustrated in Figure 2. The purpose of this diagram is to graphically present the procedures followed in conducting this empirical research. I start with Phase 1: The planning, design and preparation phase. Thereafter I move to Phase 2: The production of the data- data collection and strategies used. I then end this section with Phase 3: The analytical methods employed in this research.



**Figure 2: THE METHODOLOGICAL TRAJECTORY OF THE STUDY**



### **4.3.1 PHASE 1 -The design, planning and preparation phase**

This section, the design, planning and preparation phase of my empirical research, included familiarising myself with the theories which framed the study, followed by the design of the data collection instruments. I then conducted a pilot study which in turn influenced how I planned, prepared for and conducted the main study (see Figure 2). Shultz (1988) asserts that:

any research problem may be approached from more than one theoretical perspective....The choice of a theoretical model/conceptual framework ... will guide the research process in terms of the identification of relevant concepts/constructs, definitions of a research design, choice of a sample and sampling procedures, data collection strategies ...data analysis techniques, and interpretation of findings (Shultz, 1988:34).

I therefore started by engaging with particular theoretical frameworks. Constructs of Bernstein and Bourdieu (see Chapter 3) underpinned and framed all aspect of this study. They especially influenced the design choices I made throughout the empirical research process; influencing the way I designed the data collection instruments. As Hoadley (2005:70) notes, “theory...is indispensable, as it is the models, which theory generates, that constitute data and how the data should be read”.

The pilot study, as mentioned, formed part of Phase 1 (refer to Figure 2) of the empirical research. I now offer a summarised version of the pilot study, where I only look at which instruments were tested and engaged with, what changed and what my preliminary findings and challenges were. The full pilot study report (a unique contribution of this study) is included in the Appendices (see Appendix G). I reserved a place for it in this thesis, not only to increase the validity of the study, but also as a ‘learning tool’ so that other novice qualitative researchers, using similar instruments, in similar settings, and working with children in conducting research, could learn from my experiences.

#### **4.3.1.1 The pilot study (a summarised version)**

I start this section by providing a brief description of the site I selected to conduct the pilot study. As mentioned in my report, the selection of the school where I conducted the pilot study was crucial, in that it had to more or less mirror one of the sites I would be researching in the main study. The eligibility of schools for the main study was based on the following

criteria: socio-economic differentials, resourced and under-resourced schools, and schools comprising different racial compositions.

School X, a former House of Representatives (HOR) or former ‘coloured’ school was selected because it more or less mirrored one of the sites I researched in the main study. The report (refer to Appendix G) provided detailed accounts of how I gained access to the site, following the criteria suggested by Maginn (2007). School X is more than 100 years old and children are still housed in the original prefabricated buildings, which are small with limited ventilation. At the time of the research there were 1273 learners, +/- 1000 were ‘coloured’ and 273 were ‘black’ learners. The school had a staff establishment of 34 permanent staff members; 32 ‘coloured’, one ‘black’ and one ‘white’ teacher. The school management team comprised of the principal, two deputy principals and 4 heads of department. There were also four non-academic staff members and two administrative officials. This school is inundated yearly with learners wanting to access the school, placing huge strain on the already limited space and resources available to the school. Learners, who pay R460,00 p.a. in school fees, come from varying socio-economic backgrounds. Besides the 34 classrooms, the school also has one computer room, a staff room and playground.

Table 9 below, illustrates what was piloted (data collection instruments) and with whom (the respondents that participated in this stage of my research).

**Table 9: Pilot Study- Data collection methods and sources**

Qualitative instrument	Data Source	Number of respondents
Questionnaires	Grade 1 Class teacher, Grade 4 Class teacher; Grade 7 English and Mathematics teachers.	4
	Grades: 1 (36), 4 (40) and 7 (42) learners	118
Classroom Observations	Grade 1 classroom	Numeracy and literacy lesson
	Grade 7 classroom	Language lesson
Interviews	Principal	1
	Teachers	3
	Learners	Grade 1(2);Grade 4 (4); Grade 7(5)

In the following section, I briefly discuss each piloted instrument, as mentioned in Table 9, illustrating what was piloted, what changed in terms of design and method, and what the findings were of this stage of the research.

### **A. The questionnaires piloted**

**What was piloted?** I piloted a teacher questionnaire and two different learner questionnaires. The purpose of the teacher questionnaire was to profile the teachers (qualifications and experience) and provide me with an understanding of the teachers' perceptions around issues relating to learner achievement levels. With regards to the learner questionnaires, I piloted two different questionnaires: one questionnaire for Grade 1 and 4, was designed mainly to determine their socio-economic status (home background), and one questionnaire for Grade 7, which had two sections: Section 1 covered the home context and Section 2 addressed questions relating to their achievement levels. As illustrated in Table 5, 5 teachers completed the teacher questionnaire and 118 learners across the three grades completed the learner questionnaires.

**What changed?** The teacher questionnaire remained unchanged. I however found that teachers because of the already heavy workload needed to sit with the questionnaire in order to increase the quality of their responses. To ensure a 100% turn-in rate, I negotiated submission dates with teachers (over a three-day period), which proved to be successful. The Grade 1 questionnaire had to change. I used visuals (pictures to illustrate what was required) and words to describe the visuals instead of just words. This minor technical change saved me a lot of time in explaining what was required. I also changed the Grade 4 questionnaire to resemble the Grade 7 questionnaire. In this way, I could compare the Grade 4 and 7 responses of the learners, especially with regards to their scholastic performance and areas they were struggling in.

**What I found?** Based on the learner responses, I could determine what resources they had access to in their homes, what subjects they struggled with in school and why they were struggling. What was clear was that learners came from varying socio-economic backgrounds. From the 118 responses, 18% could be considered poor, 55% average and 27% wealthy in terms of what they had access to in their homes. I also

discovered that, of the 82 Grade 4 and 7 respondents, 72% struggled with mathematics. The majority of these learners reported that they struggled with mathematics because they either did not like the subject or they found it to be complicated or difficult. From the teacher questionnaires teachers stated that they felt more confident to teach language than mathematics.

## **B. Classroom Observation Schedule piloted**

**What was piloted?** I piloted a classroom observation schedule (COBS) first used by Hoadley (2005) based on an instrument designed by Morais and Neves (2003) to characterise teachers' pedagogic practices using the constructs of classification and framing. I engaged with the COBS in two classes: in the Grade 1 class when observing literacy and numeracy lessons and the Grade 7 language class.

**What changed?** The instrument remained unchanged. However, careful thought had to go into working with the COBS. The piloting of the COBS, based on the 19 indicators as illustrated in Appendix E1, provided me with the opportunity to not only receive training in working with the instrument, but also to find ways to avoid forcing empirical evidence to fit the theoretical constructs being observed. Therefore the design remained the same but the method changed. I used the COBS summary sheet (see Appendix E2) alongside the COBS when observing. This served a dual purpose in that I could code the lesson and reflect on the lesson simultaneously. All lessons were audio recorded and then re-coded. In this way, I could compare my initial thoughts whilst observing with the transcribed and coded audio-recorded lessons (after the observation sessions) in order to verify the authenticity of my observations. One lesson for each teacher was transcribed and coded as evident from the pilot study report (see Appendix G).

**What I found?** The actual reflections and coding of the Grade 1 numeracy lesson and Grade 7 language lesson can be found in the Pilot Study Report. What is however clear is that pedagogical practices in terms of the 'what' (content being relayed) and the 'how' (how the content is relayed) differs across the grades observed. The pilot study allowed for practice in working with the COBS and the COBS summary sheet. A deeper analysis of what I found can be viewed in the Pilot Study Report in Appendix G. What was clear from my experiences in working with this instrument was that I needed to first immerse myself in the work of Bernstein and the debates

surrounding his constructs on pedagogy, in order to fully understand what I was observing.

### **C. The Interview schedules piloted**

**What was piloted?** Three separate interview schedules were designed and piloted with three different sources. As indicated in Table 5, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the principal, 3 teachers and 11 learners. The principal and teacher interviews were individual interviews focusing mainly on the school's performance in the Annual National Assessment tests and systemic test, the principal and teachers perceptions on these tests, and strategies they were employing to improve these results, amongst other issues related to learner achievement levels. I conducted individual interviews with the Grade 1 and 4 learners and a group interview with the Grade 7 learners.

**What changed?** The flexibility allowed when conducting semi-structured interviews meant that there was no need to modify or change the interview schedules. I used these interview sessions to clarify or expand on the output from questionnaires and things I observed during direct classroom observations. Sequencing the data collection process was therefore crucial, hence the importance of a good Case Study Protocol.

**What I found?** It appears from the principal and teachers' responses that learner achievement levels in Grades 1, 2 and 3 appear acceptable however problems exist in Grade 4 and worsens from that point on. The principal and teacher respondents confirm that the mathematics and language results are below average. They attribute poor results to a number of reasons: The transition from Grade 3 to 4; misalignment between language spoken in the home and that required for teaching and learning; lack of parental involvement and lack of learner motivation, amongst other aspects. From learners' responses, it appears that they perform well in subjects they liked and poorly in subjects they did not enjoy. They attribute poor results mainly to not liking a subject, it being too difficult, blaming themselves for being too playful, not putting in enough effort, and not concentrating and listening in class. There also seems to be a disjuncture between what teachers perceive as parental involvement and what learners were saying about parents being involved.

#### **D. Limitations, challenges and lessons learnt from conducting the pilot study**

Bowen (2005:218) points out that “a study’s limitations in terms of design, methods and findings”, should be specified. This holds true for all stages of one’s research, which includes the pilot phase of the research. Therefore, this section illuminates the limitations, challenges and lessons learnt mainly from testing the data collection instruments. A more comprehensive discussion on the lessons learnt on all aspects and experiences of the pilot phase of my research can be found in the full Pilot Study Report (refer to Appendix G).

In terms of **design** - Not much changed with regards to the design of the instruments. As mentioned, only the Grade 1 and 4 questionnaires were changed. The Grade 1 questionnaire had to be more user-friendly and tailored to the learners’ level of understanding. I came to learn that Grade 1 learners are used to a print rich environment, hence I used pictures in the questionnaire. Changing the Grade 4 questionnaire to resemble the Grade 7 questionnaire was useful in that I could now get a much broader view of their perceptions on their achievement levels. Both the Grade 1 and 4 instruments, after being changed, were retested. The various lessons learnt from piloting the instruments provided me with the possible pitfalls of conducting empirical research, which informed the way I conducted the main study.

In terms of **method** - A number of lessons were learnt about the ways in which I piloted the instruments. There were practical constraints, as well as time constraints that impacted on the way things were done that in turn impacted on the quality and depth of the responses. I came to learn that the researcher cannot interfere with the daily routine of the school or teachers. My intention was to observe the Grade 4 teacher, as well as the Grade 7 mathematics teacher. The school however had arranged an excursion for the Grade 4’s during the time allotted for my visit, while the Grade 7 teacher felt that she needed time to assess her learners and therefore she could not accommodate me in her classroom. Renegotiating access to these classrooms was virtually impossible because of time constraints.

A further limitation was the sequencing of the data collection procedure. In order to conduct interviews, I had to draw from questionnaire responses, as well as aspects observed in the classroom. This however was not always practically possible for two reasons: firstly, for the same pragmatic reasons I alluded to earlier in the section: Lessons learnt in administering questionnaires, and secondly, some learners failed to number their questionnaires, making it difficult to use their responses in the interviews. Alternatively, I had to rely on teachers to assist in the selection of learners for the interview sessions. This was problematic since the Grade 4 teacher for example sent me her academically strong learners, which meant that their

responses would somewhat skew results. Administering the questionnaires myself and following a numbering system which corresponds with the appropriate class list, could help counteract these practical problems in the main study. Having a well thought-out Case Study Protocol would facilitate this process especially when working with multiple cases.

In addition to the practical and time constraints, there were also ethical dilemmas that I needed to be aware of, especially pertaining to the way interviews are conducted with young children. Denzin (1989) cautions that:

...our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared them with us (Denzin, 1989:83).

Denzin illuminates the importance of listening and protecting those who are willing to share their lived experiences with us. In the case of child-centred interviews this could entail reflecting on aspects related to gaining access to children, being aware of various communication and technical techniques prior to conducting interviews with young children, dealing with silences during interview sessions and avoiding aspects relating to 'suggestibility'. For this I drew on the work of Cameron (2005) who provided useful technical techniques and strategies for conducting child-centred interviews as well as on the work of Birbeck and Drummond (2005:584) on avoiding 'suggestibility' and dealing with silences during interview sessions. A more detailed discussion on these issues can be perused in the Pilot Study Report in Appendix G.

In terms of **findings** - Three concerns I grappled with at the end of conducting the pilot study report, which could impact on the way I conducted the main study were: firstly, whether or not the findings of the pilot study made me want to change the selection criteria and nature of participants, secondly, whether or not the findings in the pilot study made me want to change the nature of the research instruments, and thirdly, did the findings shed any light on the theoretical framework of the study?

On the issue of whether or not the selection criteria and nature of participants needed to change, I found that I had to be more explicit in my selection of learner participants. It was a given that learners would be selected from the following Grades, namely, Grades 1, 4 and 7, the units of analysis. What was not explicit was the nature of the learner participants. Informed by the outcome of the pilot work, and noting that in a Case Study design it is

important to replicate certain processes, the learners who formed part of the main study would be selected on the basis of their academic performance. Four learners out of each grade (an 'above average' learner, an 'average' learner, a 'below average' learner and an 'at risk' learner) formed part of the study. A study of the Learner Profile, which includes the learner's scholastic record, helped in the identification of these learners. The numbering of the questionnaires according to a class list would help to identify which of these learners completed the questionnaire. This would be useful when exploring the responses for interview sessions. The numbering would also help me to focus on those particular learners as they interact with teachers during classroom observations.

The issue of whether or not the findings in the pilot study prompted me to change the nature of the research instruments is best understood by answering my third concern: whether the findings shed any light on the theoretical framework used in this study.

At the start of Phase 1 (see 4.3.1), I alluded to the fact that theory is indispensable to all aspects of conducting empirical research which includes the design of the data collection instruments. Before designing the instruments therefore, it is crucial for researchers to familiarise themselves with the theoretical framework that frames the study and fully immerse themselves in the literature that debate the various constructs in question. I came to learn that it was a good idea to complete the chapter on the theoretical framework, (my chapter 3), before entering the field. Therefore, the constructs of Bourdieu and that of Bernstein provided both the observational tools and analytical lenses whilst conducting research at the research sites. Bourdieu's constructs of cultural capital, structure and agency, and interiority and exteriority of social relations, could be used to understand the role that context plays in influencing learner performance. Bernstein's notion of pedagogic practices, instructional and regulative discourses, and framing and classification values shed light on teachers' pedagogic practices, teacher-learner interaction and how these relate to learner educational outcomes.

In conclusion, the pilot phase of my research was therefore more than just a preliminary testing of my research instruments. The methodological and theoretical lessons learnt from conducting the pilot study made me aware of the multiple complexities encountered when conducting social science research, but more importantly they highlighted crucial aspects that could impact on the development of my main study. I came to learn that doing qualitative research is an 'iterative process' involving stepping back, consulting the pilot study and engaging with plans developed in the case study protocol, in order to inform the main study.



#### 4.3.1.2 Conducting the main study – Sampling procedures

The selection of the cases formed part of Phase 1 and was informed by lessons learnt from the pilot study, as well as issues raised in the case study protocol. Merriam (2009:81) points to the fact that “two levels of sampling are usually necessary in qualitative case studies”. In my study, the first level of sampling was the selection of the sites (the three selected schools), which I refer to as the macro cases or the empirical points where the data was collected. The second level of sampling was the selection of the units of analysis or bounded systems, which I refer to as the micro cases - the conceptual cases used for analysis. Both the macro and micro cases were purposively selected. Patton (2002) asserts that

the logic and power of purposeful sampling, lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry... (Patton, 2002:230, emphasis in the original).

The macro cases, namely the three schools (Flamingo Primary School, Dumont Primary School and Zola Primary School - all pseudonyms) were purposively selected, based on the following criteria: socio-economic differentials, resourced and under-resourced schools and schools comprising of different racial compositions. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:282), “the unit of analysis in case study research is rarely isolated from and unaffected by factors in the environment in which it is embedded”. It is for this reason that I devote the next chapter, Chapter 5, to providing the ‘contextual detail’ of the macro cases in which the units of analysis (the micro cases) are bounded. To clarify, the unit of analysis in this study are the learners, which overlaps with teachers and principals views but the teachers and principals were not the unit of analysis.

As mentioned, the second level of sampling was to purposefully select the micro cases (units of analysis). Merriam (2009:81) warns that one cannot “interview, observe or analyse all the people, activities, or documents within a case”. Therefore, sampling within the selected schools was necessary. One of the lessons learnt from the pilot study was that I needed to be more explicit in my selection of the unit of analysis. To recap, it was a given that the unit of analysis would be learners in Grades 1, 4 and 7, in relation to their teachers and principals, but the nature of the learner participants was unclear. Informed by the pilot study report, four learners out of each grade formed the unit of analysis, namely an ‘above average’ learner, an

‘average’ learner, a ‘below average’ learner and a ‘at risk’ learner. Learner participants were, where possible, therefore purposively selected on the basis of their academic performance. With the help of the class teachers and using learner profiles (files containing a learner’s scholastic record covering all completed grades), I was able to identify four learners in each grade (an above average learner, an average learner, a below average learner and an ‘at risk’ learner), making it 12 learners per site and 36 learners in total. My rationale for selecting these three grades, as stated in Chapter 1 (refer to the Introduction), was because learner achievement demands differ per grade, learners ages differ (they are at different levels in their cognitive development), and because research in these particular grades in South Africa is lacking.

Three principals and 10 teachers (those working directly with the learner participants) also formed part of this study. There were three teacher participants at Site 1- Flamingo Primary School (the Grade 1, 4 and 7 class teachers). The Grade 7 class teacher taught both mathematics and language). There were four teacher participants at Site 2- Dumont Primary School (the Grade 1 and 4 class teacher, the Grade 7 language teacher and the Grade 7 mathematics teacher); there were three teacher participants at Site 3- Zola Primary School (the Grade 1 class teacher, the Grade 4 mathematics teacher and the Grade 7 mathematics teacher). These teachers were observed in their classrooms on three consecutive days, as well as being interviewed. Initially, I wanted to observe both language and mathematics classes but at Sites 1 and 3 this was not possible. The reasons for this, I expand on later when I discuss the limitations and challenges of doing empirical research. The tables below summarises the main features of the macro cases (three schools) and the micro cases (Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals).

**Table 10: Main features of the three selected schools (macro cases)**

Features	Flamingo Primary	Dumont Primary	Zola Primary
School Type	Former HOR school	Former Model C	Former DET school
Quintile rating	4	5	1
Number of learners	1159	612	1275
Number of teachers	27	22	29
School Fees	R550p.a.	R6 400p.a	Non fee paying school
% of learners on the feeding scheme programme	45%	0	100%

A more comprehensive overview of the three schools is given in the Chapter 5.

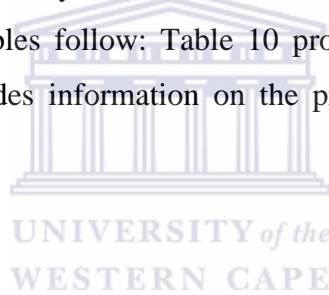
**Table 11: The sample of 36 learners**

Learner Code	School	Achievement Level	Gender	Current Grade	Grade repeated	Class status:
FL101	Flamingo	Above average	Male	1	None	Middle class
FL102	Flamingo	Average	Female	1	None	Working class
FL103	Flamingo	Below average	Male	1	None	Middle class
FL104	Flamingo	At risk	Male	1	None	Working class
FL401	Flamingo	Above average	Female	4	None	Middle class
FL402	Flamingo	Average	Female	4	None	Middle class
FL403	Flamingo	Below average	Female	4	None	Working class
FL404	Flamingo	At risk	Male	4	4 and 6	Working class
FL701	Flamingo	Above average	Female	7	None	Upper-middle class
FL702	Flamingo	Average	Female	7	None	Middle class
FL703	Flamingo	Below average	Male	7	None	Middle class
FL704	Flamingo	At risk	Male	7	Yes(unknown)	Working class
DL101	Dumont	Above average	Female	1	None	Middle class
DL102	Dumont	Average	Female	1	None	Middle class
DL103	Dumont	Below average	Male	1	None	Middle class
DL104	Dumont	At risk	Female	1	None	Middle class
DL401	Dumont	Above average	Male	4	None	Upper-middle class
DL402	Dumont	Average	Male	4	None	Middle class
DL403	Dumont	Below average	Female	4	None	Middle class
DL404	Dumont	At risk	Female	4	None	Working class
DL701	Dumont	Above average	Male	7	None	Upper-middle class
DL702	Dumont	Average	Female	7	None	Upper-middle class
DL703	Dumont	Below average	Female	7	2 and 4	Middle Class
DL704	Dumont	At risk	Male	7	4	Working class
ZL101	Zola	Above average	Female	1	None	Working Class
ZL102	Zola	Average	Female	1	None	Working Class
ZL103	Zola	Below average	Female	1	None	Working Class
ZL104	Zola	At risk	Male	1	None	Working Class

ZL401	Zola	Above average	Female	4	None	Working Class
ZL402	Zola	Average	Male	4	None	Working Class
ZL403	Zola	Below average	Female	4	None	Working Class
ZL404	Zola	At risk	Male	4	None	Working Class
ZL701	Zola	Above average	Female	7	None	Working Class
ZL702	Zola	Average	Female	7	None	Working Class
ZL703	Zola	Below average	Female	7	None	Working Class
ZL704	Zola	At risk	Male	7	4 and 5	Working Class

Information contained in the above table (Table 11) was derived from Learner Profiles, where available, and from interviews conducted with learners. Only Grade 1 Learner Profiles were available at Zola Primary. I therefore drew on interviews with learners to access the information displayed. The class status of learners, dependent on household socio-economic status, was determined from the questionnaires they had completed.

As previously stated, the unit of analysis are Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals. Two tables follow: Table 10 provides information on the teacher participants and Table 11 provides information on the principals who participated in this study.



**Table 12: The sample of 10 teachers**

Teacher code	Gender	School	Grade	Position	Area of Specialization	Subjects currently teaching	Years experience in teaching the Grade or subject	Training
F1CT	Female	Flamingo	1	Class Teacher and HOD	Language	Class teaching	More than 10years	Teacher Training college
F4CT	Female	Flamingo	4	Class Teacher	Physical Ed	Class teaching	Between 5 and 10years	Teacher Training College
F7MLT	Female	Flamingo	7	Class Teacher	Language	Mathematics and language	More than 10 years	Teacher Training College and ACE programme for mathematics at UWC.
D1CT	Female	Dumont	1	Class Teacher and Deputy Principal	Language	Class teaching	More than 10 years	Teacher Training College and UNISA
D4CT	Female	Dumont	4	Class teacher	Language and mathematics	Class teaching	Less than 5 years	UNISA
D7MT	Female	Dumont	7	Subject Teacher	Language	Language	Between 5 and 10years	Teacher Training College
D7LT	Male	Dumont	7	Subject Teacher	Mathematics	Mathematics	More than 10 years	Teacher Training college
Z1CT	Female	Zola	1	Class Teacher	Language	Class teaching	Between 5 and 10years	Teacher Training College

Z4MT	Female	Zola	4	Subject teacher	Language and mathematics	Mathematics	More than 10years	Teacher training college
Z7MT	Female	Zola	7	Subject Teacher	Mathematics	Mathematics	Between 5 and 10years	Teacher Training College and University of Technology

**Table 13: The sample of 3 principals**

Principal	Gender	School	Qualifications	Years of teaching experience	Years of experience in current position	Subject or Phase specialization	Currently Teaching
1	Male	Flamingo	Higher Diploma in education + Honours in Sport Manage	20	3	Mathematics	Yes
2	Male	Dumont	Teacher Certificate + Specialist teaching diploma + Bachelor Degree (Arts)	38	12	English	Yes
3	Male	Zola	Junior Primary Teaching Diploma + Bachelor of Theology + Honours degree in Theology	24	14	Foundation Phase	No

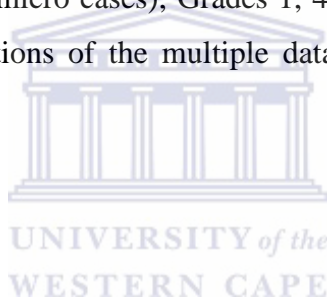
In brief, this design, planning and preparation phase, especially compiling a full pilot study report and the case study protocol, did not only improve the validity and credibility of this study, but these reports also served as learning tools, something I could move in and out of when conducting the main study. I now turn to Phase 2 (refer to Figure 2), the production of the data: data collection methods and strategies used in my study.

### **4.3.2 PHASE 2 - The production of the data: Data collection methods and strategies employed**

As mentioned, case study research normally involves using multiple data collection methods and extracting data from multiple sources. I conducted this empirical inquiry in just over a year commencing in February 2012 and ending in June 2013. The research project included conducting a pilot study and compiling a case study protocol. Both these ‘empirical tools’, as noted before, formed part of the first phase of the research, namely, the planning, design and preparation phase. Phase 2 deals with the production of data. As indicated in the case study protocol (refer to Appendix H), research was first conducted at one site before moving on to the next site. These sites can be regarded as the *empirical cases*, points where the data was extracted. Three individual schools: Flamingo Primary school, Dumont Primary School and Zola Primary School (all pseudonyms) were selected. Embedded within each site are the units of analysis or bounded systems (micro cases); Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals. Descriptions of the multiple data collection methods used in this study now follow.

#### **4.3.2.1 Questionnaires**

Two questionnaires were conducted, a teacher questionnaire and a learner questionnaire. Although questionnaires are normally associated with quantitative research studies in this study it was used as an ‘exploratory tool’ to mainly gauge the perceptions of a larger group of participants on the phenomenon under study. The purpose of the teacher questionnaire, as mentioned in the pilot study report, was to provide me with an understanding of teacher perceptions around issues of learner achievement levels, especially in language (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy), which could serve as a basis for further probing during the interview sessions. Thirty-two teachers, comprising of 12 Grade 1 teachers’ 10 Grade 4 teachers and 10 Grade 7 teachers completed the teacher questionnaires. The learner questionnaires were conducted with Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners at the three selected schools. In total, 926 learners completed a learner questionnaire: 335 Grade 1 learners, 348 Grade 4 learners and 243 Grade 7 learners. As noted in the pilot study report, the aim of the Grade 1 learner questionnaire was mainly to profile the learners’ home context, whereas the aim of the Grade 4 and 7 learner questionnaire were twofold: the first half of the questionnaire



sought to profile the learner’s home context, while the second half of the questionnaire dealt with issues relating to learner academic performance.

The questionnaires proved to be extremely helpful since key issues could be further explored in the interview sessions, as well as support similar findings being extracted from other data collection sources, such as the interviews, classroom observations and documentary sources.

#### 4.3.2.2 Direct observations

According to Merriam (2009:136) “observations offer a first-hand account of the situation under study and, when combined with interviewing and document analysis, allow for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated”. After administering questionnaires, I made arrangements to conduct classroom observations as set out in the Case Study Protocol (see Appendix H). The following table, Table 14, indicates the number and type of lessons observed. It also indicates the limitations experienced per site.

**Table 14: Number and type of lessons observed**

MACRO CASES	MICRO CASES			
	GRADE 1	GRADE 4	GRADE 7	Limitations
<b>SITE 1 (Flamingo Primary School)</b>	one week in one Grade 1 class - three full consecutive days of Observation	one week in one Grade 4 class - three consecutive days of Observation-Only literacy (3) and numeracy (3) lessons were observed.	Only observed one numeracy lesson.	The Grade 7 teacher taught both literacy and numeracy. After many negotiations and interventions by the Principal I was only allowed to observe the teacher once.
SITE 2 (Dumont Primary School)	one week in one Grade 1 class - three full consecutive days of Observation	one week in one Grade 4 class- three consecutive days of Observation-Only literacy (3) and numeracy (3) lessons were	three consecutive days were spent observing the Grade 7 Literacy teacher and three consecutive days was spent observing	Classroom observations went ahead as planned.



		observed.	the Grade 7 numeracy teacher.	
<b>SITE 3 (Zola Primary School)</b>	one week in one Grade 1 class - three full consecutive days of Observation	two consecutive days were spent observing the Grade 4 numeracy teacher	Three consecutive days were spent observing the Grade 7 numeracy teacher.	Classes were observed with a translator. In Grade 1 the language of teacher and learning is IsiXhosa this changes to English in Grade 4. Both the Grade 4 and Grade 7 teachers who teach literacy were absent during the observation period.

The table above (Table 14) elucidates the number and type of lessons observed. It also sheds light on the limitations or challenges experienced during the classroom observation stage of data collection. The reasons for these limitations will become clearer in Chapter 5 when I provide the ‘contextual detail’ of each school or site. The focus of classroom observations, in brief, was therefore on pedagogic practices (teaching practices) and pedagogic relationships (interaction between teacher and learner) during these practices. The main observations took place over three consecutive days were possible. As Hoadley (2005:82) observes, “the assumption is that by that stage [after three consecutive days] the social relations between teachers and learners would be well-established and routine pedagogic practices would have been sedimented”.

As in the pilot study, I used a Classroom Observation Schedule (COBS) previously used by Hoadley (2005) and informed by the theoretical framework of Basil Bernstein. One of my main concerns during the piloting of this instrument was finding ways to avoid forcing empirical evidence to fit the well-established COBS. Helping in this regard, and as mentioned in the pilot study report, was audio recording the lessons and using a COBS summary sheet, which, whilst observing, doubled as a coding sheet and an analytical memo (a space for jotting down ideas, feelings and initial perceptions while observing). This extra “theoretical

labour” (Gamble, 2004:51), combining both audio and written methods to observe, created ‘a mosaic of data’: the written notes capturing the ‘real- life’ details (expressions, silences, movements, interruptions) that the audio recorder failed to capture. As a result, I was able not only to ‘identify themes as they emerged in the field’ but also begin the analysis process.

#### **4.3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Three principals (one from each site) were interviewed individually for over an hour. These were semi-structured interviews which focused on issues surrounding learner achievement levels in the respective schools of the principals. I was particularly interested in their views on their schools’ overall performance in two major benchmark tests (WCED LITNUM tests and the ANA tests), as well as finding out more about how they managed curriculum change and teaching and learning. More importantly, I wanted to learn which challenges they faced regarding learner outcomes, and the strategies they had in place to bring about improvement in the schools’ overall performance. Their responses provided me with a more holistic picture of the school context, its culture and practices.

I interviewed 10 teachers: three teachers at Site 1 (the Grade 1 class teacher, the Grade 4 class teacher and the Grade 7 teacher who was responsible for teaching both literacy (language) and numeracy (mathematics)); four teachers at Site 2 (the Grade 1 class teacher, the Grade 4 class teacher, the Grade 7 literacy (language) teacher and the Grade 7 numeracy (mathematics) teacher); three teachers at Site 3 (the Grade 1 class teacher, the Grade 4 numeracy (mathematics) teacher and the Grade 7 numeracy (mathematics) teacher). These were semi-structured individual interviews which lasted between thirty minutes and an hour. The teacher interviews focused on issues that arose from the questionnaires and practices observed during the classroom observations. They also focused on the teachers’ views on their respective schools’ learner achievement levels in tests (benchmark and internal examinations), how they dealt with curriculum change, their expectations of their learners and parents, and the strategies they had in place to improve learner outcomes.

I interviewed 36 learners (the units of analysis): four learners per grade or phase (12 learners per site). The interviews were all semi-structured and I used the learner interview schedule (see Appendix F), which allowed for greater flexibility. I could draw on the learners’ responses from questionnaires and from what I had observed in the classroom to further

explore these aspects during the interview sessions which lasted about thirty minutes. I interviewed Grade 1 learners using group interviews. My rationale for this was mainly because Grade 1 learners, reinforced by the nature of Grade 1 pedagogic practices, normally work in groups and would therefore feel free to interact in this way. Patton (2002:386) adds that in these types of interviews “participants get to hear each other’s responses and can make additional comments beyond their original responses as they hear what other people have to say”. I interviewed Grade 4 and 7 learners using individual interviews. I used a translator to ask questions and transcribe responses in cases where learners spoke isiXhosa. Before conducting the learner interviews, I familiarised myself with the lessons I had learnt from my pilot study, especially lessons pertaining to conducting interviews with young children, and adhering to the ethical consideration of protecting and not bringing harm to any of the participants. Three aspects in particular stand out (refer to the discussion on these issues in the pilot study report) namely: gaining access to children (the issue of on-going consent), thoroughly preparing for interviews with children (drawing on the technical techniques and communication strategies offered by Cameron (2005) and Miller (2006)) and dealing with silences during interview sessions (avoiding the issue of suggestibility - the need to fill in conversational spaces).

Informal interviews were conducted with key role players, other than the units of analysis, which were not audio recorded but captured, with their permission, in my reflective journals. These participants willingly provided crucial contextual information about the sites which could further extend my understanding of the phenomenon under study. It must be noted that I did not interfere with the narrative voice of the respondents. As a result the speech is not produced in technically correct ways. In order to respect their voice I will leave it as it is delivered.

#### **4.3.2.4 Document Sources**

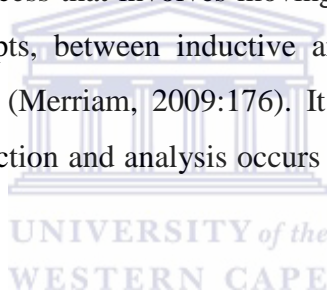
According to Merriam (2009:139), “documents are...a ready-made source of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator”. In this study, I used photographs (photographs taken mainly of the Grade 1 classrooms at each site to show resources available and the classroom setting); materials (work-sheets and other materials teachers used in the classroom during observation sessions); records (learner profiles, teacher planning files and learner notebooks where available); CEMIS documents retrieved at the school, which include the school’s LITNUM and ANA reports; and Grade Progression schedules of the observed

grades. The latter provided me with the learners' internal assessment results. Due to time constraints and because I was not allowed to remove certain documents from the school, not all the documents mentioned above formed part of the final analysis.

In short, this phase, Phase 2, illuminated the data collection procedure and strategies employed whilst collecting data. In the next phase, I shed light on the data analysis strategies employed in this research study.

### **4.3.3 PHASE 3- Analysis of the data**

According to Yin (2009:26), "data analysis is the process of examining, categorising, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining evidence to draw empirically based conclusions". Analysing data, as I came to discover when conducting the pilot study, is an iterative process, "a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between descriptions and interpretations" (Merriam, 2009:176). It therefore is not a linear process because "simultaneous data collection and analysis occurs in and out of the field" (Merriam, 2009:171).



In this section, and keeping in line with Yin's (2009) idea of maintaining a 'chain of evidence', I describe the various strategies or methods used to analyse the data from which the findings chapters (Chapter 5 and 6) and the analysis and discussion chapter (Chapter 7) are derived. I worked with the following 4 data sets: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, direct classroom observations and document sources. In the following section I first show how I organised and managed the case study data (preparing the case study database), and then show the various analytical methods and strategies I used to make sense of the data.

#### **4.3.3.1 Organising and managing the data**

According to Reid (1992), data management involves three steps or phases: Phase 1 is the data preparation phase - typing notes, transcribing interviews, etc., in other words, transforming the raw data into 'text data'. Phase 2 is the data identification phase - dividing text data into analytical, meaningful and locatable segments. Phase 3 is the data manipulation

phase - where the segments are sorted, retrieved and rearranged (Reid, 1992:126). Drawing on Reid (1992), I used both computer and manual ways to prepare, identify and manipulate the data. For Yin (2009) this process of organising and managing data, so that it is easily retrievable, is called the 'case study database'. "The case study database (or record) then, is the data of the study organised so the researcher can locate specific data during intensive analysis" (Merriam, 2009:203). The following, then, is a description of how I organised and managed each data set in turn: the questionnaires data, the interview data and data obtained through classroom observations and document sources. Included in this discussion are the methods and strategies I used to analyse data retrieved from different data sources.

### **A. Method of organising and managing questionnaire data**

The data, collected by means of questionnaires, were captured on Excel then exported to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). In order to make the data more manageable the data set was reduced by clustering certain questions. Questions 3 to 11 were grouped, as they refer to goods that make it easy for children to access information, such as: a radio, television, cell phone, computer, printer, internet access, laptop and books. I coined these 'cultural goods'. I also grouped Questions 12 to 20, as these included goods such as: a bicycle, motorbike, car, fridge, kettle, toaster, washing machine, stove/oven, microwave oven, which I call 'capital goods'. Access to these goods is determined by one's income, wealth and standard of living. Clustering items helped in creating a numerical variable from which a range was determined, for example the range for items on the Grade 4 and 7 learner questionnaire was determined in the following way:

#### **Range for cultural goods:**

0.0 - 0.49 = less than 3 items = poor

0.5 - 0.79 = between 3-6 items = good

0.8 - 1 = 7 or 8 items (possessed everything) = very good

In other words, for example, a learner's ability to access 'cultural goods' would be poor if he or she ticked off fewer than 3 items.

#### **For the capital goods the range was different:**

0.0 - 0.44 = <and = 3 items = poor

0.45 - 0.64 = 4-6 items = good

0.65 - 0.9 = 7-9 = very good

In a study conducted by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), known as the All Media and Products Survey (AMPS), similar variables were used to determine a consumer's 'income, wealth and standard of living'. In my study I used the ranges for 'capital goods' to determine different categories of households, for example learners' who responded that they had fewer than an equal to 3 items that could be viewed as belonging to 'poor' households, in this case, mostly working class homes. Those who possessed 4 - 6 items could be considered as living in 'middle-class' households and those who possess 7 - 9 items could be viewed as belonging to a 'wealthier class'. Therefore, assigning a range to the 'clustered data items' made it easier to understand and make sense of the data. The latter was done with the assistance of a statistical coach. I found that using a statistical coach, especially one acquainted with SPSS, extremely helpful in this regard.

The qualitative data responses on the Grade 4 and 7 learner questionnaires (questions 1 to 6 or 29 to 34), which specifically dealt with issues relating to a learner's achievement levels, were assigned numerical variables. Here, I clustered the qualitative responses to which I assigned a numerical code. This was done in Excel and analysed using SPSS. The examples show how the qualitative responses were coded:

Q29. How would you rate your overall performance? (Question 1)

1= below average; 2= average; 3= good and 4= excellent

Q30. In which learning areas are you performing poorly? (Question 2)

1= Life Skills; 2= Mathematics and 3=language

Q31. Why do you think your performance is poor in the areas ticked off in question 2? In this question, the responses were clustered then assigned a numerical code to make the data more manageable. (Question 3)

1. It's difficult/struggling/hard/don't know what to do/don't understand
2. don't like it/ weak in it/not good in it
3. Lazy/playful/not concentrating/not listening/not studying/ don't learn/ not focused
4. Different language/ don't understand the language
5. The teacher is to blame/ teaching practices are blamed

Q32. What do you think you can do to improve in the areas ticked off in question 2? In this question, the responses were clustered then assigned a numerical code to make the data more manageable. (Question 4)

1. Ask for help/tell someone
2. Extra classes

3. Practice/concentrate/listen/talk less/ less playful/ pay attention/focus
4. Learn more/study harder/take my time/ count more/ read and write more/do homework

Q33 (Question 5) and 34 (Question 6) Here the responses were clustered in the same way because they fell in the same categories.

1. Teacher/ sir/ mam
2. Parents/ mother/father
3. Siblings/brother/sister
4. Cousins/aunts/uncles
5. Desk partner/partner/friend
6. Grandparents/grandmother/grandfather/guardian/neighbour
7. Teacher and friend
8. Nobody helps me/I help myself

Once the data was captured onto SPSS and the frequencies and output determined, I still had to analyse the data since computer programmes, such as SPSS, do not do the analysis, it merely “helps as an organising and categorising tool” (Biklen, 2007:187). The teacher questionnaires were handled manually since they were fewer in number and the responses were mainly qualitative in nature. These were therefore easier to tabularise and code.

### **B. Method of organising and managing interview data**

As mentioned, semi-structured interviews were conducted with learners, their teachers and principals. Working with loads of interview transcripts, in this case three different sets (learners, teachers and principals responses), was challenging. In the preparation phase, all recorded interviews were first transcribed. I preferred to do the transcribing myself since it enabled me to make initial notes, that is, commenting about what I was observing and jotting down my concerns as I was transcribing. I could therefore pick up on similarities and differences in the responses within and across the different interview sets. Merriam (2009:174) regards this as a form of “rudimentary analysis” which she sees as “helpful to you as you move between the emerging analysis and the raw data of interviews, field notes and documents”. She adds that “making notations next to bits of data that strike you as potentially relevant for answering your research questions is also called *coding*” (Merriam, 2009:178). The principal interview transcripts, for example, were tabularised, according to their

responses to the interview questions, copied and pasted onto a large sheet of paper in order to capture the full picture. I preferred doing this: organising, retrieving and manipulating the data manually, even though there are computerised programmes, such as Atlas.ti, available to do such work. The following is an example of how I engaged with a particular interview set after it was transcribed. The extract was taken from a principal interview transcript:

Interview question No.18	ZP	DP	FP
<p><b>Could you describe the community that the school serves [refer to community factors that either enhance or constrain learning outcomes]</b></p>	<p>I think<sup>1</sup> there's a lot of constraining factors a lot that needs to be done with parents to show them the importance of the child's education. <sup>2</sup>They don't come to meetings, maybe 20% will attend intervention meetings with teachers. <sup>3</sup>Some parents don't work but they still don't come. When you insist they come here smelling like liquor. Those are the factors surrounding us, <sup>4</sup>they are <b>retarding the progress of Learning and Teaching in school</b></p>	<p>The community changed and it's the best thing that ever happened to this school. There was the 'white flight' but then you have to understand a lot of the community is senior and therefore other areas, surrounding the school, attracts the younger community. <sup>1</sup>Yes the school dynamics changed children come from all over the place. This use to be a white school after 1991 the school committee in 1992 voted for this model, parents knew the implications was that we would become a<sup>2</sup> fee paying school but at the same time we could decide whom to employ and enroll.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>The community that we serve is predominantly middle class families, professional people in education, a hand full of working class families, mothers working in the area.</p>	<p><sup>1</sup>Very basic interest and awareness amongst most parents that children should be sent to school to be educated but <sup>2</sup>unfortunately the environment constrains our ability to teach and learn effectively; <sup>3</sup>we can either accept that and wallow in it or embrace it and try and make those changes.</p>

The first step after transcribing the data was to tabularise the responses per question. This I did as illustrated in the table above. The next step was to read the text data a few times and



jot down my initial impressions, feelings and hunches about the responses. These were done by highlighting segments that stood out and writing notations about what I was observing in the margins.

My initial impressions (notations)

<sup>4</sup>they are retarding the progress of Learning and Teaching in school



Parents are to blame for poor learning & teaching in school  
Reasons given – don't attend intervention meetings

Why? Due to constraining environment/ use of liquor

I then coded the responses by applying Descriptive Codes to various parts within each response, for example:

<sup>2</sup>They don't come to meetings, maybe 20% will attend intervention meetings with teachers

<sup>2</sup>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

<sup>3</sup>Some parents don't work but they still don't come.

<sup>3</sup> SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

When you insist they come here smelling like liquor.

<sup>4</sup>they are retarding the progress of Learning and Teaching in school

<sup>4</sup>BLAMING PARENTS

These descriptive codes (2, 3 and 4) could then be categorised into a broader category or theme, such as, 'Contextual factors'.

Breaking the text into segments, writing notations and assigning codes to the text made it easier to see linkages (patterns) within and across the data set. All transcripts from the different interview sets (principals, teachers and learner interviews) were handled in the same way, first as individual sets then across sets in search of patterns by grouping the marginal notes and codes that seem to go together (Merriam, 2009). It must be noted that I did not interfere with the narrative voice of the respondents. As a result the speech is not produced in technically correct ways. In order to respect their voice I will leave it as it is delivered.

**C. Method of organising and managing classroom observation data**

Here I was mainly guided by the work done by Ursula Hoadley (2005) in her own doctoral dissertation *Social class, pedagogy and the specialization of voice in four South African Primary schools*, seeing that I used her classroom observation schedule to do direct observations in the classroom. In the first instance, all audio-recorded lessons obtained through classroom observations had to be transcribed and filed together with the COBS summary sheet applicable to the particular lesson. The COBS summary sheet, as alluded to earlier, served as both a way of coding lessons and an analytical memo - a way of capturing my thoughts and reflections whilst observing. The following shows how I organised and managed the observation data.

The observational data set, at the end of the classroom observations, consist of audio-recorded lessons (refer to Table 10), the COBS summary sheet for each lesson (based on the 19 indicators in the classroom observation schedule), and my reflections on each lesson observed (analytical memo). I therefore had to transcribe the lessons observed (only literacy and numeracy lessons were transcribed). The observational data set was then subjected to different levels of analysis.

First, I required a ‘language of description’ to read the ‘observational data’. For Bernstein (2000),

...a language of description is a translation device whereby one language is transformed into another. We distinguish between internal and external languages of description... A language of description constructs what is to count as an empirical referent, how such referents relate to each other to produce a specific text and translate these referential relations into theoretical objects or potential theoretical objects. In other words the external language of description ( $L^2$ ) is the means by which the internal language ( $L^1$ ) is activated as a reading device or vice versa (Bernstein, 2000:132-133).

The theory therefore constituted the internal language of description and the external language of description, according to Moore and Muller (2002:634) is the ‘data-near device’ that is, ‘the concepts and constructs that allow the theory to read the data’ (Hoadley, 2005:87). In this study, the ‘data-near device’ was the classroom observation schedule (see Appendix E1) designed and tested by Hoadley – “the indicators, or theoretical constructs- was thus developed through interactions between theory and the empirical data” (Hoadley, 2005:91). A COBS summary sheet (see Appendix E2), which doubled as an analytical memo, was used to simplify initial classroom observations. The latter allowed me to do some basic analysis whilst observing. The latter was the first level of analysing the ‘observational’ data.

The next level of analysis was to use the COBS summary sheet to analyse the transcribed audio-recorded lessons. I then compared the two sheets to verify what I initially had observed. The following is an example of how I analysed classroom observational data:

See Extract1 below that was taken from one lesson given by the Grade 1 class teacher at Dumont Primary School. The topic of the lesson was Domestic Pets. To make it easier to code, the lesson was divided into three segments: 1) introduction to the lesson, 2) the course of the lesson, and 3) the evaluation activity. The explanations captured in square brackets are taken from my journal. The reflective note beneath each segment was written to reflect on what I observed in the segment or ‘transcribed text’.

## Extract 1: Literacy Lesson- Grade 1 Class teacher at Dumont Primary school

### Segment 1: Introduction to the lesson

*The teacher stands in front of the class and instructs the learners to come to the carpet. The learners have previously been compiling a project book on instruction of the teacher and now move to the carpet.*

Teacher: Come to the carpet and sit near the red chair please. Turn this way [*a group of boys were facing the opposite direction*]. 'M' you got a new project book Monday what colour was it?

M: Green

Teacher: 'V' your new project book that you got- Tell me what was on the cover? Tell me something about the cover? What did you see?

V: A cat

Teacher: and something else. There was something else on the cover? 'J' help her!

J: Grass

Teacher responds: No

*['C,' one of the brighter learner's, according to the teacher, who I also observed the teacher calling on regularly to provide answers in other lessons observed, called out]*

C- Dogs, cats and birds!

Teacher: So what is this about?

C- Pets

Teacher: Yes, we going to talk about pets. We going to talk about domestic pets.

*[A boy seated close to the teacher shouts out]* What is that?

Teacher: It is not a word we often use it means pets that live in your home. I don't have a pet. Now if you live on a farm you can have farm animals as pets. Now remember our special book were we already spoke about the farm yard...and all the animals you can have as your friend or your pet on the farm. This week and next week we will be talking about domestic pets?

Reflective notes: Teacher selects the topic, determines both the sequence and the pacing of the lesson. She draws on learners previous experiences to get to an understanding of the topic. The teacher is working with the whole class no differentiation evident.

## Segment 2: The course of the lesson

*Teacher remains seated on the red chair as she continues the lesson. The learners are seated on the carpet facing the teacher. Only those closest to her seem to be paying attention. The others seated furthest away- some are talking to each other and others are fidgeting and becoming restless. The teacher continues*

Teacher: 'Z' tell me one domestic pet you have in your home?

Z: A dog

Teacher responds: A dog correct. 'E' another one

'E' responds: A cow

Teacher: Do you have a cow in your home [*learners begin to laugh. Teacher turns to another learner for a response*]

F: A parrot

Teacher: You have a bird of some sort ok we have three: a dog, cat and parrot- What else?

*[Different children are called on by the teacher to respond. They, in turn mention: a rabbit, fish, guinea pig and hamster. In turn the teacher repeats what they say before calling out another name. The noise coming from the back row is becoming louder.]* The teacher shouts: I'm not going to speak when you speaking. *[She repeats herself and children quiet down. She waits till she has everyone's attention then continues]*

Reflection notes: Lesson is strongly framed- teacher determines sequencing and pacing of questions. Only single-word responses are accepted. When the learner gives a different response 'A cow' the teacher proceeds to ask a follow up question but does not wait for the learner's to respond – the 'incorrect response' is not explored further or elaborated on.

Teacher: Ok, I want to speak about cats and I want to speak about dogs. Cats and dogs belong to a very huge family called mammals...I taught you five things about mammals let see

*[The teacher reminds the children about what they covered about mammals in a previous lesson on the topic. She then tries to extract 5 factors about mammals the learners should remember. She starts off each question with a clue. It appears from the answers learners were giving that they could recall 4 of the 5 factors on mammals. The teacher notes that they are struggling to find the fifth answer so she recaps by repeating what they said]*

Teacher: OK, What do we have: 1- born alive, 2- drink milk, 3- have a backbone, 4-have some hair and when you are sick your mother worries about what?

E- She feels your temperature

Teacher: You are on track. Your temperature goes up because you are warm [*teacher pauses and learners respond in unison*]

Learners [*in unison*] blooded

Teacher responds: Yes warm blooded

Reflection notes: Teacher draws on learners' previous engagement with the topic. She does not wait for learners to think. When there is a brief silence after her question, she provides clues quickly that leads them to the answer - 'warm bl' forming the sound- leading them to answer. Learners answer in this section collectively.

### Segment 3: The evaluation activity

Teacher: I want you to go to your table in a moment, take out your new project books and I will show you which page to go to. Boys, go now [*boys get up from the mat, line up and move towards their tables followed by the girls who move only when the teacher instructs them to. Once all learners are seated and have their books open in front of them. The teacher briefly reprimands a boy talking and continues with her instructions*]

[*The teacher stands in the middle of the classroom facing the desk to her right. The children are grouped according to their abilities. The groups seated to the left of the teacher are the weaker learners. She stands with her back to them and it appears that she is only teaching the more academically strong groups to her right. When questions are asked normally the academically stronger learners are called upon to answer and those who are weaker and who want to answer are often ignored.*]

Teacher: Now we going to read a lot of words here. It says colour in the blocks that are the facts about cats. What colour are you going to use. [Some children respond 'pink' others have their pencils out. One boy to the left asked repeatedly if he can use his pencil but the teacher continued with her instructions]

Teacher: Put your pencil and crayons down we going to talk first. Are you ready? Lets do the questions on cats first. [*I do however observe some children closest to me colouring in blocks as the teacher is going through the questions. Others sit quietly and listen.*]

[*The teacher reads the questions and children respond.*]

Teacher: Cats hate milk

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: purrs

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Is playful

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Eats grass

[*There is a brief silence and a few children answer:*] No

Teacher: Yes. When they are sick it makes them throw up.

Teacher: Have whiskers

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Are their whiskers long or short [*children do not respond at first*]

Some learners answer: Long

Teacher: Yes ...it warns the cat whenever there is danger. See how many blocks you can colour in ...colour in all the true facts. Information that is true.

*[The teacher walks amongst the learners signing a few books as she passes. She makes no attempt to engage with learners who have incorrect answers. She stops at the desks of a group (weaker) boys and notices that they have completed the activity. They were amongst the group of learners that I observed early whilst the teacher was reading the questions colouring in the blocks. They did not realise then that they only had to colour in the block if the answer was 'yes'. She looks at them but addresses the whole class]*

Teacher: I'm very disappointed because some started before the time and did not follow instructions. *[Some children who have completed the task approach her she angrily shouts- "Go sit down! Go sit!" She then moves amongst the desk to mark books]*

Reflection notes: Some evaluation criteria is made explicit by the teacher but certain aspects remain implicit –she reads the task questions – learners sit in ability groups but receive the same activity (no differentiation). The teacher provides correct answers she does not wait for learners to explain why they say 'yes' or 'no'. She tends to lapse into the regulative.

The transcribed text above was coded using the COBS summary sheet below (refer to figure 3) and then compared with the COBS summary sheet coded whilst observing in the classroom. I could then pick up on any discrepancies thus using the comparison as a 'reliability check'. Comparing my reflection notes after transcribing lessons, with those I wrote whilst observing (I refer to these as an analytical memo) helped in the final analysis in that they captured deeper insights into what I was thinking at different time spans as I moved in and out of the field.

**Figure 3: COBS summary sheet for the Grade 1 Class teacher at Dumont Primary - A Literacy Lesson**

1.Selection	F++	F+	F-	F--
2.Sequencing	F++	F+	F-	F--
3.Pacing	F++	F+	F-	F--
4.Evaluation criteria Intro to a task	F++	F+	F-	F--
5.Evaluation criteria In course of the task	F++	F+	F-	F--
6.Evaluation criteria Kinds of responses of learners	F++	F+	F-	F--
7.Evaluation criteria Conclusion of task	F++	F+	F-	F--
8.Evaluation criteria Number of ways a	F++	F+	F-	F--

concept is presented				
9.Evaluation criteria Variations in responses to learners questions	F++	F+	F-	F--
10.Hierarchical rule When the teacher leaves or someone enters	F++	F+	F-	F--
11. Hierarchical Rule Physical interaction between teacher-learner	F++	F+	F-	F--
12.Hierarchical rule when teacher disciplines a learner	F++	F+	F-	F--
13.Inter-disciplinary relations (Between subjects areas)	C++	C+	C-	C--
14.Inter-discursive relations (Between EK –SK)	C++	C+	C-	C--
15.Relationship between spaces (inside –outside class)	C++	C+	C-	C--
16.Relationship between spaces (teacher-learner space)	C++	C+	C-	C--
17.Relations between subjects (learners)-grouping of learners	C++	C+	C-	C--
18. Relations between subjects (learners)-in routine activities engaged in by learners	C++	C+	C-	C--
19. Relations between subjects (learners)-behaviour of learners	C++	C+	C-	C--



Although I transcribed all the lessons taught, drawing on Hoadley (2005:92-94), I only selected two lessons per teacher for analysis purposes. I selected lessons in which most of the codes as indicated in the COBS schedule could be observed. Hoadley, (2005:93) states, “The final coding values assigned to teachers were cumulative values across lessons of that

particular teacher. These values were derived by assigning numerical values to each of the classification and framing values for each indicator, and taking an average for each conceptual category”. The following extract, taken from two of coded lessons presented by the Grade 1 teacher, captures how the conceptual category of each teacher was determined:

**Figure 4: Grade 1 Class teacher literacy lesson- Dumont Primary School**

1.Selection	F++	F+	F-	F--
2.Sequencing	F++	F+	F-	F--
3.Pacing	F++	F+	F-	F--
4.Evaluation criteria Intro to a task	F++	F+	F-	F--
5.Evaluation criteria In course of the task	F++	F+	F-	F--

**Figure 5: Grade 1 Class teacher numeracy lesson- Dumont Primary School**

1.Selection	F++	F+	F-	F--
2.Sequencing	F++	F+	F-	F--
3.Pacing	F++	F+	F-	F--
4.Evaluation criteria Intro to a task	F++	F+	F-	F--
5.Evaluation criteria In course of the task	F++	F+	F-	F--

If we are looking at the evaluation rules in the two figures (Figure 4 and 5), the lessons that were selected as representative lessons for that teacher, then adding numerical values assigned to the codes and dividing the total by the number of coding instances would produce the global code for the evaluative rules for the teacher. This would translate here into:

$F^+ [3] + F^- [2] + F^+ [3] + F^{++} [4] / 4 = F^{++}$  - This merely “represents an ‘average’ or ‘global’ characterization of the teacher’s pedagogic practice” (Hoadley, 2005:94).

In the above section (Section 4.3), I explained how I organised and managed each data set, as well as how I went about coding the data, that is, the methods and strategies I employed to analyse the data. The following section is dedicated to the final analysis and synthesis of the multiple case study data.

#### 4.4 Analysis and synthesis of multiple case study data

Working with data extracted from multiple sources using multiple methods/instruments could be challenging. Merriam (2009) suggests that:



in a multiple case study there are two stages of analysis – the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis. For the *within-case analysis*, each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Data are gathered so that the researcher can learn as much about the contextual variables as possible that might have bearing on the case. Once the analysis of each case is completed, *cross- case analysis* begins (Merriam, 2009:204).

In my study, the comprehensive analysis was done on two levels. Level 1, the macro level, where each school was treated as an individual case first. This was followed by doing a cross-case analysis (across the three selected schools). Data from the various data sets (questionnaires, interviews and document sources) were brought together and analysed inductively, that is, looking for “recurring regularities or patterns” (Merriam, 2009:180). Here I moved from ‘descriptive coding’ towards ‘analytical coding’ - “coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning” (Richards, 2005:94). The aim of this first level of analysis was to derive at as much contextual detail about the cases as possible. Having a complete ‘case study database’ facilitated this process of categorising and drawing from different data sets. Level 2, the micro level, where I worked with the conceptual cases, the units of analysis. Here, a within-case analysis was done, treating each unit (Grade 1, 4 and 7), in turn, as an individual case. The data sets I worked with were questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation and document sources. Once again, having a ‘case study data base’ facilitated this process of identifying recurring regularities or patterns. The analysis of the individual cases was followed by a cross-case analysis (across the three Grades). According to Merriam (2009:204), “a cross-case analysis can result in a unified description across cases; it can lead to categories, themes, or typologies that conceptualise the data from all cases”. In this study, I therefore did both a within-case analysis and a cross-case analysis to arrive at the findings and answers to my research questions. I now turn to the limitations and challenges experienced whilst conducting empirical research.

#### **4.5 Limitations and challenges encountered in the main study**

In the pilot study phase of my research, I alluded to some challenges I had experienced during that phase of my research, one of which was gaining access to the research site. I came to realise that, even though I had followed all the necessary ethical steps, gaining access to certain sites, especially to classrooms, was problematic. This was especially the case in one of the schools where there was a strong teacher union presence. Teachers at this school felt it was, as they put it, ‘their democratic right’ to refuse me access to their classrooms. Not being

able to enter certain classroom impacted on the number of questionnaires I received back since these teachers took it upon themselves to distribute and collect the questionnaires. Another factor was absenteeism amongst teachers. At one site, as I previously mentioned, the Grade 4 and 7 English teachers were absent for the entire time that I was at the school. I later came to learn that the Grade 4 teacher was ill and she would return. I tried to gain access to her classroom on her return but then she was busy catching up on assessment task and she felt that I would not gain anything by visiting her classroom. The Grade 7 English teacher had been on sick leave for about three months and she did not have anyone substituting for her. As a result, all the Grade 7 classes were left without an English teacher for that entire period. I therefore could only observe mathematics (numeracy) lessons, even though in my study I mentioned that both language (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) lessons would be observed.

Lastly, I regard the language barrier as a limitation or constraining factor. Using a translator to translate from IsiXhosa to English, especially during interview and lesson observation sessions, was limiting. At times, the translator would not turn up and I had to rely on the audio recordings alone. Here, I felt constrained since certain aspects or issues get lost in translation, making it extremely difficult to explore or expand on later.

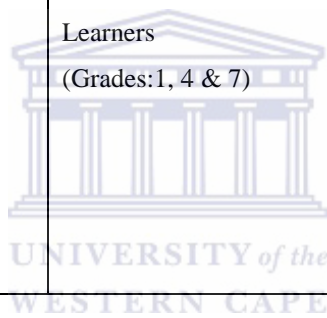
#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a comprehensive overview of the methodological issues relating to my study. I tried throughout this process to maintain a ‘chain of evidence’ by offering detailed accounts of all methodological procedures followed. Unique to this chapter and to qualitative research in general is my pilot study report, a full account of my pilot study phase of this research, which is often lacking in most qualitative dissertations. I offer this as a learning tool for other novice researchers doing similar research in similar settings using similar data collection methods. The following provides a summarised version of the data sources, that is, analytical approaches used as they pertain to the research questions contained in Chapter 1.

**Table 14: Summary of data collection, data sources, and analytical approaches as they relate to each research question**

Research Questions	Data generating methods (data sets)	Data Sources	Analytical approaches	Internal language of description
What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling?	Questionnaires  Semi-structured interviews  Direct classroom observation  Document sources	Teacher/learners  Principals/teachers/learners  Grades: 1,4 and 7 classrooms (language and mathematics lessons)  WCED LITNUM systemic tests/ANA results/Progression reports	SPSS-statistical output  Coding categories  COBS19 indicators for classification and framing  Coding categories	Bernstein code theory-restricted/elaborative codes; classification and framing codes  Bourdieu's constructs of habitus, field and capital and the interiority and exteriority of social relationships
In which ways are learner achievement levels informed by the curriculum?	Literature-Curriculum reform  Semi-structured interviews  Document sources	Chapter 2-Curriculum form  Principals and teachers  WCED LITNUM systemic tests/ANA results/Progression reports	Coding categories	Bernstein's theory on the three message systems  Bernstein and Bourdieu social reproduction theories
What is the nature of pedagogic practices in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling, and how do these account for	Direct classroom observations	Grades 1,4 and 7 classrooms (language and mathematics lessons)	COBS19 indicators for classification and framing  Coding categories from	Bernstein's theory of Pedagogic discourse: Instructional and regulative discourses  Pedagogic codes and modalities: VP and IP

learner achievement levels in those phases?			analytical memo and reflective journals	Pedagogic Device
How does the role of the teacher in the pedagogic relationship influence learner achievement levels, and how are such influences experienced in practice by learners?	Questionnaires Semi-structured interviews Direct classroom observation	Teachers/learners Teachers/Learners Grades 1, 4 and 7 classrooms	SPSS-statistical analysis Coding categories COBS19 indicators for classification and framing	Bernstein's constructs: Pedagogic device Pedagogic code Interactional practice Pedagogic discourse Recognition and realization rules
How does the learner's racial, class and gender identity relate to his/her achievement levels?	Semi-structured interviews	Principals Teachers Learners (Grades:1, 4 & 7)	Coding categories	Bourdieu's constructs of habitus, field and capital and the interiority and exteriority of social relationships. Bernstein's constructs of elaborate and restrictive codes.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5 CONTEXTUAL FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I provide an account of the background contextual factors which characterise each of the schools that were used in this study. In the first part of each section in this chapter I outline the socio-economic contexts of the community within which each of the selected schools is located. One should note that these school communities are not always ‘traditional’ school communities, in the sense that some of the selected schools in this study serve learners from different communities and in some cases are not located in a residential area. My description of these communities within which the selected schools are located includes an account of the socio-economic context of these schools and some of the issues they deal with which arise from their environmental location. In addition, I also provide an account of the type of facilities and resources learners in these selected schools have access to in terms of their households and in terms of their communities. In the second part of each section, I provide a description of the composition of the school in terms of its staff and learner profiles, and level of resourcing available in the selected schools. Thereafter, I provide an account of how each of the selected schools performed in both the WCED systemic tests (better known as the LITNUM test - Literacy and Numeracy tests) and the Annual National Assessments (ANA), in addition to what these results were for each of the grades in each of the selected schools.

In this chapter, I draw on data obtained from questionnaires that were used in this study, interviews that were conducted, direct classroom observations and my own journal notes made when I visited each of the selected schools. Conceptually, in this chapter, I worked largely with the concepts or theories of Bourdieu to provide an understanding of how context actually influences people’s dispositions, that is the ways in which ‘cultural capital’ is distributed amongst different schools and the influence it has on the way in which certain dispositions have been embodied and interiorised by the actors in these schools, given their

exteriorisation. Furthermore, looking at ways in which these actors construct their agency within these schools, in other words how they make sense of their external reality.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is mainly to provide a background and context of each of the selected schools and their learners, thus revealing the respondents' reported experiences at these schools; showing how these schools and individual learners fared in both systemic and internal tests; and bringing to the fore their voices regarding all aspects engaged with in this chapter. In subsequent chapters, I provide in-depth analyses of the data that have been generated during this study.

The following are narrative accounts profiling and describing the three schools – (the macro cases): Flamingo Primary School, Dumont Primary School and Zola Primary School (all pseudonyms) which formed part of this research project and in which the three cases are bounded. These pseudonyms are used throughout, in line with the ethical considerations of anonymity and confidentiality.

## **5.2 THE MACRO CASES: THREE SELECTED SCHOOLS**

### **5.2.1 Flamingo Primary School**

Flamingo Primary school is a former House of Representative (HOR) or 'coloured' school, established 95 years ago. It is a Section 21 (fee-paying) school where learners pay R550 p.a. The school has an establishment or quintile rating of 4 (wealthy) and is situated in an industrial area, more than 6 km away from the nearest residential area.

The location of the school is concerning for a number of reasons, as expressed by the principal, who stated that "We have a problem that the proximity of our school, we don't serve one geographical community. They [learners and their parents] are all over the place. It's not like they can walk. They [the parents], have to take off from work, travel down here" (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012). He adds that "school must be the centre of the community" yet this is not the case and the remoteness of the school brings with it a number of problems, especially in terms of safety of teachers and learners. The school is often vandalised after school hours and over weekends, as expressed by the Grade 4 teacher:

The community here next door ... is stealing and breaking into the school on a regular basis. We were without phones. You know they put up CCTV cameras hey; it was put up in the afternoon the evening it was stolen. We had electric fencing around this whole school property,... missing! This fencing was out how many times, the vibracrete was out I don't know how many times. I'm one of those; I feel like marching to...and tell them that your learners also attend this school' and learners and teachers were robbed outside the school, but the problem is, we say with our school, we don't have a community; we border everywhere so we have an influx of learners. Our learners come via taxi. We don't have that community proudness, the support (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

This lack of a traditional school community inhibits after - school activities and holiday programmes (extra classes) the school has in place to improve poor academic performance of learners. As the principal puts it, "Proximity is a big problem. We cannot have holiday programmes because of the distance from the school" (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012). This is confirmed by a teacher responsible for arranging extra-mural activities who stated:

Like with extra-mural activities, you heard me say. So the drivers don't want to wait for the children, the parents are at work. Now the parents although they would like their child to be here, there's no way for the child to get home. So now they going to say: 'No'. So with a result every year we just stuck with netball and soccer and other extra-murals fall by the wayside because only parents who are at home and can afford to get someone to come fetch their child, those learners participate in extra-murals. Whereas if the school was surrounded by houses, I think it would go better (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

The following extract, taken from my reflective journal provides my first impressions of the school:

This isolated school, surrounded by wire-meshed fencing, borders a busy road, a graveyard and an industrial area. The nearest residential houses are 6 km away. I enter the school's huge gates manned by a security guard into a small parking area. I make my way to the reception area passing a few classrooms and the school courtyard which doubles as a playground. I notice a few prefabricated classrooms and a double-story old-styled school building. The reception area or waiting area is well-equipped with neatly rows of chairs and the working station of the secretary. This area is adorned with religious paintings and pictures of past principals. The classrooms that I visited later are varying in size; the ones housing the lower grades are big, well-organised containing a carpeted area for mat work, colourful samples of

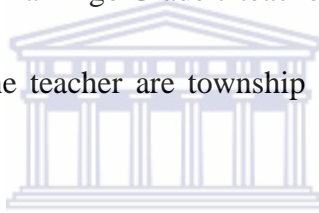
learners' work and neatly stacked tables and chairs. The classrooms housing the older learners have limited space since most of the space is occupied with desks and in some there are only a few samples of charts on the walls, unlike what I observed in the lower grades.

The above extract from my journal notes confirms what the participating teachers and the principal were alluding to regarding the school's location.

It is interesting to note that this school serves students from varied economic backgrounds, as expressed by the Grade 1 teacher, "We got children from all walks of life" (Grade 1 teacher interview, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2012). This point is expanded by another teacher who notes:

I think that it serves a middle class community. There are a few in the upper class. Like me, I have students in my class that come from wealthy backgrounds. I know of two learners', parents own factories and things, dad's an engineer...I would say half of the class come from a middle class background. Then we also have children coming from ... [names omitted] areas and so on (Flamingo Grade 7 teacher interview, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The latter areas mentioned by the teacher are township areas, inhabited predominately by working - class families.



The following tables (Table 15 and 16) taken from questionnaires conducted with Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners', profiles the learners' home context and statistically show the varied socio-economic backgrounds of these learners:

**Table 15: Percentage of learners' who have water and electricity in their homes**

Water: n=404	Electricity: n=403
Yes - 390 (97%)	Yes - 397 (99%)
No - 13 (3%)	No - 6 (1%)

Although the majority have water (97%) and electricity (99%) there is still 13% who do not have access to running water in their homes.

**Table 16: Percentage of learners' who have access to cultural goods**

Cultural Goods- n=383		
Range	N	Valid %
Poor (less than 3 items)	28	7
Good (between 3 and 6 items)	176	46
Very Good (7-8 items)	179	47



The table (Table 16) indicates that 7% of the learners have limited access to goods that could be helpful in gaining access to information in their homes, including access to a radio, television, cell phone, computer, printer, internet access, laptop and books, whereas 46% have access to some of these items, while 47% have access to all the items. In addition, Table 14C provides further indication of the varying socio-economic status of families.

**Table 17: Percentage of learners' who have access to capital goods**

Capital Goods- n=393		
Range	N	Valid %
Poor (less/equal to 3 items)	46	12
Good (4-6 items)	116	30
Very Good (7-9 items)	230	58

Table 17 indicates access to the following goods, which I have labelled 'capital goods', namely access to a bicycle, motor bike, car, refrigerator, kettle, washing machine, toaster, stove and microwave, which normally increases according to income, wealth and standard of living. Once again it is evident that 58% households have complete access to capital goods, whilst 30% could afford 4-6 items and 12% could only afford 3 or fewer items, showing the variations in socio-economic status of families.

The variations in totals (response size) provided in tables: 15, 16 and 17 are as a result of the amount of valid responses received.

The contrasting lifestyles of two learners are depicted in the following two extracts, taken from different interviews with different respondents:

Researcher: You mentioned X [name omitted] coming from a rich family. Do you think she gets more exposure to learning than the others?  
 Grade 7 teacher: Oh yes! They travel all the time, travelling during the holidays and so on... you can see out of what home this child comes out of, where manners are instilled, manners respect, but also academic freedom...(Flamingo Grade 7 teacher interview, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012)

In contrast, another teacher tells me of a child who comes from different circumstances. He causes numerous behavioural problems and needs constant attention as noted by the teacher:

X [name of child omitted] needs constant reassurance, and he just wants you to hold his hand the whole day. ... Yes, his father, his biological father

is in and out of jail, and I gather he was very abusive towards the mother ... (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

These extracts from interviews with teachers and students at this school provide evidence of children having different home experiences.

In the previous discussion I described the external factors negatively affecting the school which provided interesting insights into the challenges facing the school in terms of location and the community the school serves. I now turn my attention to this school by describing the staff compliment at the school and its infrastructure. I then discuss the school's overall performance in WCED systemic tests and the ANA tests in order to gain a better understanding of the internal or intra-school factors facing this particular school.

As mentioned, Flamingo Primary School is a predominantly 'coloured' school serving students from varied economic backgrounds. The staff compliment consists of one principal, one deputy principal, four heads of department and 27 educators, all "coloured" staff members. There are currently 1159 learners of whom 1004 are 'coloured', 153 'black' and two 'white' learners. The school, in terms of infrastructure, is fairly well-resourced. There are 34 classrooms, three administrative offices, three storerooms, one school hall, one library, one computer room with 25 computers for learner use. Teachers have access to a well-equipped staffroom and three computers for their use. The school however experiences shortages in library material, audio-visual equipment for teachers, as well as internet access to facilitate learning. Other problems experienced are a lack of classroom space, shortages in chairs, tables, desks, textbooks and facilities for duplicating worksheets. The following table (Table 18) provides an indication of the average class size of the cases researched:

**Table 18: Average class size per grade (Grades 1, 4 and 7)**

Grade	Total learners per grade	Number of classes per grade	Average number of learners per grade
1	165	5	33
4	147	4	37
7	142	4	36

In each grade, there is one Afrikaans class where children are taught in their home language, Afrikaans. The figures presented in the table above indicate 33-37 per class, which are not

large classes but these figures are not consistent throughout a grade. For example, in one of the Grade 4 classes, the number of learners in the class is 40 and was even bigger (46) last year. For the Grade 4 class teacher, class size does matter. As she puts it: "...our classes are too big...half of this class has repeated already" (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012). Her frustration with having big classes stems from the fact that the number of learners makes it difficult to provide 'at risk' learners' with individual attention. As she expressed it:

What do you do with the rest, the 39 that talk like this, and now you have to sit with that child and read. You need to teach him how to read. You need to start from scratch. This year we lucky, 40 this year, last year I had 46 Grade 4's (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

The Grade 1 teacher also welcomed the reduction in class size, stating that "the principal was so beautiful to actually drop our numbers. So if the numbers go down then that [the number of 'at-risk' learners] also go down" (Grade 1 teacher interview, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2012). Another problem which comes to the fore with regards to management of the particular Grade 4 class mentioned earlier is the issue of bullying, as expressed by the teacher:

When I leave here he bullies man [here she is referring to an 'at risk' learner], he bullies, now when there's no one here then I must take ... [teacher mentions the names of three learners] I have to take them with me otherwise when I come back here's chaos...(Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

'Bullying' is not confined to this particular class only but appears to be rife throughout this particular school. According to the principal, "The children are products of their environment, individually they are ok but socially they don't know how to interact. They get angry quickly, swearing is their third language. You can work with them but they come with baggage" (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012). Whilst conducting research at this particular school, I observed various incidences where children were involved in one or other act of violence towards other children. These acts of violence are often sparked by something small, as is evident in my interview from a Grade 7 learner who has been known for his involvement in fights at the school:

Miss, I walked there [playground] and I was standing then my paarper bites [chips] fell on the floor then I picked it up and a boy kicked me on my back then I stood up and asked him: 'Do you want to fight me'; and he said 'yes'. Then I fought with him Miss (Flamingo Grade 7 learner interview, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

In interviews with some learners especially Grade's 4 and 7, the learner respondents confirmed their fear for other children. A Grade 7 learner expressed her experiences with what she refers to as 'rude children' and children who bully. She said: "Sometimes I don't feel I want to be here because of the children. I don't feel comfortable, I feel like sick. I don't mean that I feel like sick but emotionally sick and I want everything to be calm" (Flamingo Grade 7 learner interview, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012). In an informal interview with a teacher who was subjected to bullying herself, she noted that the children come from different areas and this could be, as she puts it, "territorial fights, wanting to stamp your mark on the playground" (Flamingo Grade 7 teacher interview, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The Principal provides a contrasting view which he calls the "knock - on effect". Here he was referring to the number of learners who are retained in the early years, as early as Grade 1. According to him: "They [referring to Grade 1 learners who are retrained] end up being older in Grade 7 causing a multitude of problems..." (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012). This issue of bullying, which appears quite rife in this particular school, will be revisited in the chapters that follow.

The school's performance in the national benchmark tests provides an account of learner achievement levels in this school. In the summary table below, the average percentage results of the school in mathematics and language for Grade 6 over two years is shown:

**Table 19: Summary average percentage for the school in WCED systemic tests/LITNUM tests for Grade 6 in 2011 and 2012**

Area tested	2011	2012	% difference between 2012 and 2011
Mathematics %	38.2	40.4	2.2
Language %	45.2	49.2	4.0

The table shows no substantial change between 2011 and 2012 for both mathematics and language. In other words there was only a slight improvement in both subjects. It also shows that the majority of Grade 6 learners who sat for these tests achieved below 50%. This is confirmed in the following tables (Table 20 and 21), which depicts different performance categories for mathematics and language for Grade 6 in 2011 and 2012.

**Table 20: Percentage categories for mathematics – Grade 6**

Percentage categories for Mathematics (rounded off)								
%	0-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
<b>2011</b>	7	19	37	17	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2012</b>	5	18	32	20	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 21: Percentage categories for language - Grade 6**

Percentage categories for Language (rounded off)								
%	0-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
<b>2011</b>	5	12	21	22	<b>21</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2012</b>	2	8	18	22	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

Tables 20 and 21, show that the majority of learners perform poorly in mathematics. This is indicated by the number of learners achieving below 50% in both 2011 and 2012; 75% of the Grade 6 learners achieved below 50% for mathematics in 2012. The poor results in mathematics appear to stem from Grade 4, as is evident from the 2012 ANA test results shown in the table below.

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**Table 22: Summary of the ANA results for Grades 1- 6 in both literacy and numeracy for 2012 and 2013 (Grade average percentages and percentages of learners who achieved above 50%)**

GRADES	SUBJECTS	2012		2013	
		Grade average% for the school	% achieving above 50% at the school	Grade average% for the school	% achieving above 50% at the school
<b>GR1</b>	<b>Home Lang</b>	67	79	68	80
	<b>Mathematics</b>	81	95	55	61
<b>GR2</b>	<b>Home Lang</b>	65	83	67	85
	<b>Mathematics</b>	68	87	57	71
<b>GR3</b>	<b>Home Lang</b>	60	78	45	45
	<b>Mathematics</b>	50	54	50	48
<b>GR4</b>	<b>Home Lang</b>	61	68	61	78
	<b>Mathematics</b>	45	43	41	48

<b>GR5</b>	<b>Home Lang</b>	46	45	60	74
	<b>Mathematics</b>	38	21	42	39
<b>GR6</b>	<b>Home Lang</b>	57	71	69	86
	<b>Mathematics</b>	33	12	47	38

The ANA results for 2012 reveal that the performance of learners in the Foundation Phase was fairly good. Grades 1 to 3 learners were performing at the appropriate grade level in both language and mathematics. However, in 2013 the mathematics results for these grades show a decline. The decline in the Grade 1 results could be due to a number of reasons, one of which could be curriculum change which was instituted in Grade 1 for the first time in 2012. I elaborate on this issue later in this chapter (see 5.3 Cross-case inferences).

As mentioned the problems in learner achievement levels appear to stem from Grade 4 and escalate as the learner moves from grade to grade. This is especially the case in mathematics where the pass rate in Grade 4 was 43% in 2012, decreasing in Grade 5, where the pass rate was 21% and in Grade 6 the pass rate being only 12%. However, the mathematics results for both Grades 5 and 6 increased as evident from the 2013 ANA results. The latter could be due to the various intervention programmes the school put in place in 2012, such as the extra classes, being a LITNUM focus school and being part of the Wetlands project, an NGO – run mathematics and science project (see below).

The school has developed various strategies in partnership with the WCED, the district office and NGOs' to improve the school's overall performance in 2012. The WCED identified the school as a Literacy and Numeracy (LITNUM) focus school based on their poor performance in numeracy and literacy. The principal expresses what it means to be a LITNUM focus school, as follows:

We are a LITNUM focus school so we receive training from the education department for 18 months in literacy, reading, numeracy, and that happened consecutively over a three year period and many of our teachers are implementing what they have learnt so there is improvement. But the ANAs creates an awareness that we cannot continue doing things as done in the past...the education department, the school must support teachers (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012).

Being a LITNUM focus school could account for the slight increase in literacy and numeracy results, as reported in Table 17. The support the school receives from the District Office

(Education Department) is welcomed but appears insufficient, as expressed by the principal: “We have very good people in our District Office but they cannot get to assisting 26 schools you cannot say to schools that this is your baby” (Flamingo Principal interview, 19 June 2012). This point is confirmed by a teacher:

They really trying, they really trying but I’d like to see them more hands on presenting lessons and things. I know that they got a lot of work; you know sometimes they throw the ball in our courts since they appointed certain Lead Teachers in certain subjects, and I feel that they burdening us (Flamingo Grade 7 teacher interview, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Hence, to supplement the lack of support from the District Office, the school has also formed partnerships with NGOs. As mentioned, besides being a LITNUM focus school, the school also participates in the WETLANDS Project which is a mathematics and science project run by an NGO, as described by a teacher who stated, “We attending the WETLANDS which is nice because they show you different methods and styles, what’s allowed for this grade which is different to how the department again gives workshops” (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

Besides these external groups helping the school, the school has also been identified as part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) efforts to purchase textbooks, wall charts and other resources for all classes. The principal explained that:

for the first time this year [2012] we are looking at the group that band from 30% to 50%. We target them in maths to get them over 50%, even if we improve the average mark from 20% to 35% pass rate that would have been an achievement (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012).

In order to achieve the targets referred to above, the school instituted Saturday classes for Grades 6 and 7. These classes are conducted by teachers from other schools and children pay R30.00 for this extra programme. The school operates in financially constrained circumstances and therefore relies on parents to pay for additional classes, excluding those learners who cannot afford to pay. For this reason the school employs an honours student from a neighbouring university to assist the Grades 6 and 7 mathematics teacher in helping ‘at risk’ learners. The school has also adopted various classroom-based intervention strategies to bring about improvement, especially in literacy (language) such as: a word wall, spelling tests, Word Smart Competition and making classrooms print rich. As expressed by the

principal, “If we introduce a new term we display it” (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012). These strategies aimed at improving learner performance in language.

In questionnaires conducted with Grades 4 and 7 learners in 2012, learners identified mathematics as a subject in which most of them were performing poorly.

**Table 23: Areas identified by Grade 4 and 7 learners in which they are performing poorly**

Subjects- n=225		
Variable	N	Valid %
Life skills	30	13
Mathematics	135	60
Language	60	27

The table confirms that 60% of the Grade 4 and 7 respondents were struggling with mathematics. The reasons they give for this will be expanded on later in this section. But first I turn to the reasons the principal and teachers gave for the school’s poor performance in the systemic tests, especially in the ANA tests.

The principal and participating teachers attribute the school’s poor performance in these tests to a number of factors namely: the disjuncture between home and school in terms of what happens in the home and in terms of language use, the lack of parental involvement, the transition from Grade 3 to 4 and the way in which questions in the ANA test are set. The following extracts express teachers’ views on why the results are poor:

Grade 1 class teacher: ...most of them come here for a better education but what constrains them there’s nothing happening at home. They don’t belong to libraries, there’s nothing educational for them (Flamingo Grade 1 teacher interview, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012).

Grade 4 class teacher: The lack of parental involvement that’s the major thing. Then the other, our lifestyle now a days because you can just do so much in school, and the child can just take in so much but because of technology there’s less and less between parent and child (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

Grade 7 maths teacher: I think its home background because some of our children come from, not only impoverished backgrounds but academically impoverished backgrounds. Many of them don’t have things like computers at home, many of them don’t have books. When I tell my parents ‘take your child to the library’ they look at me as if I’m talking Greek (Flamingo Grade 7 teacher interview, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012).



From the above extracts, taken from interviews with teachers, home background or what happens in the home appears to be a constraining factor. In addition to home background, there appears to be a disjuncture between the language children use at home and that used for teaching and learning in this school, as noted by the Grades 1 teacher: “In their language, like in Afrikaans we say “hulle is taalarm” [their grammar is poor or they have a poor vocabulary]”. She further adds that the reason for this is “there is no communication at home and there are no good examples in their communities” (Flamingo Grade 1 teacher interview, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012). The Grade 4 class teacher adds “Now a lot of parents can’t speak English properly, so how do I help...they can’t help the child then they also become despondent that is why I say it stems from home” (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

In addition to the poor vocabulary of learners, there is the issue of the systemic tests especially the ANAs that use language that learners are not familiar with, which could account for their poor performance in 2012. This is noted during an interview session with the Grade 4 class teacher:

Grade 4 teacher: Our results it weren’t that good, although the teachers do put in a lot, but it’s as though when that question papers come, you heard this morning, five minutes before you came we did that activity. I let them read through it and I said this word means that and that and that. When you came I asked that same question, my learners couldn’t answer me. Now that’s what happens, I work around the vocabulary and things, we explain and that but it’s as though, when they get that question paper their minds go blank, and it is as though they never [heard] any of the things...The test was difficult. Here and there maybe the questions weren’t set properly or asked properly. But on a whole they set the test unfairly, they know, they are also aware, that we do not use that vocabulary in the class all the time, you understand? And now they put that in, in the question paper and they know it’s going throw the learners a curve ball.

Researcher: Like this morning you were calling out the maths and you said the word you spoke about was difference and then used another word ‘quotient’ and you had to explain to the children what ‘quotient’ meant; that you had to divide or something. Do they use words like that that the children aren’t using in the maths lesson?

Grade 4 teacher: Yes, yes and words like there’s a whole list and although we try to work it in and to teach that way it doesn’t come up in every activity or on a daily basis, you understand. Now that is the thing.

Researcher: So you saying the language of the test is different to the language of teaching?

Grade 4 teacher: Yes, and that is part of it.

Researcher: If you had to explain to your children that ‘this means that’ would they then be able to answer it?

Grade 4 teacher: Yes if we had never use 'quotient' like we use the word 'answer' everyday then obviously it's going to stick, but now we hear it once or twice a term, or when I give homework or when we do something specific and that word comes up then how can we see it. It is not a word I'm familiar with so it's going to throw me off the rocker off the road because I must think what must I do here. But if it says 'give the answer' or the answer to sum so and so, then they'll know (Flamingo Grade 4 teacher interview, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

The teacher quoted in the above extract alludes to the misalignment between the language used in the ANA test and the types of questions which the learners are exposed to in normal classroom activities and tests, which could account for them not understanding the questions. The principal offers a different perspective on the issue attributing the poor results to the transition from Grade 3 to 4:

The ANA's our performance there decreased especially in Grade 4 and we cannot put our finger on it. I went to CAPS training on the weekend where I'm being trained as a lead teacher...and even there they spoke about problems, the bridging from foundation phase to intermediate phase, with having three learning areas to suddenly 8, 9, 10 subjects. There's that problem that fails the children and the intermediate phase teachers expectations in that they have to cover the curriculum for Grade 4, so there is that disjuncture. The Grade 4 learners have been schooled differently in the foundation phase, so we don't take that into consideration you know, the transition which must happen in the first four months of the first quarter. We don't do that. So there is a decrease as you move up in the grades (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012).

Two aspects are emphasised in the above extract: firstly, there is the issue of Grade 4's being schooled differently in comparison to the Foundation Phase. Learners in the Foundation Phase are taught mainly in ability groups which changes in the Intermediate Phase where I observed teachers teaching mainly to the whole class and seldom differentiating between learners in terms of their abilities. Secondly, in Grade 4, learners are exposed to far more subjects than in Grade 3.

I now turn to the internal results of learners (see Table 24), and provide their reasons for their performances in language (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy).

**Table 24: The internal examination results at the end of the third term (September 2012) for language and mathematics:**

Identification type	Learner code	Gender	Language	Mathematics	Days absent
Above Average	FL101	Male	6	7	2
Average	FL102	Female	5	6	2
Below Average	FL103	Male	4	4	1
At risk	FL104	Male	1	2	9
Above average	FL401	Female	4	4	3
Average	FL402	Female	4	3	5
Below average	FL403	Female	3	2	1
At risk	FL404	Male	3	1	15
Above average	FL701	Female	7	7	1
Average	FL702	Female	6	4	3
Below average	FL703	Male	5	3	9
At risk	FL704	Male	1	2	13

As is evident from Table 24, the ‘above average’ learners perform equally well in both language and mathematics across the three grades, Grades 1, 4 and 7. An area of concern is the ‘at risk’ learners across the three grades who not only are at risk of failing but also display high levels of absenteeism.

Table 25 illuminates their responses to why they thought they were performing poorly, especially in mathematics which the majority (60% of Grades 4 and 7) were struggling with.

**Table 25: Grade 4 and 7 learner responses to why they performed poorly**

Reasons for poor performance	Grade 4		Grade 7	
	n= 100	%	n=104	%
Difficult	32	32	42	40
Do not like it	26	26	29	28
No effort/lazy	27	27	27	26
Language	14	14	2	2
Teachers and their practices	1	1	4	4

From the Grade 4 and 7 questionnaire responses, learners appeared to find mathematics difficult or perform well in subjects that they liked and poorly in subjects they did not or they simply felt that they were lazy and did not put in enough effort. They seldom felt that the teacher or his/her teaching practices were to blame for their poor performance. Learners are also affected by what they call ‘rude learners’, who do not only impact on their experiences in the classroom but also impinge on the teacher’s instructional time. The influence of these offensive learners will be explored further in Chapter 6 when I deal with issues relating to pedagogic practices.

To sum up, this former ‘coloured’ school does not serve a traditional school community. It is located in an industrial area which affects its quintile rating and poses some safety issues for teachers and learners. Learners come from varied socio-economic home backgrounds. The performance of Grades 1-3 learners appeared satisfactory in 2012 but there were drastic changes in 2013, especially in the mathematics results of Grades 1 and 3. This, as I mentioned could be due to a change in the curriculum. From Grade 4 upwards, learners appear to be performing poorly, especially in mathematics as is evident from the WCED LITNUM and ANA results. The reasons for the poor performance are attributed to the following factors: the transition from Grade 3 to 4 (changes in pedagogical practices in Grade 4, as well as the number of subjects learners are exposed to as opposed to what happens in the foundation phase), poor language use of learners (attributed to the poor language use at home), lack of parental involvement, the issue of bullying (learners fear other learners and teachers fear learners) and disruptive behaviour.

### 5.2.2 Dumont Primary School

Dumont Primary School is a former Model C and a former 'all white' school. This section 21 (fee paying) school, where learners pay R6 400 p.a. in school fees, was established 53 years ago. The school which has an establishment rating of 5 (wealthy) is located in a predominantly 'white', upper-middle class area.

This well-resourced school is quite different from the other schools I visited. The principal explains the 'Model C' concept and describes how the school community changed after 1992:

People view Model C schools in the wrong light as if it was for the privilege few because you have Model C status it only means that the school would take it upon itself to buy books, buy textbooks, pay for electricity. The community changed and it's the best thing that ever happened to this school. There was the 'white' flight but then you have to understand a lot of the community [that surrounds the school] is senior and therefore other areas, surrounding the school attracts the younger community. Yes the school dynamics changed children come from all over the place. This used to be a 'white' school, after 1991 the school committee in 1992 voted for this model. Parents knew the implications were that we would become a fee-paying school but at the same time we could decide whom to employ and enrol. Allowing the school to open up [to other races] brought a good vibe into the school (Dumont Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012).

The opening up of the school to other races is confirmed by an older teacher who provides some historical background on this change:

We not a community school anymore as you know. When I first started teaching here we were partially community school. There were still children who lived in the neighbourhood who came here. Then over a few years it became an elite's school. It was a 'white' elites school because we were English speaking the parents did not want to send their children to school... and school...[names omitted] because of the Afrikaans influence (Dumont Grade 1 teacher, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

What is clear from both extracts of interviews with the principal and teacher is that this English-speaking school is no longer a community school in the traditional sense and that children travel to the school from various outlying suburban areas. The community the school serves is varied, consisting of children from different racial and class backgrounds. This point is confirmed by the principal in his description of the community the school serves when he stated, "The community that we serve is predominately middle class families, professional

people in education, a hand full of working class families; mothers working in the area” (Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012). The tables below provide some insights into the learners home context.

**Table 26: Percentage of learners who have water and electricity in their homes**

Water: n=248	Electricity: n=248
Yes – 238 (96%)	Yes – 248 (100%)
No – 10 (4%)	No- 0

The majority of the households have electricity and only 4% do not have access to running water.

**Table 27: Percentage of learners who have access to cultural goods**

Cultural Goods- n=217		
Range	N	Valid %
Poor (less than 3 items)	2	1
Good (between 3 and 6 items)	49	22
Very Good (7-8 items)	166	77

Table 27 indicates that only 1% of the learners have limited access to goods, including access to a radio, television, cell phone, computer, printer, internet access, laptop and books, that could be helpful in gaining access to information in their homes, whereas 22% have access to some of these items and 77% have access to all the items.

**Table 28: Percentage of learners who have access to capital goods**

Capital Goods- n=237		
Range	N	Valid %
Poor (less/equal to 3 items)	3	1
Good (4-6 items)	35	15
Very Good (7-9 items)	199	84

Table 28 indicates access to ‘capital goods’, including a bicycle, motor bike, car, refrigerator, kettle, washing machine, toaster, stove and microwave, which as mentioned, normally increases according to income, wealth and standard of living. In this case 84% of the learners have all the items in their homes, which confirm what the principal alluded to when he

described the school community as predominately middle class families with parents who are generally professionals. The 1% who indicated that they only have access to three or fewer items could be learners whose mothers work in the area as domestic workers and who come from less affluent backgrounds.

Now that I have sketched the contextual background of the community the school serves, I now turn my attention to the inside school context. As has been noted, Dumont Primary is a former Model C school serving children from varied class and racial backgrounds. The school consists of 26 members: one principal, one deputy principal, two heads of department, 22 educators; 15 of the staff permanently employed by the WCED (Western Cape education Department) and 11 employed by the SGB (School Governing Body). There are two non-academic staff members and two administrative staff. The principal, deputy principal as well as 18 other staff members are 'white', with six 'coloured' and two 'Indian' educators. They serve 612 learners of which 560 are 'coloured', 20 'black', 15 'Indian', 15 'white' and two Chinese learners. Learners are admitted to the school based on language (they must be English speaking) and on their academic performance.

The school is well-resourced and in a fairly good condition. It has a school hall, two fully functioning libraries, nine specialist rooms and a well-equipped staff room. There is one computer lab consisting of 25 computers and teachers have access to 22 computers for their use. There are four computers for the administrative staff. The school has internet access, while some classes have interactive whiteboards to facilitate teaching and learning. Other facilities observed are: four playgrounds, two rugby fields, one soccer field and a swimming pool. The only identifiable problems are a few shortages of textbooks and audio visual equipment. Having 'Model C' status, as mentioned, means that the school can determine its own school fees, which in turn enables the school to afford additional staff members. An additional staff complement of 11 allows for smaller class a size that is evident in Table 29.

**Table 29: Average class size per grade (Grades 1, 4 and 7)**

Grade	Total learners per grade	Number of classes per grade	Average number of learners per grade
1	86	3	29
4	89	3	30
7	89	3	30

Class size does not appear to be an inhibiting factor at this school although one teacher did note that, in terms of teaching English, the classes are still too big. As she put it,

Now some schools where they have smaller classes, they are ahead...Nowhere does it allow for you to spend time doing that; providing children feedback, remediation for work they have done (Dumont Grade 7 teacher interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Individualised feedback in larger classes appears challenging. One other factor is classroom space, which appears to restrict movement as I observed in most classrooms I have been in especially in the Grade 7 classes where tables and chairs are used as desks. This restricts the teacher's movement in the class and they often have to stand up against the board and teach or sit at the table, as expressed by the language teacher:

My problem with the classroom is that we have these tables and the classrooms are too small...I like centres in my classroom there is no space for it...So the classroom does not lend itself to interactive learning (Dumont Grade 7 teacher interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The following is an indication of the school's performance in the national benchmark tests and the responses of the teachers and principal on this matter. In the summary table below, the average percentage results of the school in mathematics and language for Grade 6 over two years are shown:

**Table 30: Summary average percentage for the school in WCED systemic tests/LITNUM tests for Grade 6 in 2011 and 2012**

Area tested	2011	2012	Difference between 2012 and 2011
Mathematics %	65.2	66.7	1.5
Language %	83.1	97.6	14.5



The table (Table: 30) shows a slight increase in mathematics between 2011 and 2012, but there was a substantial improvement in the language results between 2011 and 2012. The following tables (Table 31 and 32) show the pass percentage categories for both mathematics and language.

**Table 31: Percentage categories for mathematics - Grade 6**

Percentage categories for Mathematics (rounded off)								
%	0-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
2011	0	3	16	16	20	26	10	9
2012	0	1	12	20	27	23	8	9

**Table 32: Percentage categories for language – Grade 6**

Percentage categories for Language (rounded off)								
%	0-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
2011	0	0	3	14	23	18	26	16
2012	0	0	0	2	14	42	35	7

Tables 31 and 32, show that the majority of learners are performing fairly well in both mathematics and language. This is indicated by the number of learners achieving above 50% in both 2011 and 2012; 67% of the Grade 6 learners achieved above 50% for mathematics in 2012 and 98% above 50% for language. The ANA results for 2012 across Grades 1 to 6 confirm the good performance of learners in both subject areas.

**Table 33: Summary of the ANA results for Grades 1-6 in both literacy and numeracy for 2012 and 2013 (Grade average percentages and percentages of learners who achieved above 50%)**

GRADE	SUBJECT	2012		2013	
		Grade average% for the school	% achieving above 50% at the school	Grade average% for the school	% achieving above 50% at the school
GR1	Home Language	80	90	80	95
	Mathematics	79	96	85	81
GR2	Home Language	80	99	81	97
	Mathematics	77	98	91	97
GR3	Home Language	69	94	69	93
	Mathematics	70	94	76	97
GR4	Home Language	81	99	72	95

	<b>Mathematics</b>	64	85	60	74
<b>GR5</b>	<b>Home Language</b>	70	98	75	95
	<b>Mathematics</b>	61	77	65	85
<b>GR6</b>	<b>Home Language</b>	73	98	86	99
	<b>Mathematics</b>	53	64	64	83

The school's overall performance was fairly good as evident from the number of learners achieving above 50% in the ANA tests in 2012 and 2013 and the school's performance in the LITNUM tests of 2011 and 2012. The principal and certain teacher respondents however feel that there is room for improvement, especially from Grade 4 onwards, as expressed by the Grade 4 Class teacher: "ANA's told us that for our school that our numeracy was weak. There's a lot of common things/factors I'm not aware of, the numeracy was low. The literacy came out pretty average" (Dumont Grade 4 teacher interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012). This point is reiterated by the Grade 7 language teacher who noted that "I know it is not low, but I think it can be much higher" (Grade 7 teacher interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

In questionnaires conducted with Grades 4 and 7 learners they also identify mathematics as a subject in which most of them are performing poorly.

**Table 34: Areas identified by Grade 4 and 7 learners in which they perform poorly**

Subjects- n=159		
Variable	N	Valid %
Life skills	59	37
Mathematics	84	53
Language	16	10

Whereas only 16% of the Grades 4 and 7 learners felt that they were performing very poorly in language, 53% felt that they were performing poorly in mathematics. The Principal concurs with both the teachers and learners views by noting that the problem lies in Grade 4. He stated, "On a whole they performed well, there was a problem in Grade 4 particularly with numeracy but the rest was alright" (Dumont Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012). Here, he was mainly referring to the ANA results for 2011, noting that the problem could be that the learners wrote at the beginning of the year just after the school holidays. The Grade 4 learners wrote on Grade 3 work, which he found problematic. As he put it:

It might have been abstract. We wrote the test at the beginning of the year and the children came back from the December holidays and I believe

children at that age need to be in contact with the work they are dealing with daily, just in terms of their memory spans and things like that. It wasn't bad but it wasn't what it could have been if they wrote the test at the right level. There was six weeks of school holiday, and it was two weeks into the term quite a long time and with primary school children especially 'in my mind I finished with that grade why should I bother with the work' (Dumont Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012).

The ANA test in 2012 was written in September and the test was set at the correct grade level. Contrary to the explanation given by the principal, the teacher respondents attributed the 'low' results in the ANA test to different factors, as noted by one teacher respondent:

I can't speak for other grades but for me in Grade 4 we still need more concrete things, we need aids, we need counters, we need sticks...because these learners who still count on fingers, and we don't have the aids in Grade 4 (Dumont Grade 4 teacher interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012).

The Grade 7 mathematics teacher had a different viewpoint as evident from our interview session:

Grade 7 maths teacher: ...you got non-specialists people doing a job that actually requires special training. So you got a teacher maybe their flair or aptitude is more towards say languages, but they sliding [marks are dropping] in maths.

Researcher: Where does this normally happen, in Grade 4 when they supposed to make the transition. Do you think it should start there?

Grade 7 maths teacher: I think it starts right at the bottom because that regular training must take place because you notice if time is allocated for maths and they finish and feel like they want to do extra reading because it is easier to do the reading than doing maths. Yet the weighting that one should spend on logical maths should be higher and I think those teachers know it's not properly taught up to Grade 6 (Dumont Grade 7 teacher interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The extracts above taken from interview sessions with the Grade 4 and 7 teachers highlights the lack of concrete aids (teaching and learning materials) for Grade 4 mathematics learners and the absence of specialist mathematics teachers especially in the lower grades. In the latter extract the teacher was referring to teachers in the lower grades not being specialist mathematics teachers who end up devoting extra time to areas they like teaching and neglecting other more important areas, such as teaching what he refers to as 'logical maths'. From the questionnaires conducted with teachers the vast majority felt more confident in teaching languages, especially in Grade 7, admitting that they found teaching languages more fun, as evident in the table below.

**Table 35: Areas that teacher's felt more confident teaching**

Learning area	Grade 1 teachers n= 11	Grade 4 teachers n=10	Grade 7 teachers n=10
Language	7	4	8
Mathematics	1	4	2
Both Language and mathematics	3	2	0

The table above (Table 35) is an indication of how confident teachers who completed the questionnaires felt about the subjects they taught: 61% of the teachers felt more confident teaching languages whereas only 23% felt confident teaching mathematics, while 16% felt confident teaching both subjects. It appears the reason for this is that most of the teachers who participated in this study received training at teacher training colleges where most of them majored in languages as opposed to mathematics. These teachers found that teaching languages was 'more fun' as expressed by some in the questionnaires conducted with teachers.

Other factors identified by teachers that could account for poor learner performance, stem from what is happening in the home, as evident from the following extracts from a Grade 4 teacher's interview:

I also think that support from home is a huge factor. What is happening at home, the situation, if mom or someone is available to help with homework, single parent families, working all day. A lot of these children are at aftercare until 6, they get home its chaos at home at 6.30 or 7 there's no time to sit with, to do homework, and it's not happening at aftercare, there's no supervision of homework there (Dumont Grade 4 teacher interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012).

The Grade 1 class teacher concurs with the Grade 4 teacher's observations, stating that:

A lot of parents work, so their input is limited. I can understand that if they getting home at 6 and they got to feed the family, and they got to do chores and washing and ironing and all that kind of stuff and then they must still spend time with their children (Dumont Grade 1 teacher interview, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The time constraints placed on working parents as indicated in the extracts above appears to be an inhibiting factor. The following example reinforces how ‘time’ can be a constraining factor, especially for children whose parents work long hours:

One of the girl’s, the average girl... she’s at risk. In term 1 and term 2 the work never went home and when I asked her, she goes home to an empty house. She has a key in her pocket, she unlocks. Her dad a policeman and her mom works shifts. So the adults get home late at night. She’s got a younger sibling who comes home from crèche with her. She’s got no one to help her with maths and she struggles with numeracy. At the beginning of the year, I was coming down quite strictly on her. I raised my voice and said ‘Why’s this not done’ and she was crying, and when I started speaking to her I found out there is no one to help this child. Dad gets home at 7 then its dinner, then bath, its bed. Mom not there or very seldom there, she’s working funny shifts and I thought I can’t be harsh on this child. Definitely, there are other factors at home. You got to think of where kids are coming from, what they going through (Dumont Grade 4 teacher interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012).

The limited amount of time parents have at their disposal to spend with their children is not the only inhibiting factor. Poor language use in the home coupled with not having enough ‘background knowledge’ also appear to be lacking. In most cases the ‘children’ teachers are referring to in the extracts taken from interviews with teachers are ‘coloured and black’ learners irrespective of class background. This comes across clearly in the following discussion:

Researcher:...is there anything about children’s learning, because you have been in the business for so long, that you noticed and would like to share with me?

Grade 1 class teacher: The children don’t have the background, they don’t have the information in their heads and I can’t understand it because they are exposed to so much technology. For example, they don’t have background information they don’t have knowledge of whatever the characteristics of certain animals are

Researcher: Farm animals and domestic animals?

Grade 1 class teacher: Yes they don’t understand that. How can you have a cow as a pet in a domestic situation...I think it might be a social problem because of parents working. I do believe that. I don’t think parents talk to their children sufficiently (Dumont Grade 1 teacher interview, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The overexposure to technology and not using it to enhance learning appears to be a concern for certain teachers, as the Grade 1 noted in the extract above: “I can’t understand it because

they are exposed to so much technology”. The Grade 7 language teacher however felt that it was not technology as she expressed in one of our interview sessions:

They not the computer generation, these particular kids. I know more about computers than they do and that’s why I introduced power points and got the computer teacher to teach them that element. But we were having difficulty with saving things. Well I said to them “email it to yourself” I asked if they knew how to do that and they said “No mam” “But you do have an email account?” “Yes, but how do you email something to yourself?” So it’s not computers. With many children I taught before it was computers but this is not the computer generation. This is very much TV and they going to bed incredibly late (Dumont Grade 7 teacher interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The principal summed it up by noting that children, especially those in Grade 1 lacked what he called “common sense”. He attributes this to exposure through the media. As he puts it, “Common sense is lacking through the media which is varied. Children cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality. Children these days are not left alone enough to experience life and make common sense decisions” (Dumont Principal interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013). The Grade 1 teacher identified the lack of parental interaction with children to be limiting but also noted that, when parents do interact with their children, they often do not speak, as she expressed it, a ‘corrected language’. Here she was referring to the mixture of English and Afrikaans, which is how most of the ‘non-white’ children speak to each other on the playground and in certain classrooms. She adds:

I don’t think that they speak a vocabulary rich language at home. I don’t think parents in many cases are in a position to actually correct their children’s language. Now I’m going to say something which is totally off, I probably shouldn’t say it but it’s the truth, gospel truth, it applies to this school. If you come to a meeting here where there are many parents, the predominate language is poorly spoken Afrikaans,...and it’s very noticeable when they interact, when parents interact with one another...(Dumont Grade 1 teacher interview, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Speaking a mixture of languages and not one language appears to be a disabling factor, since as the teacher suggests, it could lead to ‘poor vocabulary and poor sentence structure and this carries over to the children’. She emphasised that for her the main issue is “poor language and that inhibits everything...” (Dumont Grade 1 teacher interview, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012). This issue, the language barrier, is confirmed by the principal in one of our interview sessions:

We are an English-speaking school and they are not necessarily English-speaking children. This does not impact on their intellectual ability but in

Grade 1 it is crucial to understand the concepts in the language it is being taught and children ...battle with the language in which concepts are being taught (Dumont Principal interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013)

The school has developed a number of strategies to improve learner achievement levels, especially in mathematics, as mentioned by the principal, “Even though we generally have done quite well certainly we’ve not been recognised for doing well, but the school has performed better than the circuit, better than the district” (Dumont Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012).

He adds:

The year before [2011] we did an analysis of our own internal results. We then compared it to the analysis done [by] the Department with regards to systemic test and compared it with what was found in the ANAs to find or identify areas where we were correlating (Dumont Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012).

This correlation or analysis of three different test results resulted in the school adopting various classroom-based intervention strategies, such as: providing remediation exercises, providing workshops and arranging seminars on how to improve learner performance. The principal provides an example of one seminar where they addressed the issue of questioning techniques: “The librarian and I did workshops on questioning techniques, higher order questioning, how you can go about setting questions” (Dumont Principal interview, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012).

The schools relationship with the District Office can be described as supportive. Teacher respondents and the principal felt that District officials provided adequate support. The nature of the support required is mainly administrative and on occasion they do require the help of the school social worker for guidance but this does not appear to be frequent. They felt that the support they got from the District Office was sufficient. The Grade 4 class teacher felt that intervention programmes should not be done by the district office. As she puts it, “I don’t think it needs to come from the District. There are teachers here who have the knowledge to offer that support” (Dumont Grade 4 teacher interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012).

I now turn to the internal school results and provide the learners’ views on their academic performance especially in language and mathematics.

**Table 36: The internal examination results at the end of the third term (September 2012) for language and mathematics.**

Identification type	Learner code	Gender	Language	Mathematics	Days absent
Above Average	DL101	Female	7	7	2
Average	DL102	Female	5	6	4
Below Average	DL103	Male	4	3	24
At risk	DL104	Female	2	4	10
Above average	DL401	Male	4	4	5
Average	DL402	Male	3	4	5
Below average	DL403	Female	3	3	1
At risk	DL404	Female	3	2	26
Above average	DL701	Female	7	7	1
Average	DL702	Male	7	6	1
Below average	DL703	Female	4	1	11
At risk	DL704	Male	1	1	13

As with Flamingo Primary School, the ‘above average’ and ‘average’ learners at this school performed fairly well in both language and mathematics. The problem appears when children are performing below average or have been identified as ‘at risk’ learners since these learners either perform poorly in both subjects or do well in language and extremely poorly in mathematics. An area of concern is the high absentee rate amongst both ‘below average’ and ‘at risk’ learners.

Table 37 provides the questionnaire responses of Grade 4 and 7 learners’, justifying why they were performing poorly. As previously displayed in Table 34, 53% of the learner respondents struggled with mathematics.



**Table 37: Grade 4 and 7 learner responses as to why they were performing poorly**

Reasons for poor performance	Grade 4		Grade 7	
	n= 74	%	n=86	%
Difficult	19	26	39	45
Do not like it	22	30	18	21
No effort/lazy	26	35	27	31
Language	7	9	2	2
Teachers and their practices	0	0	0	0

As is evident from the above table, Table 37 learners struggled with a subject mainly because it is too difficult or they simply did not like the subject or they were struggling because they were not putting in enough effort. As a Grade 4 ‘average’ learner so directly put it, “I should concentrate more on my work and that’s all” (Dumont Grade 4 learner interview, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012).

Grade 1 learners in our interview sessions felt that, in order for them to improve, they had to listen to the teacher and stop talking. During my observation time in the classroom I often witnessed certain children’s disruptive behaviour, especially those among the weaker group of children, which resulted in incomplete work or being reprimanded by the teacher. In a group interview session with the Grade 1s, an ‘at risk’ learner expresses what she has to do in order to improve:

I must start telling X [ name of boy omitted] he must stop talking to me and I must start doing what Miss[name of teacher omitted] says. I think I must take my books home and start reading before class...(Dumont Grade 1 learner interview, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Learners being disruptive appear to be common amongst other grades as well, as a Grade 7 ‘above average’ learner so eloquently explained:

I like it when people are keeping the peace so in a way when it’s like chaotic I dislike it. When it gets disruptive and when there’s that certain learners’ that always wanting more attention because they not doing well academically they act out... It happens every single day but at different times... it’s like a virus when one person starts laughing or does something

idiotic then the next person and the next person then soon all chaos breaks loose... (Dumont Grade 7 learner interview, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

He adds that:

I think that there are three levels of learners, those who care, the ones that don't want to fail, and the ones that are more *laisse faire*. They are the group that is always disrupting the class (Dumont Grade 7 learner interview, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The Grade 7 language teacher explains how a learner, who did not have his presentation, deliberately froze her computer by inserting an infected flash drive resulting in her not being able to listen to other learners' presentations. The teacher noted that "X [learners name omitted] has a very bad 'I couldn't care less' attitude, yet he comes across incredibly friendly, cold and calculated" (Dumont Grade 7 teacher interview, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The Grade 7 mathematics teacher supports this view. As he puts it, "If you look at children in my class this year- I think their poor performance is due to apathy, those that want to do well, do well and the rest don't bother" (Dumont Grade 7 teacher interview, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

I will elaborate further on this disruptive behaviour when drawing cross-case inferences later in this chapter and in the next chapter (Chapter 6), seeing that such behaviour appears to filter into the classroom and in turn impacts on teachers' instructional time. What does however appear obvious from my interviews with the majority of learners across the three grades is that learners who are disruptive are often aware of it, and the effect it has on their learning. Besides being disruptive, other learners who find a subject difficult would withdraw by not responding to questions or not asking questions when they failed to understand a topic. One such learner expressed in an interview session:

When I was in Grade 4 and 3 I was a bit chatty and naughty but then out of the blue in Grade 5 I changed. Like I don't speak in class, I don't raise up my hand to ask questions. Sometimes I give the wrong answer then the teacher just say, 'it's wrong' (Dumont Grade 7 learner interview, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

From the extracts above relating to learners' behaviour one comes to realise that learners adopt different 'coping mechanisms'; they become disruptive (do not concentrate, laugh, talk and disturb other learners and the teacher), or withdraw (do not speak, ask or respond to questions) or become completely apathetic (adopt a careless attitude). In the next chapter, I will illuminate how these learner dispositions affect pedagogic practices and pedagogic relationships.

To sum up, this former Model C and all ‘white’ school now, serves children from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds. This fairly well-resourced school is located in an upper class residential area is not a community school in the traditional sense. The school’s performance in both language and mathematics across all grades is fairly good however teachers and learners from Grade 4 to 7 do acknowledge that they struggle with mathematics. Inside - school factors that could account for the latter is: restricted classroom space, lack of concrete teaching materials, lack of trained subject specialists (especially teachers who teach mathematics), lack of parental involvement, poor language use (attributed to language use in the home and the mixture of languages), and the disruptive behaviour of certain learners.

### 5.2.3 Zola Primary School

Zola Primary School is a former Department of Education and Training (DET) or ‘black’ school. This Section 20 (non-fee paying) school is 16 years old. The school has a quintile rating of 1 (extremely poor), given the fact that the school is located in a very poor semi-urban area.

The location of this school adds to the manifold challenges the school and its community faces. These social challenges are expressed by the principal in one of our interview sessions. As he puts it:

Our community is predominately previously disadvantaged. The mass of learners who are here come from these homes. These communities is a farm community, being supported by farms and most parents are entirely dependent on these farms to earn a living. It’s a type of rural setup in an urban area. We are 1km away from the farms and those parents are from the Eastern Cape, to work, some of them are caught up in no work resulting in unemployment. We have lots of challenges. The first few years I was confronted with a lot of child abuse, rape, fathers and stepfathers raping their children. So that is the nature, thought our children are surrounded with. There’s a great deal of social mishaps in this community because of the background of the parents (Zola Principal interview, 11 June 2012).

He further adds:

They don’t come to meetings maybe 20% will attend intervention meetings with teachers. Disappointing factor, parents don’t come... when you insist they come here smelling like liquor. Those factors surrounding us, they retarding the process of teaching and learning (Zola Principal interview, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012).

The following extract taken from my reflective journal provides my first impressions of the school:

En route to this school I pass by a few farms, a busy taxi rank and many container type informal businesses. I make my way on a narrow sandy road to the front gate of the school. The school is nestled amongst small box-like informal homes; a combination of poor quality brick homes and shacks. Three plots away from the school is a bottle store and at 8 am this store is already abuzz with customers streaming in and out of the store. The school, still under construction, is a collection of different types of classrooms. There are the prefabricated classrooms which are in a state of disrepair and which house Grades 4-7. These classrooms are small, have very little ventilation and are often sandy because of the unpaved pathways to the classroom. There are hardly any wall charts and because of a lack of cupboards and tables one often finds textbooks and learner note books on the floor. Then on the opposite side of a parking area one finds the reception area, the school's administrative block and the classrooms housing the Grade 1-3 learners. These classrooms are big in size, have adequate tables and desks and contain colourful wall charts and samples of learners work. The Grade 1 classrooms have small storerooms attached to the classroom for holding books and equipment. The Principal informs me that the Grades 4-7 classrooms are still under construction and that this will only be available by next year July [my first visit to the school was in June 2012]. Because of this the children have very limited space to play. The noise caused by the construction often makes teaching and learning impossible, drowning out the voices of teachers in their attempt to teach.

The physical location of this school, as described in the extract, being amongst a 'hub of activities', illuminates the type of social ills confronting this community which appear to impact negatively on the school. The following tables provide insights into the home context of learners' and are indicative of the level of poverty facing this school:

**Table 38: Percentage of learners' who have water and electricity in their homes**

Water: n=271	Electricity: n=270
Yes – 228 (84%)	Yes – 253 (94%)
No – 43 (16%)	No- 17 (6%)

Although the majority of households have water and electricity, 16% still do not have running water in their homes and 6% do not have electricity.

**Table 39: Percentage of learners' who have access to cultural goods**

Cultural Goods- n=257		
Range	N	Valid %
Poor (less than 3 items)	111	43
Good (between 3 and 6 items)	124	48
Very Good (7-8 items)	22	9

Table 39 indicates that only 9% of the learners have goods in their homes that could be helpful in gaining access to information, including access to a radio, television, cell phone, computer, printer, internet access, laptop and books, whereas 48% have some access and 43% have fewer than 3 cultural items in their homes.

**Table 40: Percentage of learners' who have access to capital goods**

Capital Goods- n=263		
Range	N	Valid %
Poor (less/equal to 3 items)	103	39
Good (4-6 items)	113	44
Very Good (7-9 items)	47	18

Table 40 indicates access to 'capital goods', such as a bicycle, motor bike, car, refrigerator, kettle, washing machine, toaster, stove and microwave, which as mentioned, normally increases according to income, wealth and standard of living. In this case only 18% of the learners have all the items in their homes, suggesting that the majority of the learners come from low income homes.

Now that I have established the status of households of learners in this school by looking at the manifold socio-economic challenges facing this community and learners' home context, I now move to the internal school environment. As mentioned, Zola Primary School is a non-fee paying, 'black' school serving children from a predominantly, working class township community. The school has a staff compliment of 36 staff members, which includes one principal, two deputy principals, five department heads and 29 educators. Currently there are 1275 learners. Grades 1-3 are taught in their mother tongue, namely isiXhosa and Grades 4-7 are taught in English. The majority of the learners (100%) are on the school's feeding scheme, which is another indication of the level of poverty facing the school and its

community. There are 29 classrooms and one computer lab with 25 computers. The school does not have a library there are no specialist rooms and no school hall. The staff has access to a well - equipped staff room and three computers. The school is often faced with shortages of chairs, desks and tables, textbooks and stationary, library material relevant to teaching, facilities for duplicating worksheets and internet access to facilitate instruction. The courtyard of the school doubles as a playground. The field assigned for playing is occupied by prefabricated classrooms and mobile toilets. The computer lab for learners is not functioning owing to construction works and constant vandalism of the school. A key role player at the school informed me that the police have to constantly visit the school due to vandalism. I visited the school on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and on this day the copper pipes in the learners' toilets were stolen rendering the toilets out of order for some time. On a previous visit, classrooms were vandalised, and books and desks damaged. To add to the problem, the electricity load for the school is insufficient. This causes constant interruption which affects internet access to the school. The secretary notes:

We get phone calls from the department asking why our teachers did not attend the workshops. How are we supposed to know if there is no internet there is no emails coming through. This has been going on for a long time even today I can't get online so I have no access to the CEMIS or emails (Informal conversation with the secretary of Zola Primary, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013).

The following table indicates the average class size in the cases researched.

**Table 41: Average class size per grade (Grades 1, 4 and 7)**

Grade	Total learners per grade	Number of classes per grade	Average number of learners per grade
1	236	5	47
4	158	4	40
7	179	4	45

Overcrowding in certain classes is problematic. As one teacher puts it, "The problem in the class is overcrowding of learners in the class because you don't have enough [space] for each learner [for me] to get to which problem it is". It is especially challenging for the Grade 1 teachers where the class size is averaging at 47, as I observed during my visit to a Grade 1 classroom. The teacher finds it difficult to give individual attention to learners and she often finds herself exhausted at the end of the day.

The school's performance in both the WCED systemic tests and the ANA test of 2012 shows that learners are struggling in both English and mathematics as is evident from the tables below.

**Table 42: Summary average percentage for the school in WCED systemic tests/LITNUM tests for Grade 6 in 2011 and 2012**

Area tested	2011	2012	Difference between 2012 and 2011
Mathematics %	24.0	24.9	0.9
Language %	25.3	32.3	7.0

The table shows no substantial change between 2011 and 2012 for mathematics and an improvement in language between 2011 and 2012. Although the school's average for mathematics was 24.9 % the pass rate for that year was 0, as indicated in the following table.

**Table 43: Percentage categories for mathematics- Grade 6**

Percentage categories for Mathematics (rounded off)								
%	0-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
2011	35	44	18	1	1	1	0	0
2012	35	37	19	9	0	0	0	0

**Table 44: Percentage categories for language- Grade 6**

Percentage categories for Language (rounded off)								
%	0-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-100%
2011	34	35	22	5	3	1	0	0
2012	11	30	38	16	4	1	0	0

Tables 43 and 44, reveal disturbing pass rate results. The 2012 mathematics results show that none of the Grade 6 learners' who sat for this test managed to get the 50% pass percentage while 5 learners managed to pass the language test. The poor performance of learners in both mathematics and English is concerning, especially in the ANA results provided below.

**Table 45: Summary of the ANA results for Grades 1-6 in both literacy and numeracy for 2012 and 2013 (Grade average percentages and percentages of learners who achieved above 50%).**

GRADE	SUBJECT	2012		2013	
		Grade average% for the school	% achieving above 50% at the school	Grade average% for the school	% achieving above 50% at the school
GR1	English Home language	None	None	55 (1)	100
	Mathematics	None	None	64	82
GR2	English Home language	None	None	77(1)	100
	Mathematics	54	67	53	63
GR3	English Home language	None	None	None	None
	Mathematics	39	22	55	68
GR4	English First additional language	45	41	49	45
	Mathematics	34	13	27	11
GR5	English First additional language	37	18	45	42
	Mathematics	48	56	50	68
GR6	English First additional language	29	7	53	64
	Mathematics	28	1	44	35

There were no reported results available for English home language for Grade 1-3 in 2012, and neither for English home language for Grade 3 in 2013, mainly because the majority of learners at this school are isiXhosa speaking. The pass rate for English First Additional language in 2012 for Grades 4 to 6 is below 50%. This is concerning because the language of teaching and learning from Grade 4 to 7 is English. There is however change in Grade 5 where 68% of learners received above 50%. The problem lies largely with mathematics, especially in 2012. The difficulty appears to start in Grade 2 and then becomes worse as the learner moves up the grades. Even though there still is a problem with the mathematics results in Grade 4 in 2013, we do see an increase in the Grade 5 and 6 mathematics results. The latter could be due to a number of factors, including: the transition from Grades 3 to 4, the fact that the language of teaching and learning changes in Grade 4, or a shift in the teaching staff (Grade 6 mathematics teacher moving to Grade 4), or it could be due to the school being a LITNUM focus school, or the school partnership with a local University aimed at improving mathematics results. The learner respondents also identified mathematics as a subject in which they struggled as is evident in table 46 below:



**Table 46: Areas identified by Grade 4 and 7 learners in which they perform poorly**

Subjects- n=141		
Variable	N	Valid %
Life skills	35	25
Mathematics	83	59
Language	23	16

The table shows that 59% of the learners identified mathematics as a subject in which they were performing poorly. The reasons they give will be expanded on later in this chapter, but first I turn to the principal's and teachers' views on the overall performance of the school in the systemic tests, especially the ANA results.

The principal and teacher respondents attribute the school's poor performance to a number of factors. These include absenteeism amongst children, the lack of parental involvement, the language barrier evident in Grade 4, the language usage in systemic test and other internal school factors. The following extracts are taken from my interviews with the principal and teachers, which accentuates the extent of the problem:

Grade 4 maths teacher: You know last year [2012] I was in Grade 6 and then the results came while I was in hospital. When I came to school I was surprised that they got zero

Researcher: For mathematics

Grade 4 maths teacher: For mathematics

Researcher: Why do you think that happened?

Grade 4 maths teacher: I don't know how that happens because I took most of my time and their time. We did even evening classes to do preparation of the work...What is happening as the year goes on, they drop and drop and drop. Maybe it depends to learners during the year (Zola Grade 4 teacher interview, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

The teacher notes that even though she put in the effort she could not understand why the learners showed no improvement. She later adds that she thinks that the reason for the poor mathematics results is due to learners not working at home and not attending school regularly. As she puts it:

These children they don't work at their homes ... even now this morning there was a parent who went to King Williams town and then he was so surprised to find out that his son was at home didn't come to school there are some problems like that. Mothers that go to work early leaving their children behind and they don't come to school regular (Zola Grade 4 teacher interview, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

Contrary to this, the Grade 7 teacher explains what she thinks the reason was for the poor mathematics results: “In Grade 6 last year [2012] we had a problem at the school because as from June to September there was no maths teacher...It was a crisis. We had a problem with that” (Zola Grade 7 teacher interview, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013). The problem the teacher was referring to in the above extract is the problem of absenteeism amongst teachers. From my observation in the two months I visited the school this appeared to be a contributing factor, which is especially damaging to the higher grades (Grades 4-7). For example, the English teacher teaching all grade 7 learners was absent from school for the entire period that I was there. This meant that 170 children were without an English teacher for that period. The following extract, taken from my reflective journal, shows the extent of the problem:

At the start of the second term I arrive at the school to collect various documents. The computer is off line and I am unable to access the documents I need. Instead a key role player shares with me that today 10 teachers are absent. This includes the principal, deputy principal and 4 department heads. ‘X’ angrily explains, “This is a sickness at this school”. I’m not allowed to access the teachers register to confirm this. I do however remember when I came in February observing a Grade 1 class being without a teacher for a month, the Grade 4 classes being without an English teacher for a week and the Grade 7 English teacher, whom I never met, not being there. ‘X’ adds that on average about 6 teachers are absent daily. Whether or not this problem is being addressed is not clear but ‘X’ notes “They just fill out the leave forms”, suggesting that nothing is being done in this regard. The foyer and staff room is filled with boxes containing textbooks and dictionaries which had to be distributed to classes but because of key people being absent there is no one to manage this process. The books were delivered in the previous term. ‘X’ reveals that I have to take a look in the storeroom which is stacked to the brim with textbooks and learner workbooks. Two WCED officials arrive at the school unannounced to assess the school buildings. I overhear a teacher saying that he hopes they do not go into the storeroom. As I sit in the foyer, I notice the panicky look on the faces of those in the administrative block as the officials inform the deputy principal that they need someone to take them around the school, and that they need to access each classroom. ‘X’ notes that maybe this is a good thing, “Now they will become aware of what’s happening here”.

Regular absenteeism amongst teachers is problematic in this school. The school often makes use of the feeding scheme ladies and unemployed parents to look after learners when teachers are absent but on a day, as described in the extract, this task becomes more challenging since there are not enough people to stand in for absent teachers. During these times children often do not work which results in a loss in instructional time as confirmed by the Grade 7 teacher: “...if there is no teacher for the learning area that time the learners are making a noise there’s no one” (Zola Grade 7 teacher interview, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013).

In the following excerpt taken from my interview with the principal, he provides additional reasons for the school's poor performance. He explains that:

There is a great assumption that our schools are similar in terms of resources. Now when these people are setting the papers they forget to take into consideration background of the institution. So as long as this is still the case that perception, that mind - set, there will always be some inequalities in terms of performances as with the results of ANA and LITNUM test or systemic tests (Zola Principal interview, 11 June 2012).

In the excerpt above, the Principal was referring to the inequalities that exist between different schools regarding resources. In addition to the lack of resources, he also attributes poor performance to the transition from Grade 3 to 4 noting that “when you go up Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 things are terrible in terms of outcomes but in Grades 1 to 3 things are better” (Principal interview, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012). For him, it is due to the differences between home language and the language used for teaching and learning in the foundation phase, and the language used for teaching and learning from Grade 4 onwards. He noted that “...material, textbooks are all written in English but teachers always throw in some translations/code switching but this becomes problematic in the event of ANA and systemic test, the response of the learners to questions that is” (Zola Principal interview, 11 June 2012).

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The misalignment between the language used in benchmark test, and that which children are exposed to in the classroom, is expanded on in a discussion I had with the Grade 7 teacher confirming what the principal had alluded to earlier:

Grade 7 maths teacher: The problem with our learners is the language. They don't understand the language sometimes that is used.

Researcher: On the question paper?

Grade 7 maths teacher: Yes

Researcher: I noticed that you code switch quite a lot in your classroom. So you switch to isiXhosa if they don't understand?

Grade 7 maths teacher: Yes, in our lesson what I did I used both languages to make them, to make them to be comfortable and understand what I'm talking about.

Researcher: Do you think they understand it better if you teach it in isiXhosa?

Grade 7 maths teacher: Yes because the problem with the curriculum that we are using in the foundation phase most of the time they were using isiXhosa, most! And when they are starting from the intermediate phase they've got a problem of the language because they are coming with that language of isiXhosa...Some of them are struggling and they still have to

struggle with language (Zola Grade 7 teacher interview, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2013).

As mentioned the Grade 4-7 learners are taught in English, but as I observed, teachers often resorted to code switching to explain concepts. Although this practice of code switching helps the learner to understand the lesson and what is required of them during class activities, it does appear to limit certain learners' ability to understand the questions used in the benchmark tests. Another problem identified by the principal is societal factors that appear to have a disabling effect on learners. As he puts it

...the learner must be healthy, healthy in mind will assist the learner to deal with issues but a learner who comes from a society rife in alcoholism, negligence, poverty becomes very, very difficult for them to understand mathematics (Zola Principal interview, 11 June 2012).

Despite what may appear as a dismal state of affairs, the school has adopted various strategies to improve the schools poor performance. The school was identified by the Department as a LITNUM focus school. The school therefore receives support in designing assessment tasks for mathematics as well as other assessment programmes, as explained by the principal "Every term we must submit our assessment tasks, they are moderated then we go on teaching this". The support from the District Office is welcomed but appears insufficient. The principal noted that the school was still waiting on the subject advisor for languages to assist the school but, in his own words, "We still waiting for them to come". The school has alternative strategies in place, such as the support it gets from a university programme aimed at uplifting the standard of literacy and numeracy at the school, and teachers attended a two - week training session with the State Learning Institute to increase their understanding in certain learning areas, especially in Grade 4. Having these strategies in place could account for the school's improved performance in mathematics, as is evident from the 2013 ANA results (see Table 46).

Now that I have provided the views of the principal and teachers, I give the views of the learner respondents regarding their academic performance.

**Table 47: The internal examination results at the end of the third term (September 2013) for language and mathematics**

Identification type	Learner code	Gender	Language	Mathematics	Days absent
Above Average	ZL101	Female	6	6	1
Average	ZL102	Female	5	6	6
Below Average	ZL103	Female	4	3	1
At risk	ZL104	Male	2	2	11
Above average	ZL401	Female	7	6	0
Average	ZL402	Male	5	5	6
Below average	ZL403	Female	3	2	3
At risk	ZL404	Male	1	1	14
Above average	ZL701	Female	6	4	0
Average	ZL702	Female	6	3	2
Below average	ZL703	Female	3	3	1
At risk	ZL704	Male	3	1	13

The ‘above average’ and ‘average’ learners in Grades 1 and 4 performed well in both language and mathematics, however the ‘below average’ and ‘at risks’ learners performed poorly in both language and mathematics. In Grade 7, the ‘above average’ and ‘average’ learners only performed well in languages. The fact that they performed poorly in mathematics dovetails with earlier findings (see responses of teachers during interview sessions and responses of learners in questionnaires). A common factor, similar to the other schools in the study, is the high absenteeism amongst ‘at risks’ learners. The following table (Table 48) illuminates learner responses as to why they were performing poorly in mathematics.

**Table 48: Grade 4 and 7 learner responses as to why they were performing poorly**

Reasons for poor performance	Grade 4		Grade 7	
	n= 54	%	n=24	%
Difficult	9	17	9	38
Do not like it	20	37	7	29
No effort/lazy	18	33	4	17
Language	7	13	3	13
Teachers and their practices	0	0	1	4

The majority of the Grades 4 and 7 learners who completed questionnaires (37% and 29%, respectively), noted that they simply did not like the subject or they did not put in the effort. Similar to the other learners at the other schools, they did not blame teachers or their practices. Thirteen percent of Grades 4 and 7 learners noted that the language of teaching and learning attributed to their poor performance. The latter reflects what other respondents (Principal and Grades 4 and 7 mathematics teachers) reported about their difficulties.

Disruptive behaviour also appears to be an issue for certain learners at this school, as stated by one Grade 7 learner, “I don’t like the fighting and I don’t like children who are shouting because if the teacher is shouting at us then I won’t concentrate on my work” (Zola Grade 7 learner interview, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013). This was reiterated by another learner who noted that she does not like it when, as she expressed, “Students don’t listen to the teacher; the teacher must discipline” (Zola Grade 7 learner interview, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013).

To sum up, this ‘black’ township school serves predominantly poor learners from both the township and the surrounding farming areas. The geographical location of the school, amongst a ‘hub of activities’ (taxi rank, informal businesses, liquor store), adds to the manifold social challenges facing the community and the school. The majority of the learners who attend this school come from low socio-economic home backgrounds. At school, learners perform poorly in both language and mathematics. The problem appears to surface in Grade 3, escalates in Grade 4 and worsens as learners move up the grades. Reasons for the poor performance are attributed to the following: transition from Grade 3 to 4 (not only does

the language of teaching and learning change from isiXhosa to English, but learners are also exposed to different pedagogical practices compared to those used in the foundation phase), lack of parental involvement and the inability of parents to help learners with homework, class size, learner and teacher absenteeism and disruptive behaviour.

### 5.3 Cross - case inferences

In the previous sections, 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3, I profiled the individual schools and their communities, providing deep insights into the contextual dynamics surrounding the schools in which the cases (Grades 1, 4 and 7) are bounded. I paid particular attention to issues related to learners' home background and experiences, the overall performance of these schools in two national benchmark tests, and provided pertinent explanations given by respondents for these performance levels. I end this chapter by summarising the findings, extracting key results that are pertinent in understanding the multiple cases under study.

The following table summarises the differences between schools.

**Table 49: Summary of the three selected schools in which the micro cases (units of analysis) are contained**

Features	Flamingo Primary	Dumont Primary	Zola Primary
School Type	Former HOR school	Former Model C	Former DET school
Quintile rating	4	5	1
Number of learners	1159	612	1275
Number of teachers	27	22	29
School Fees	R550p.a.	R6 400p.a	Non fee paying school
% of learners on the feeding scheme programme	45%	0	100%
<b>Room types available</b>			
Classrooms	34	21	29
Computer lab	1	1	1
Library	1	2	0
Specialist Rooms	0	9	0
<b>Other facilities</b>			
School hall	1	1	0
Administrative office	3	5	3
Computers for teachers	3	22	3
Duplicating machines	1	2	1

Swimming pool	0	1	0
Playgrounds	1	4	1
Soccer fields	0	2	0
Rugby fields	0	2	0
<b>Average class size per grade studied</b>			
Grade 1	33	29	47
Grade 4	37	30	40
Grade 7	36	30	45

What is evident from the table (Table: 49) are the two extremes in terms of quintile ratings. On the one hand there is Dumont Primary labelled an extremely rich well - resourced school and, on the other hand, we have Zola Primary an extremely poor school, both in terms of infrastructure and the community the school serves. Flamingo primary, as mentioned has been incorrectly rated since the school is not as well-resourced as Dumont Primary and it serves a community that varies in terms of socio-economic background. The differences between the schools are exacerbated by the percentage of learners who are on the feeding scheme: with 45% of learners at Flamingo Primary and 100% at Zola Primary. The latter is evident of the level of poverty facing this school since for most of these learners this is the only meal they receive for the day.

My initial assumption, which could be seen as a limitation to this study, centres on the issue of 'community schools' and that one could clearly distinguish schools in terms of class but which I found not to be the case. Both Flamingo Primary and Dumont Primary are not 'community schools' in the traditional sense. Flamingo Primary is located in an industrial area far from residential homes, serving a community with varied socio-economic and class backgrounds. Dumont Primary, located in an upper-middle class area, serves communities from outlying suburbs and from different class structures. The dynamics surrounding Zola Primary are also important to mention, seeing that the school is located in a semi-urban setup where children come from the surrounding township and farms that surround the township. Children who attend these schools have different home experiences, as a result of being exposed to different influences. The discussions around the location of the schools and learners' home context, as alluded to earlier in this chapter, are crucial to understanding the deep - rooted contextual constraints facing these schools. To recall, the location of Zola Primary is around a 'hub of activities' namely, the taxi rank, informal businesses, informal



housing and the busy liquor store that accentuates the many obstacles this school has to overcome.

When I turned my attention to the overall performance of these schools in the ANAs a number of interesting points surfaced. To summarise, I single out the mathematics results in the following comparison (Table 43, 44 and 45), since the majority of the learners in all three schools identified it as a subject in which they were performing poorly. I used Grade 6 results because Grade 7 learners do not write the ANA tests. Although the principals and teacher respondents at the three selected schools expressed mixed feelings about the writing of these tests, as alluded to earlier, they welcomed the ANA tests since most used it as a diagnostic tool to deal with poor performance and to identify the types of interventions required to improve their learners' academic performance. As the principal of Dumont Primary so eloquently put it: "the ANA's is a good indication of not necessarily the standard of work but it is a good diagnostic tool- from the results that we get we can actually work on that areas in which we need to improve" (Dumont Principal interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013). This point was confirmed by the Principal at Flamingo Primary who noted:

The ANAs creates an awareness that we cannot just continue doing things as done in the past...In the past we saw it as a measure to see how terrible we are performing but we tried last year to tackle the identifiable problems, especially in mathematics (Flamingo Principal interview, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012).

Tables 50, 51 and 55 offer a comparison of the ANA results for mathematics across the three schools for 2012 and 2013.

**Table 50: Comparing the percentage of Grade 1 learners who passed the ANA test in mathematics in 2012 and 2013 across the three selected schools**

YEAR	School	Flamingo Primary	Dumont Primary	Zola Primary
2012	% who achieved above 50%	95	96	Not recorded
2013	% who achieved above 50%	61	81	82

As is evident from Table 43, Grade 1 learners appear to be performing fairly well in the ANA tests across the three selected schools. The drop in the results in 2013 could be attributed to a number of aspects, including home contexts (exposure to things in the home and the mismatch between the language spoken in the home and the language of teaching and learning), curriculum reform and insufficient training with regards to CAPS, the transition from Grade R to Grade 1 in terms of the structure of learning (the lack of routine and low emotional levels of learners and not being school ready), and the lack of parental involvement, amongst other things I alluded to earlier (see Section 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3). The aspects regarding the transition from Grade R to 1 is worth exploring, as the principal of Dumont Primary noted:

The problem is the child comes into Grade 1, we don't expect the child to know Grade 1 stuff but expect them to be prepared in terms of social aspects, routine but very often they do not have this sort of background coming into Grade 1 (Dumont Principal interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013).

Grade 1 'at risks' learners are often labelled as 'babyish' or diagnosed as being OT (in need of occupational therapy, as is common at Dumont Primary), a problem certain teachers attributed to home influences, as noted by the Grade 1 teacher at Flamingo Primary school:

He [referring to an "at risk" learner] can be very immature. How they treat him in the home that is important. They [the parents] are babying him at home (Flamingo Grade 1 teacher interview, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012).

The Grade 1 teacher at Dumont Primary would often diagnose her struggling learners as being OT or immature. As she expressed it:

He [referring to a boy who reads above grade level and who had completed the Grade 1 reading programme in March of that year already but writes slowly] is a lazy boy. OT is a combination of being lazy and low muscle tone. He is a prime example of someone who needs OT and the sad part is because of his intelligence he would actually benefit...he can do verbal stuff but the actual motor stuff he cannot do and that is going to inhibit his learning in my opinion (Dumont Grade 1 teacher, interview 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

This teacher's discourse of OT was often directed at struggling learners that the teacher had earmarked to fail. I found that Grade 1 teachers across the three selected schools did not know how to work with children who were struggling to learn and they would adopt one of three choices, diagnosing the learner with one or other disorder (e.g. OT), referring the child

to the LSEN teacher in the case of Flamingo and Zola Primary Schools, and as in the case of Dumont Primary to a therapists, or labelling the child as slow or lazy. On the one hand, struggling learners often used various ‘coping mechanisms’, as expressed by the Grade 1 teacher at Dumont Primary, to cope with not understanding the work or not completing tasks. These mechanisms included talking, laughing, looking around and not concentrating. As mentioned, Grade 1 learners in general felt they needed to concentrate more and listen to the teacher in order to improve. Teachers on the other hand held low expectations of these learners - placing them in lower ability groups and exposing them to less work. The latter I will explore in the next chapter mainly because it impacts on both the learner’s achievement levels and the teacher’s classroom practices.

**Table 51: Comparing the percentage of Grade 4 learners who passed the ANA test in mathematics in 2012 and 2013 across the three selected schools**

YEAR	School	Flamingo Primary	Dumont Primary	Zola Primary
2012	% who achieved above 50%	43	85	13
2013	% who achieved above 50%	48	74	11

The number of learners who achieved lower than 50% in the Grade 4 ANA tests in 2012 and 2013 at Flamingo Primary and Zola Primary is concerning. At Dumont Primary, more learners achieved above 50% even though there was a slight decrease in 2013. Earlier, I alluded to the reasons given for the poor performance in Grade 4 (see 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.3.3). To repeat, in brief, common factors that appear to affect achievement levels of Grade 4 learners are: home background (learners having varied home experiences and the disjuncture between the language used in the home and one required for learning in school); the transition from Grades 3 to 4 (learners being schooled differently in the foundation phase, the number of subjects increases in Grade 4, and in the case of Zola Primary, learners being taught in their additional language); class size or overcrowding (this affects the teacher’s ability to provide timeous and individualised feedback, and teachers claim not to be able to differentiate learning, that is teach to difference); the lack of concrete materials; the lack of specialised teachers (teachers mainly drawn to teaching language than mathematics - see Table 35 in Section 5.2.2); and learners’ disruptive behaviour (impacting on both the teachers’ ability to teach and learners’ ability to learn).

**Table 52: Comparing the percentage of Grade 6 learners who passed the ANA test in mathematics in 2012 and 2013 across the three selected schools**

YEAR	School	Flamingo Primary	Dumont Primary	Zola Primary
2012	% who achieved above 50%	12	64	1
2013	% who achieved above 50%	38	83	35

The Grade 6 ANA results across all three schools increased dramatically in 2013, more so for learners who achieved above 50% at Flamingo and Zola Primary Schools. I highlighted earlier the many strategies these schools had in place to increase their learner achievement levels. Despite the increase in performance levels, however a large percentage of learners at both Flamingo Primary (62%) and Zola Primary (65%) are still performing below 50%. The reasons for this have been elaborated on earlier (see Section 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3).

To recap, common factors that appear to affect achievement levels of Grade 7 learners are: home background (children coming from different socio-economic background thus have different home experiences, and the disjuncture between language used at home and that required to learn in school); class size (impeding on teachers' ability to differentiate learning and provide individualised feedback); lack of teacher specialisation; and defiant behaviour of learners (learners using conscious strategies to disrupt their learning and those of others).

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide detailed accounts of the background contextual factors that characterised the three selected schools. It highlighted the role of context in shaping particular learner identities which influences learner academic performance, including the varied experiences learners had in their homes and communities, their different experiences in these schools, how they fair in benchmark and internal tests and their responses to why they struggle to perform in certain subjects, in this case especially mathematics. Moreover, the chapter revealed that learners come with disparities to these schools; some come from poor home backgrounds, with a low socio-economic status, and

others, come with ready-made cultural capital from better-off home backgrounds. Once in school, they adopt and embody particular identities, with some showing a willingness to learn, while others lapse into disruptive behaviour in different ways. They either adopt conscious strategies (laughing, talking, not concentrating) or use their knowledge of technology to lapse into unruly behaviour. In other words, these learners internalise different learner dispositions, such as showing a willingness to learn, being apathetic (learners who simply do not care); becoming disruptive (laughing, talking, not listening and doing everything to be thrown out); withdrawing (do not ask questions when they do not understand and seldom participate in classroom discussions); whilst others, those with a high-tech disposition (use their cell phones and knowledge of computers) to disrupt their own learning and the learning of others. A deeper analysis of these findings will be made in the subsequent chapters.

Thus far then, the common contextual factors that appear to affect learner achievement levels across the three selected schools and across the three targeted grades (Grades: 1, 4 and 7), drawing on the findings in this chapter, can be divided into two broad categories: external/environmental factors and internal/institutional factors. The external environmental factors that appear to affect learner achievement levels are: home context, that is what the learner come with to these schools (they enter these schools with disparities), lack of parental involvement and limited parental interaction with their children, and the misalignment between the language exposed to in the home and the one required for learning. The common internal contextual factors that appear to affect learner achievement levels across the three selected schools, including: transition from Grade R to Grade 1 (emotional level of these learners, not being school ready, lack of routine and structure in Grade R), transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 (being exposed to more subjects and different practices as in Grade 3, and as in the case of Zola Primary, this transition is exacerbated by having to be taught in a second language for the first time), and the disjuncture between the language used in the classroom and that used in the ANA tests. Furthermore, the high absenteeism amongst the 'at risk' group, low teacher expectations of low ability groups, and the lack of specialised mathematics teachers could account for learner achievement levels. I now turn to Chapter 6, the pedagogical findings, illuminating the nature of pedagogic practices and pedagogic interactions within the three selected schools and across the three targeted grades.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6 PEDAGOGICAL FINDINGS

#### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I discussed the background contexts which characterised each of the selected schools which participated in this study. Chapter 5 provided some insights into the role of context in determining their performance. The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on pedagogy, more specifically my findings relating to the nature of pedagogic practices and pedagogic relationships within these schools and across three grades, Grades 1, 4 and 7, in order to understand how pedagogy could account for different learning outcomes.

I mainly worked with Bernstein's concepts of regulative and instructional discourse, in terms of classification and framing values, and other related constructs outlined and engaged with in Chapter 3, where I engaged with literature to show how power and control through variations in classification and framing values play out within the classroom. In Chapter 4, I outlined how I used the observation schedule that was first constructed by Morais and Neves (2003) and elaborated on by Hoadley (2005), based on Bernstein's work, "to characterise teachers' pedagogic practices, in the instructional and regulative contexts, through which teachers' practices can be characterised in reference to a four degree scale of classification and framing" (Morais & Neves, 2003:3). I provided detailed accounts of how the classroom observation schedules were coded and used as an analytical tool to observe language (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) lessons taught in the targeted grades: Grades: 1, 4 and 7. I will now be using these codes to show my own observations in these classrooms to describe how pedagogy in each of these selected schools and across the three selected grades is actually delivered and experienced by both teachers and learners within these classrooms.

To compile this chapter, I drew on the audio-recorded lessons observed, together with the coded COBS (coded summary sheet and analytical notes) and my own reflective notes captured in journals that I kept whilst doing observations in the three schools.

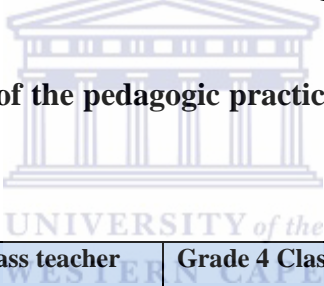
Merriam (2009) suggests that it is crucial to treat each case as an individual case before drawing cross-case inferences. Following on this then, in the first half of this chapter, is an overview of the pedagogic practices of Grade 1, 4 and 7 teachers within each school (within-

case analysis), then in the second half of the chapter, I provide cross-case inferences (cross-case analysis), where I delve deeper into how the pedagogic practices are delivered and experienced by teachers and learners within the targeted grades.

### 6.1.1 Flamingo Primary School

Table 46, shows the characterisation of the pedagogic practices of teachers, indicating the final coding values of classification and framing of the pedagogic practices of Grades 1, 4 and 7 teachers at Flamingo Primary School. As illustrated in Chapter 4 (see Chapter 4 section 4.3), these codes were derived from coding two representative lessons for each teacher, then adding numerical values assigned to the codes and dividing the total by the number of coding instances in order to produce the global (average) code for each category (Hoadley, 2005). The coding values captured in the table (Table: 53) will give some insight into the instructional and regulative discourse of teachers at Flamingo primary school.

**Table 53: The characterisation of the pedagogic practices of Grades 1, 4 and 7 teachers at Flamingo Primary School**



MICRO CASES	Grade 1 Class teacher	Grade 4 Class teacher	Grade 7 mathematics teacher
Discursive rule-selection	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discursive rule-sequencing	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discursive rule –pacing	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discursive rule-evaluation	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>
Hierarchical rule-Teacher-Learner	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discourse relations-Inter-discursive relation (between subject areas)	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
Discourse relations-inter-discursive relation (School/Everyday)	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
Spaces – (specialization of space for teaching)	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>

<b>and learning)</b>			
<b>Spaces – (insulation teacher/learner space)</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
<b>Spaces- (insulation between learners) – specialization</b>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
<b>Routine activities engaged in by learners</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
<b>Relations between subjects (teacher and learner)</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>

My observations in the selected classrooms at Flamingo Primary show that in Grades 1, 4 and 7 the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge are strongly framed (F<sup>++</sup>). The teachers in these three grades have apparent control over the selection (what is to be taught), the sequencing (what follows what) and the pacing (the rate at which the content is taught). Learners in these grades do little to alter the pacing of the lessons. They seldom ask questions and only respond to the teachers' questioning. There are often moments of silence when teachers ask questions, which is often followed by the teacher prompting an answer normally directed at the 'brighter' learner or the teacher answering the question.

The coding at the level of the evaluation rule is F<sup>-</sup> (quite weak framing) in all three grades, meaning that the evaluation criteria are quite unclear and implicit. According to the COBS (see Appendix E<sub>1</sub>) the evaluation rule reflects the extent to which the teacher and learner have control over the evaluation criteria of instructional knowledge pertaining to the meaning of concepts and principles and their appropriate realisations. These elements could be observed in the introduction of the topic, in the course of the learners conducting the activity, in the kinds of verbal answers required by learners and at the conclusion of an activity or tasks. It is also evident in the number of ways the concept or problem is represented in the exposition of the topic or task as well as the number of ways in which the problem is represented in response to questions from learners. In some cases, the evaluation criteria are not made entirely explicit to learners, with the result that learners are sometimes left confused as to how to proceed or what constitutes a correct text/answer. Instructions to tasks are relayed to learners, often repeated by the teacher restating the instructions yet some aspects as to how to proceed remain implicit. Teachers also ask simple recall questions or questions are



seldom reformulated or alternative explanations are seldom engaged with so that learners could get a clearer understanding of the concept or problem at hand. Incorrect responses of learners are not dealt with but at times merely passed on to the next person who has the 'correct' answer.

In Grade 1, the coding at the level of the hierarchical rule is  $F^-$  (weakly framed) as teacher-learner relations are mostly personal. The Grade 1 teacher at times exercises mainly personal control, where emotive descriptors (terms of endearment) are often used when interacting with children. This differs in Grade 4 where the code is  $F^+$  (strong framing), as the teacher exercises positional control. The authority of the teacher is implicit and the teacher tends to maintain a physical distance between herself and her learners. In Grade 7 the coding at the level of the hierarchical rule is  $F^{++}$  (very strong framing), as the teacher exercises mostly positional or imperative control. She is a strong disciplinarian and learners often do not approach the teacher. The authority of the teacher is therefore explicit.

I now turn to the organisational dimension of the pedagogic discourse in terms of inter-disciplinary relations (relations between subjects) and inter-discursive relations (relations between school and everyday knowledge). I found that in Grade 1 and 4, but more prominently in Grade 1, contents from other subjects are often referenced, mainly when the teacher is introducing a new theme or when drawing on learners' prior knowledge. The boundary strength between subjects in this case is weak ( $C^-$  / weak classification). I observed similar trends in Grade 4. However, the boundary strength in the mathematics Grade 7 classroom is coded  $C^{++}$  (Classification is strong), mainly because the teacher seldom makes reference to other subject content in the teaching of mathematics. The insulation between school knowledge and everyday knowledge in Grade 1 and 4 is  $C^-$  (quite unbounded) since I observed teachers referencing everyday knowledge, especially when teaching literacy (language) and sometimes this is incorporated into the lesson. This is not the case in Grade 7 where the classification between school and everyday knowledge is strong ( $C^{++}$ ), as only subject-specific knowledge is dealt with in the teaching of the mathematics lesson.

Variations occurred across grades in terms of the classification of space, that is boundary strength between the inside and outside space (external classification) and between the teacher and learner space (internal classification). The external classification for Grade 1 is  $C^{++}$  /very bounded). The teacher and learners spend most of the instructional time within the classroom. Learners only leave to go to the toilet, have lunch breaks and attend the feeding

scheme, but for most of the time, the teacher and her learners remain inside the classroom. Although there is a lot of noise and disturbances outside the classroom the teacher seldom allows this to interrupt her classroom time. The same cannot be said for Grade 4. Here the boundary strength between the inside and outside is mostly weak ( $C^-$  / very unbounded). The teacher at times will leave the class, especially when learners are busy completing some or other activity or when there are constant interruptions from outside, mainly from other teachers and learners. This appears to interfere with instructional time, which I will expand on in the next section. The constant interruptions could be attributed to the fact that the Grade 4 class teacher is responsible for the school's extra-mural activities and she also oversees the computer lab. On many occasions, I observed teachers coming to collect the key for the lab and this would in turn briefly interrupt the teacher's lesson. The boundary strength between the inside and outside in Grade 7 is  $C^+$  (strongly bounded). The teacher only on occasion leaves the classroom to attend to something urgent and learners are not allowed to leave the class without permission from the teacher. The teacher often closes her door whilst teaching and does not entertain any interruptions from those outside the classroom.

Teacher and learner space within the classroom (internal classification) is very unbounded ( $C^-$ ) in the Grade 1 classroom. The Grade 1 teacher seldom sits at her desks but spends most of her time in the learners' space to assist learners by monitoring or assessing their work. Learners are therefore free to approach the teacher, to ask for assistance or to facilitate marking. This differs in Grade 4 and 7 where the strength of insulation between the teacher and the learner's space is quite bounded ( $C^+$ ). Teachers and learners generally remain in their own space. Learner movement in the Grade 4 and 7 classrooms is restricted by their teachers who often reprimand them when they are not seated at their desks. Learners' in these classrooms are only able to move when given permission to do so or when they are called on by the teacher to facilitate the marking of one or other activity.

Variations occur across the grades, with respect to classroom and classroom practices, when it comes to the extent to which learners roles are specialised (classification of agents). In Grade 1, learners work in homogeneous ability groups and receive differential tasks for reading and mathematics. The coding at this level is  $C^+$  (quite bounded). Whole class teaching is evident when new themes are being taught, in the teaching of Life Skills, when learning new words or when mental mathematics activities are being done. In Grades 4 and 7, teachers generally do not divide learners into ability groups or do differentiated lesson tasks.

Teachers teach in a homogenising way and whole class teaching is mostly used. The classification value at this level is  $C^-$  / learners' roles are seldom or never specialised.

With respect to the coding for routine tasks engaged in by learners, here the relation between subjects (learners) in Grade 1 and 4 is coded  $C^-$  (very unbounded) since learners do not do instructional task unless they are instructed to do so by the teacher. Learners do not manage their own books, as these are kept in designated places in the classroom, handed out to learners for classroom work and collected when the period is over. Grade 4 learners are allowed to take books home to prepare for tests, but other than that the books are kept at school. The coding for Grade 7 is  $C^+$  (quite bounded); only a few learners do routine instructional task of their own accord, whereas the majority generally do not. Learners do however manage their own books.

In terms of classroom discipline or learner behaviour, the code for Grade 1 and 7 is  $C^-$  (quite unbounded). Teachers in these grades often struggle with getting particular learners to behave. Generally, the noise level in the class will increase towards the end of an activity. The coding for Grade 4 is  $C^-$  (very unbounded), as it is a constant battle for the teacher to get certain learners to remain seated, concentrate on the task at hand and work consistently.

In the above section (section 6.1.1), I described the nature of pedagogic practices at Flamingo Primary, more specifically the characterisation of teacher's pedagogic practices in selected Grade 1, 4 and 7 classrooms.

### **6.1.2 Dumont Primary School**

Table 47, shows the characterisation of the pedagogic practices of teachers revealing the final coding values of classification and framing of the pedagogic practices of Grades 1, 4 and 7 teachers at Dumont Primary School. As illustrated in previously (see 6.1.1), these codes were derived from coding two representative lessons for each teacher, then adding numerical values assigned to the codes and dividing the total by the number of coding instances in order to produce the global (average) code for each category. The coding values captured in the table (Table: 54) will give some insight into the instructional and regulative discourse of teachers at Dumont primary school.

**Table 54: The characterisation of the pedagogic practices of Grades 1, 4 and 7 teachers at Dumont primary school**

<b>MICRO CASES</b>	<b>Grade 1 Class teacher</b>	<b>Grade 4 Class teacher</b>	<b>Grade 7 Language teacher</b>	<b>Grade 7 Mathematics teacher</b>
<b>Discursive rule-selection</b>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
<b>Discursive rule-sequencing</b>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
<b>Discursive rule – pacing</b>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>
<b>Discursive rule-evaluation</b>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>
<b>Hierarchical rule-Teacher-Learner</b>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>
<b>Discourse relations-Inter-discursive relation (between subject areas)</b>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
<b>Discourse relations-inter-discursive relation (School/Everyday)</b>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
<b>Spaces – (specialization of space for teaching and learning)</b>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
<b>Spaces – (insulation teacher/learner space)</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
<b>Spaces- (insulation between learners) – specialization</b>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
<b>Routine activities engaged in by learners</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
<b>Relations between subjects (teacher and learner)</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>

The level of coding across all three grades for selection and sequencing is  $F^{++}$  (strongly framed), where the teacher has apparent control over the selection and sequencing of the lessons. In Grade 1, the pacing of the instructional knowledge is coded  $F^+$ , as the teacher mostly controls the pacing of the lesson but on occasion does allow learners to ask questions to which she responds briefly before moving on. She does occasionally wait on learners to complete work before continuing, which alters the pace at which learners work. The coding at the level of pacing in Grades 4 and 7 is  $F^-$  (weak framing), as teacher exercises some control over the pace of the lesson but generally learners work at their own pace. They are allowed to make interjections, which is dealt with by the teacher. The teachers in these grades often wait to ensure learners are ready to move on before moving to the next point.

The framing at the level of evaluation rule across all three grades is coded  $F^+$  (strongly framed). Explanations on what to do are normally detailed as learners are informed of the task and how to proceed but this however is done in generic terms, with some aspects on how to proceed being implicit. Teachers in this school often used a whole class approach to state what is expected of learners. I did witness on occasion the Grade 4 teacher working one-on-one with individual learners during a mathematics lesson when she elaborated on what constituted a correct answer but this was not consistently done. On correcting answers these were recorded on the board but the teachers, especially in Grades 4 and 7, seldom checked whether learners transcribed the work correctly in their books or gave them extra time to write things down before proceeding.

The coding at the level of the hierarchical rule in Grade 1 is coded  $F^-$  (very weakly framed). Here the teacher exercises mostly personal control, as the teacher is generally affectionate towards the learners, often using terms of endearment when interacting with them. The reasons for the presence of visiting adults are explained to learners who would acknowledge them by greeting them. Learners often feel free to approach the teacher with problems which she would deal with immediately, thus accommodating the learner. The teacher often listens to the reasons learners give for their behaviour and responds by expanding on the implications of their behaviour for themselves and others. This however is not the case in Grades 4 and 7 where the coding at the level of the hierarchical rule is  $F^+$  (strongly framed) since these teachers exercise mostly positional control. Teachers in these grades are not very approachable or affectionate towards their learners. The authority of these teachers is implicit and they tend to maintain a physical distance between themselves and their learners.

I now turn to the organisational dimension of the pedagogic discourse in terms of interdisciplinary relations (relations between subjects) and inter-discursive relations (relations between school and everyday knowledge). Coding in terms of interdisciplinary relations in Grades 1, 4 and 7 (language) is  $C^+$  (boundary is somewhat blurred), as content from other subjects are sometimes referenced but mainly at the introduction of a new lesson to show some form of integration. This is not the case for Grade 7 mathematics where the code is  $C^{++}$  (very bounded), as there is no reference to contents from other subjects. With regards to the boundary between school and everyday knowledge in all grades the coding is  $C^+$  (quite bounded). Everyday knowledge is mainly incorporated into the lesson as examples and explanations to facilitate learning, making concepts and operations that need to be learnt more explicit.

Variations occurred across grades in terms of the classification of space, that is boundary strength between the inside and outside space (external classification) and between the teacher and learner space (internal classification). In terms of the external classification of space, between inside and outside the classroom, there is no variation across the grades. Here the coding is  $C^{++}$  (very unbounded), as teachers generally do not leave the classroom. Learners remain in the classroom and can only leave with permission from the teacher. The surrounding classrooms are quiet and there are seldom interruptions from outside. I did however observe some variations in terms of the teacher-learner space. In Grade 1, the code is  $C^-$  (very unbounded) since the teacher spends most of her day in the same space as the learners, monitoring and assisting them while learners are free to approach the teacher. The coding for Grade 4 is  $C^+$  (quite unbounded or weakly classified). Here the teacher and learners generally remain in their own spaces but at times do enter each other's space to facilitate marking or when she works with individual learners. The latter is especially evident when learners are doing mathematics and show signs of struggling with one or other mathematical operation. In Grade 7, the insulation between teacher and learner space is coded  $C^{++}$  (very strong classification). Here teachers and learners generally remain in their own spaces, the teacher at his or her table or at the blackboard and learners at their desks. These teachers do not tolerate unnecessary movement in class by learners and learners are often reprimanded if found out of these seats. They are seldom granted permission to leave the classroom. The learner can approach the teacher for help but movement is controlled by the teacher.

The extent to which the learners' roles in Grade 1 are specialised, with respect to the classroom and its practices, the code is C<sup>+</sup> (quite unbounded). Learners are divided into homogeneous ability groups for reading and mathematics only and receive differential tasks in these lessons. In Grades 4 and 7, the lessons are never specialised so the coding here is C<sup>-</sup> (very unbounded). Learners are not taught in ability groups and do not receive differential tasks.

With respect to the coding for routine tasks engaged in by learners, here the relation between subjects (learners) in Grade 1 and 4 is coded C<sup>-</sup> (very unbounded) since learners do not do instructional task unless they are asked to do so by the teacher. Learners do not manage their own books, as these are kept in designated places in the classroom, handed out to learners for classroom work and collected when the period is over. Grade 4 learners are allowed to take books home to prepare for tests but other than that the books are kept at school. The coding for Grade 7 is C<sup>+</sup> (quite bounded), as only a few learners do routine instructional task of their own accord, while the majority generally do not. For most of the time, learners manage their own books.

When it comes to classroom discipline or learner behaviour the code for Grade 1 is C<sup>-</sup> (quite unbounded). The teacher often struggles with getting particular learners to behave and do their work. Generally the noise level in the class will increase towards the end of an activity. The coding for Grades 4 and 7 is C<sup>+</sup>, as learners generally work consistently and are kept busy throughout instructional time. Only on a few occasions did the teacher have to tell certain learners to keep quiet and sit down.

In Section 6.1.2 above, I discussed the pedagogic practices evident in the selected Grade 1, 4 and 7 classrooms at Dumont Primary School. In the next section, I turn my attention to Zola Primary to show how pedagogy is delivered in the selected Grade 1, 4 and 7 classrooms at this school. Initially, I set out to observe and code both language (English) and mathematics lessons but this was not always possible. The reasons for this inability are detailed in Chapter 4 (see 4.5).

### 6.1.3 Zola Primary School

Table 48 shows the characterisation of the pedagogic practices of teachers, including the final coding values of the classification and framing of the pedagogic practices of Grades 1, 4 and 7 teachers at Zola Primary School. As in the previous cases, these codes were derived from coding two representative lessons for each teacher, then adding numerical values assigned to the codes and dividing the total by the number of coding instances in order to produce the global (average) code for each category. The coding values captured in the table (Table: 55) will give me some insight into the instructional and regulative discourses of teachers at Zola Primary School.

**Table 55: The characterisation of the pedagogic practices of Grades 1, 4 and 7 teachers at Zola primary school**

MICRO CASES	Grade 1 Class teacher	Grade 4 mathematics teacher	Grade 7 mathematics teacher
Discursive rule-selection	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discursive rule-sequencing	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discursive rule –pacing	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>
Discursive rule-evaluation	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>
Hierarchical rule-Teacher-Learner	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>
Discourse relations- Inter-discursive relation (between subject areas)	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
Discourse relations- inter-discursive relation (School/Everyday)	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
Spaces – (specialization of space for teaching and learning)	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
Spaces – (insulation teacher/learner space)	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
Spaces- (insulation between learners) – specialization	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>



<b>Routine activities engaged in by learners</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
<b>Relations between subjects (teacher and learner)</b>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>

Table 55 shows that the selection, sequencing and framing of lessons across all three selected grades are strongly framed (F<sup>++</sup>), indicating the teacher's apparent control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge. From my observations, learners' in these classrooms do very little to alter the pace at which they learn. They normally answer by chorusing the answer, only respond to questions when directed at them by the teacher or at times do not respond at all. In cases where learners do not respond, the teacher either moves from learner to learner to elicit a response or ends up answering the question for them.

The coding at the level of the evaluation rule for teacher participants of Grade 1, 4 and 7 is F<sup>-</sup> (weakly framed), as evaluation criteria are quite unclear and implicit. Learners are given some idea about the concepts, normally written on the blackboard, which is being explored. The teachers seldom explain concepts and procedures in depth so that learners could get a clearer understanding of what is required of them. When tasks are given the procedures as to how to proceed and what constitutes a successful production are poorly articulated and not fully engaged with. Clarity as to what should be done and how it should be done are often not made explicit, causing some confusion amongst learners. When learners do not understand, teachers, especially in Grades 4 and 7, would 'code switch' by merely restating in isiXhosa what they had said in English. In the course of learners conducting an activity or task, the teachers seldom check whether they are working correctly or experiencing problems. Answers to a task or activity are generally dealt with at the end of an activity where the teacher responds mostly to correct answers and learners are left to do corrections. Grade 1 learners' books are looked at by the teacher who identifies that the answers are correct or incorrect but no reformulation is made. Grade 4 and 7 learners generally mark their own activities after the teacher has given the correct answers or has written the answers on the blackboard. The teacher does not check whether these answers are correctly written from the board. Incorrect answers, left to the learners to correct, are seldom expanded on as to why they are incorrect.

The coding at the level of the hierarchical rule in Grade 1 is F<sup>-</sup> (mostly personal). Here the control of authority is masked. The teacher is generally openly affectionate and approachable.

This is not the case in Grades 4 and 7 where the code is  $F^+$  (mostly positional), because the authority and control of the teacher are mostly overt. These teachers maintain some distance between them and their learners. They do appear to be approachable but they are not openly affectionate towards their learners. Classroom rules are clearly visible and learners are constantly reminded of these. Teachers at times become angry, raising their voices when struggling to get learners to be quiet. This is mainly evident when learners are busy with some or other activity or task.

The classification value at the level of the interdisciplinary rule (the organisational dimension of the pedagogic discourse) in Grade 1 is coded  $C^+$  (quite bounded). Contents from other subjects are seldom referenced or incorporated into the lesson. When reference is made to other subjects, it is always evident at the beginning of a lesson. In Grades 4 and 7, where only mathematics lessons were observed, the insulation between subjects is strong ( $C^{++}$  strong classification). Here no reference is made to other subjects in the teaching of mathematics only subject-specific content is relayed.

The boundary strength between everyday knowledge and school knowledge in Grade 1 is fairly bounded ( $C^+$  / strong classification). Everyday knowledge is sometimes drawn on at the beginning of a lesson or when giving examples but seldom incorporated into the lesson. This differs in Grade 4 where the boundary strength between everyday and school knowledge is somewhat blurred ( $C^-$  / weak classification). The teacher often uses examples from everyday life when explaining content to the point that it becomes part of the lesson content. The mathematics lessons in Grade 7 are coded  $C^{++}$  (very strong classification). Only subject-specific content is dealt with.

In terms of the classification of space, external classification value for Grade 1 is  $C^{++}$  (very strong classification). The teacher and learners never leave the classroom. The Grade 1 classrooms are located in an area away from the other grades so it is fairly quiet. There are seldom interruptions from outside the classroom. This is however not the case in Grades 4 and 7 where the external classification of space is very unbounded ( $C^{-}$  / very weak classification). As alluded to in the previous chapter, this school was under construction for most of the time that the research was conducted, while certain teachers often stayed absent, leaving many of their classes unattended. Because of the construction noise, it became difficult at times for teachers I observed to teach and they often had to speak loudly in order

for learners inside the classroom to hear them. I found that the Grade 7 mathematics teacher often had to attend to more than one class at a time, resulting in her class being left unattended.

In terms of internal classification, the boundary between teacher-learner space in Grade 1 is quite unbounded ( $C^-$ /weak classification); the teacher and learner at times enter each other's space, mainly when doing small group work, mat work or when the teacher facilitate marking. However at other times, the teacher and learners remain in their own space. In Grades 4 and 7, the boundary strength between the teacher and learner is very strong ( $C^{++}$ /very strong classification). The teachers in these grades spend most of their time either at the blackboard in front of the class or at their tables while learners generally stay seated at their desk. Communication between the teachers and learners is not very open and normally one directional.

In terms of the classification of agents, as in the previous schools, learners in Grade 1 are divided into homogenous ability groups for reading and mathematics and are given differential tasks but for the rest of the time they are given the same work. The relation between agents (learners) is quite bounded ( $C^+$ / strong classification). In Grades 4 and 7, the relation between agents is never specialised. Here the classification value is  $C^-$  (very weak classification). In other words, learners are always taught as a collective (whole class approach to teaching and learning) and are never given differential tasks.

With respect to the coding of routine tasks engaged in by learners, here the relation between subjects (learners) in Grade 1 and 4 is coded  $C^-$  (very unbounded) since learners do not do instructional tasks unless directed to do so by the teacher. Learners do not manage their own books, as these are kept in designated places in the classroom, handed out to learners for classroom work and collected when the period is over. Grade 4 learners are allowed to take books home to prepare for tests, but other than that the books are kept at school. The coding for Grade 7 is  $C^+$  (quite bounded) as only a few learners do routine instructional task of their own accord, while the majority generally do not. For most of the time, learners manage their exercise (writing) books but all textbooks and government learner workbooks are kept in class.

When it comes to classroom discipline or learner behaviour, the code for Grade 1 and 4 is  $C^-$  (very unbounded). The teachers in these grades constantly struggle with getting particular

learners to behave and do their work. Generally the noise level in the class will increase towards the end of an activity. The coding for Grade 7 is C as learners are often told to keep quiet, especially towards the end of a task. The teacher takes some time to settle learners down before giving instruction or introducing new work.

In the sections above (6.1.1; 6.1.2 and 6.1.3), I characterised the pedagogic practices of teachers at the three selected schools. These sections provided some insight into the nature of pedagogical practices, as well as the nature of pedagogic relations in these particular schools. In the next section, I delve deeper into other aspects of pedagogic practices of teachers by drawing cross-case inferences and providing evidence for these characterisations.

## **6.2 Cross - case inferences**

The purpose of this section is to further explore the pedagogic practices of teachers in particular grades and to provide evidence of how these practices are experienced by both teachers and learners in these particular grades. I start each section by providing a summary of the structuring of the pedagogic discourse of teachers in Grade 1 across the three selected schools. This is followed by evidence taken from one transcribed lesson that is representative of each teacher's pedagogic practice (see Appendix I, J and K for full transcribed lessons) in each of the targeted grades so as to illuminate how teachers and learners experience pedagogic practices in Grade 1 classrooms, followed by Grade 4 and 7 classrooms.

In order to derive at the findings in this section, I worked mainly with the representative lessons of each teacher participant as shown in the attached appendix (Appendix I, J and K). I use certain excerpts from these lessons as evidence of what I observed. I also draw from interviews with teachers and learners, and from my own journal notes, to show how they experienced certain classroom practices.

### **6.2.1 Case 1: Pedagogic practices in Grade 1 - Instructional and regulative discourse**

This section deals with the pedagogic practices of Grade 1 teachers across the three selected schools, and how these practices are experienced by teachers and learners.

**Table 56: Summary of the structuring of the pedagogic discourse in Grade 1 across the three schools**

			<b>Flamingo Primary: Grade 1 Class teacher</b>	<b>Dumont Primary: Grade 1 Class teacher</b>	<b>Zola Primary: Grade 1 Class teacher</b>	
<b>1. Classification and framing of pedagogic discourse: instructional and regulative</b>	<b>Selection &amp; sequencing</b>		F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	
	<b>Pacing</b>		F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	
	<b>Evaluative rules</b>		F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	
	<b>Hierarchical rules</b>		F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	
	<b>Discourses</b>	<b>Inter-disc (subjects)</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
		<b>Inter-disc (school/everyday)</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Internal</b>		C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
		<b>External</b>		C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
<b>Agents</b>	<b>Specialisation of voice</b>		C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	
<b>2. Instructional form</b>	<b>Content</b>		Differentiated/ Uniform	Differentiated/ uniform	Differentiated/ Uniform	
	<b>Classroom organisation</b>		Homogenous ability groups for reading and mathematics/ communalized	Homogenous ability groups for reading and mathematics/ communalized	Homogenous ability groups for reading and mathematics/ communalized	

It is evident from the table (Table: 56) that both the internal (<sup>i</sup>F) and external framing (<sup>e</sup>F) of lessons are very strong (F<sup>++</sup>). The selection and sequencing of lessons are strongly regulated and informed by the syllabus; themes and time frames in which to complete them are strongly influenced in terms of syllabus coverage. Teachers therefore have apparent control of the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge being taught.

The short extract (Excerpt 6.1) below shows the teacher's apparent control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of the numeracy lesson. The extract is taken from a numeracy lesson

taught by the Grade 1 class teacher at Zola Primary (the full transcribed lesson can be found in Appendix I).

### **Excerpt 6.1: Numeracy lesson – Grade 1 teacher Zola Primary**

#### **Segment 1: Introduction to the lesson**

*The learners are instructed to collect 10 bottle tops, take it to their desk and add  $8+2$*

Teacher: Do you have 10. Count it! So separate them, then how many do you have?

Learner X: 2 [*the learner was referring to 2 sets*]

Teacher: Work on this please, separate them. Be fast please! How many on each side?

No response

*I observed that not all learners understood what they must do. Some placed the bottle tops in a straight line and others separated it placing 8 on one side and 2 on the other. There were one or two learners who either had more or fewer than 10 tops which the teacher was not aware of.*

Teacher: Are you done?

From my observations, the initial instruction given by the teacher is not very clear. The instruction ‘count them’ ‘be fast’ or the inquiry ‘are you done?’ shows that the teacher is in control over the pace at which learners work. The rhythm of the question-answer interaction is often maintained by the teacher. The fact that learners do not respond by asking or answering questions illustrates that they are doing very little to alter the pace of the lesson. The teacher’s type of questioning tends to produce yes/no answers or a single answer. Learners, when they do respond, often answer in unison (chanting answers) as is evident in segment 2. The same can be said about the teacher at Dumont Primary (see excerpt 6.2) where the teacher at times controls the tempo at which learners acquire the content. In this particular literacy lesson, the control of the sequence and pace of the lesson was determined by the teacher.

#### **Segment 2: During the course of the lesson**

*Teacher writes  $4+2$  on the board and instructs learners to look on the board.*

Teacher: Which numbers do you add?

Learners in unison answer:  $4+2$

Teacher: Divide your lids and see when you add what will the answer be?

*Some learners do what the teacher instructed them to do whilst some are adding on*

Teacher: Do not add it, put it aside. How many do you have?

*Learners do not respond*

Teacher: What are we doing?

*She does not wait for the learners to respond , Teacher: We are adding, so now add them.*

Teacher: Come one by one to me and tell me in my ear the answer

*After the fourth child approaches the teacher with an answer she then request the answer*

Learner X: 6

Teacher repeats:  $4+2=6$

In the above excerpt (segment 2) the criteria for how to proceed with the application are not clearly stated and therefore certain ways of approaching the application remain implicit. The teacher continues without checking whether all learners understood the application.

### Segment 3: The evaluation activity

*The teacher repeats the same process [see segment 2] for three different examples. She however does not write any of these examples on the board. She then instructs learners to complete the task that she had previously written on the board. In her explanation she used numbers but the task on the board contained different shapes not numbers.*

Teacher: Do you see the board?

Learners answer in unison: Learners: Yes, Miss.

Teacher: You have to use the lids that are in front of you and count what is on the board.

Teacher repeats: Add by looking at what is on the board and use your lids.

*On the board are a few operations that the teacher previously wrote for example:*



*She then moves to the carpet with a group of learners whilst the rest of the class is busy with the exercise on the board. The teacher occasionally moves amongst learners and signs their books. Some learners who have completed the task approach the teacher to check their work. She would on occasion tell them the sum is incorrect and send them back to their desks. Learners are not told whether or not their work is correct or not.*

Segment 3, from Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2, taken from a literacy lesson taught by the Grade 1 class teacher at Dumont Primary (see the full transcribed lesson in appendix H), show variations at the level of the evaluation rule.

## Excerpt 6.2: Literacy lesson – Grade 1 teacher Dumont Primary

Teacher: I want you to go to your table in a moment, take out your new project books and I will show you which page to go to. Boys, go now!

*Boys get up from the mat, line up and move towards their tables followed by the girls who move only when the teacher instructs them to. Once all learners are seated, they open their books in front of them. The teacher briefly reprimands a boy for talking and continues with her instructions.*

*The teacher stands in the middle of the classroom facing the desk to her right. The children are grouped according to their abilities. The groups seated to the left of the teacher are the weaker learners.*

Teacher: Now we going to read a lot of words here. It says colour in the blocks that are the facts about cats. What colour are you going to use.

*Some children respond 'pink', others have their pencils out. One boy to the left asked repeatedly if he could use his pencil but the teacher continued with her instructions.*

Teacher: Put your pencil and crayons down. We going to talk first. Are you ready? Let's do the questions on cats first.

*I do however observe some children closest to me colouring in blocks as the teacher is going through the questions. Others sit quietly and listen.*

*The teacher reads the questions and children respond.*

Teacher: Cats hate milk

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: purrs

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Is playful

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Eats grass

*There is a brief silence and a few children answer. Learners: No!*

Teacher: Yes. When they are sick it makes them throw up.

Teacher: Have whiskers

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Are their whiskers long or short? *Children do not respond at first.*

Some learners answer: Long

Teacher: Yes ...it warns the cat whenever there is danger. See how many blocks you can colour in ...colour in all the true facts. Information that is true.



The evaluation criteria in segment 3 (Excerpt 6.1) are coded F<sup>-</sup> (very weak framing), which indicates that the evaluation criteria in most cases are unclear and implicit. Very little attempt is made by the teacher to show learners what she requires of them and then what constitutes a successful production. I observed some learners using symbols when it was expected of them to write numbers in the operation of the sum, some writing the incorrect amount from the board and others merely sitting, not knowing how to proceed. The teacher marked a few



learners books and commented that the answer is incorrect or merely shouted “Write numbers, write numbers” to those who wrote the sum using the symbols from the board and yet got the correct answer. Learners were instructed to do corrections but the correct answers were not displayed on the board.

In excerpt 6.2, the coding at the level of the evaluation rule was F<sup>+</sup> (strong framing), indicating that the evaluation criteria were generally quite clear and explicit. The teacher clearly instructs learners on what she expects of them. They know which book they are going to write in and how to proceed with the activity because this is made explicit by the teacher. She also takes them through what constitutes a correct answer which they do communally (as a whole class) and then on their own. The following instructions and questions, “Put your pencil and crayons down, We going to talk first, Are you ready? Let’s do the questions on cats first” shows that the selection and sequencing are controlled by the teacher. At times, she does alter the pace (wait for learners before continuing) but this was only observed at the start of the activity. A lot of emphasis is on the where to write and what to write with (more emphasis on the regulative than on the instructional). The actual content (instructional discourse) is weakly relayed because the meanings of concepts are not elaborated on, learners are not required to give reasons for their answers and the teacher at times answers the question for learners. Learners are seldom asked questions that enable them to draw from their own knowledge-base. I observed the teacher directing questions mostly to ‘brighter’ learners, ignoring ‘slower’ learners, which could lead to different messages being relayed to learners.

The use of repetition, responding in unison and copying work from the board are common learning strategies in Grade 1. Learners in our group interview session also acknowledge that they learn through repetition and copying things in order to remember:

Researcher: If you learn for a spelling test then how will you learn it?

Learner 1 explains: Our teacher normally tells us that we have to go over that word a lot of times.

Learner 2: I do it four times, I sometimes struggle with it then she [the mother] writes it on paper then she gives it to me then I will be able to write it.

Learner 3: I will take 5 to 6 times to read then my mommy will write it down for me then I will copy it first and then she takes the page away and then I will write it myself

Learners across the three schools conveyed how their parents or siblings helped them with their homework. (Grade 1 Dumont Primary group interview, 2012).

Teachers (see Chapter 5) however bemoaned the lack of parental involvement in their children's learning. There appears to be a disjuncture between what teachers say about parents not being involved and what parents at home are doing for their children.

The coding at the level of the hierarchical rule for the Grade 1 teacher's at Flamingo and Dumont Primary is F<sup>-</sup> (very weak framing/ mostly personal) and for the teacher at Zola Primary F<sup>-</sup> (weak framing/ personal). As mentioned, these teachers often used emotive descriptors when interacting with learners. I witnessed this sort of interaction during my interview with a teacher when a child approached her with a problem: "Are you ok my sweetheart, come talk to me. What is the matter darling" (Interview, Grade 1 teacher Dumont, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012). Teachers in Grade 1 are generally approachable and affectionate in their interaction with learners. The teacher at Zola Primary is generally affectionate towards her learners and will show some affection towards them but there are times where she exercises positional control, when her authority is masked or implicit.

The classification of agents (specialization of voice) at Flamingo Primary and Zola Primary is weak. Learners' own knowledge –base is seldom tapped into in the reproduction of knowledge. Opportunities that could lead to the specialisation of learner voice is evident in the Grade 1 classroom at Dumont Primary but these opportunities are not visible in all lessons and are not created for all learners. Those labelled by the teacher as the 'brighter' learner are called on more often and make more interjections during lessons.

When it comes to the coding of the instructional form in terms of content and classroom organisation, some lessons are taught communally, where learners receive the same lesson and activities, and others especially reading, phonics and mathematics, are taught to homogeneous ability groups, where learners work in small groups (do 'mat work') and receive differential tasks, as described by the Grade 1 teacher at Dumont Primary:

When you do Grade 1 teaching ...you have to teach in groups, and I'm not talking here about general groups, I'm talking about ability groups. In the first term of Grade 1 you establish group cohesion and school cohesion and all that stuff but at the same time you are observing the children to see 'Who's who in the zoo' who fits where and then you do your grouping. I got maths groups, I've got reading groups, [but] they are all at different levels. All their levels are recorded everyday so I know which group is where. You

can't teach Grade 1 without doing that ...you can't teach in a blanket way (Grade 1 teacher, Dumont Primary, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

This strong ability discourse that frames practices in Grade 1 is further expanded on by another teacher when she says:

At the beginning of the year we have a baseline assessment that we do and from there we immediately know who goes where...some activities are class activities. Then we have ability groups especially for mathematics and reading and phonics but the rest, like Life Skills it's for everyone" (Grade 1 teacher, Flamingo Primary, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

Different groups are given different animal names, such as cheetahs, lions, giraffes etc. The teacher at Zola Primary warns of the dangers attached to naming groups, and asserts:

We don't do that and we all don't do that because the issue that when the teacher name the group she told the learners you are this flower because this flower is dull you are this flower because this flower is bright ... and learners are labelling each other as this dull flower 'You can't do anything because your name is dull and ...' I'm the bright one I'm the clever one', and all these things (Grade 1 teacher, Zola Primary, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2013).

In my interaction with learners, I became aware that certain unintended messages are relayed to learners as a result of their participation in different ability groups. It appears to have an enabling effect on some learners, especially 'average and above average' learners and a disabling effect on other learners, especially 'below average' and 'at risk' learners, as is evident in group interview sessions held with Grade 1 learner participants:

Researcher: [Addressing an 'at risk' learner] Why do you think you are not a cheetah? [The animal name normally resembles the status of the group (cheetah moves faster than a giraffe).]

'Average learner' interrupts: Because they [referring to 'at risk' learners] pasting stuff. Miss makes the numbers then they paste because they don't now the bonds of 10.

Researcher: [Addressing the 'at risk' learner] What bonds do you know?

'At risk' learner responds: Bonds of 1 only

'Below average' learner: I want to be faster

Researcher: Is there a reason why you not faster now?

'Below average learner': Because I work slow.

Researcher: Why do you think you work slow?

'Below average' learner: Because I am in a slow group (Grade 1 Flamingo Primary group interview session, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

Learners can move up or down in groups based on their performance but this is mostly the case for ‘average’ and ‘above average’ learners and seldom the case for struggling learners who normally remain in the low status groups throughout the year. Besides learners being aware of these practices, teachers tend to hold low expectations of ‘below average’ and ‘at risk learners’, as expressed in the following extracts taken from my interviews with the teachers: “We give them less work or we use a lower number for them” (Grade 1 teacher, Flamingo Primary, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012). This is reiterated by another teacher who noted, “If the learner is a slow learner you give them easier work” (Grade 1 teacher, Zola Primary, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013). It appears that teachers do teach to different ability groups, and give the groups different tasks but the method used to teach these groups are the same. From my observations, it is clear that teachers are able to identify learners, normally through labelling them as ‘bright’ or ‘struggling’ or ‘slow’ and in the case of Dumont Primary specifically, where learners are diagnosed as being ‘OT’, yet they seldom know how to work with these learners. As mentioned (see Chapter 5), teachers would diagnose learners and then refer them to either the LSEN teacher or one or other specialist. The Grade 1 teacher at Flamingo Primary confirms that children learn differently but the teaching styles are the same as she puts it, “We don’t exercise different styles of teaching because children learn differently so we supposed to teach in different styles” (Grade 1 Class teacher Flamingo Primary, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

Teachers in Grade 1 often struggle to get some learners to concentrate and listen whilst being taught and when learners are busy doing activities. As confirmed by the Grade 1 teacher at Flamingo Primary:

The main thing we expected of them is to listen. That’s something we struggle with, because it doesn’t get implemented at home also. We expect them to be in school and to do what we ask for, listen, to read and write and all the little things (Grade 1 teacher, Flamingo Primary, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

In the following excerpt (Excerpt 6.3), I show how a learner interrupts his own learning and that of others in the group.

### **Excerpt 6.3: Numeracy lesson- Grade 1 Teacher Flamingo Primary**

The teacher starts the lesson by doing some mental mathematics activities with the whole class. She then continues by working with a group of 5 learners on the mat whilst the rest of the class are busy completing an activity sheet in their classwork books, as per the teacher's instruction. The learners on the mat each have three round bottle tops, a board and a classwork book, which they collected before sitting down. They sit in a semi-circle with the teacher at the head.

Teacher: How many bottle tops do you have?

Learners answer in unison: Three

Teacher: First tell me about the bottle tops. What do you see?

A learner responds: One is purple, one is blue one is green.

Teacher repeats: Yes one is purple, one is blue one is green what else about it?

'Below average' learner responds: Circular!

Teacher: The shape is circular and the size?

No response. She waits then says: The size is it big or small?

'At risk' learner shouts: Big!

Teacher: And what can they do?

'At risk' learner: You can roll it.

Teacher: Place the tops on your board. Move one down. What happens to the bottle tops on the top of the page?

'Below average' learner notes: It's getting less

The 'at risk' learner starts laughing for no reason.

Teacher pointing to him and responds angrily: You that's laughing at other people, you tell me!

'At risk' learner pointing to the bottle top at the bottom says: I have one here and it makes three.

Teacher: No! How can one here make three. You need to say how many is on top and at the bottom to say the numbers. Now move all the tops to the bottom. What do you see?

'Below average' learner answers: There is naught on top and three at the bottom

At this point the teacher notices the 'at risk' learner looking around. She turns to him in anger.

Teacher: Why are you writing the sum like that? You really need to listen

He looks over at the other learner's book.

Teacher shouts: Don't look at his work...Come master, let me look at your work. You see that laughing at other people must stop because he can laugh at a lot of things about you.

See, you wrote one after I told you it was not one.

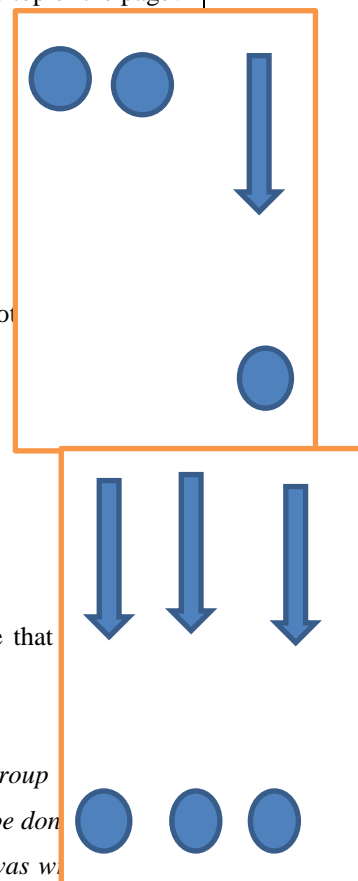
The teacher then demonstrates the procedure on the board. The other learner's in the group attentively for the teacher to work with them. She however continues to explain what needs to be done

The 'at risk' learner writes the sum but keeps looking up at the board where a list of sums was written. He incorrectly writes the sum  $2+1=$  in the middle of the page.

Teacher: No! You write here [She points to the top left corner of the page.] So now write  $2+1=?$

He answers: Three.

Teacher: Now write it.



*The teacher only had a few minutes to quickly check the other four learners' books. She instructs them to return to their tables and to complete in their classwork books the sums that appear on the board. She later checks on the group again but the learner still did not follow the instructions.*

Teacher: [Reprimands him]: You need to write the sums beneath each other. Stop looking around! Sit properly!  
*The learner would listen when spoken to but as soon as the teacher continued with the group he would revert to either laughing or interfering with the other learners in his group.*

I observed this type of behaviour first-hand- talking, laughing, looking around and interfering with other learners and not concentrating on the tasks at hand, during classroom observations sessions across the three schools. This type of interruptions prominent mostly amongst 'below average' and 'at risk' learners, appears to impede their learning and that of others, as confirmed in one of the interview sessions with Grade 1 learners:

Researcher [Addressing an 'at risk' learner]: What do you do when the others go to the mat to do bonds?

'Average' learner responds: They make a noise. He [referring to the 'at risk' learner] always talk and laugh when nothing is a laughing matter. When they do wrong stuff, then he laughs, always if Miss is talking stuff but it's not funny then he always laughs...(Grade 1, Flaming Primary group interview, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

The 'at risk' learners I observed seldom complete daily classwork or assessment activities. In their classwork books, I noted many areas where the teacher marked the work as being incomplete. I used the interview sessions to find out why this was the case.

Researcher: I noticed that in most of your assessment tasks that you don't complete ...that you have a lot of incomplete stuff. Why do you think you don't complete stuff or what are you doing when other children are busy?

'Average learner' interrupts: She's lazy! [Referring to the 'at risk' learner]

'At risk' learner: I'm not lazy the children just talk to me

Researcher: The children in your group

'At risk' learner: No the children at my table. 'X' [the boy next to her] every time wants to talk to me so I can't finish my work

Researcher: [Later in the interview I ask again] How come your work is not completed?

'At risk' learner: Because we play the whole time. 'X' just want to talk to me all the time

'Above average' learner interrupts and responds: I don't think it's just 'X' and 'Z' [two boys sitting on either side of the learner in question who she constantly talks to] I think she also talks to them (Grade 1 Dumont Primary interview session, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The teacher at Dumont Primary notes that certain children often use this type of behaviour as a ‘coping mechanism’ when they do not understand or do not know how to proceed.

### 6.2.2 Case 2: Pedagogic practices in Grade 4 - Instructional and regulative discourse

This section deals with the pedagogic practices of Grade 4 teachers across the three selected schools, and how these practices are experienced by teachers and learners.

**Table 57: Summary of the structuring of the pedagogic discourse in Grade 4 across the three schools**

			Flamingo Primary: Grade 4 Class teacher	Dumont Primary: Grade 4 Class teacher	Zola Primary: Grade 4 mathematics Teacher	
<b>1. Classification and framing of pedagogic discourse: instructional and regulative</b>	<b>Selection &amp; sequencing</b>		F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	
	<b>Pacing</b>		F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	
	<b>Evaluative rules</b>		F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	
	<b>Hierarchical rules</b>		F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	
	<b>Discourses</b>	<b>Inter-disc (subjects)</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
		<b>Inter-disc (school/everyday)</b>		C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Internal</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
		<b>External</b>		C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
	<b>Agents</b>	<b>Specialisation of voice</b>		C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
<b>2. Instructional form</b>	<b>Content</b>		Uniform/ no differentiation	Uniform/no differentiation	Uniform/ no differentiation	
	<b>Classroom organisation</b>		Communalized/ whole class teaching	Communalized/w hole class teaching/ Individualized	Communalized/ whole class teaching	

It is evident from the table (Table: 57) that the selection and sequencing of lessons are strongly framed ( $F^{++}$ ), both internally ( $^iF^{++}$ ) and externally ( $^eF^{++}$ ). Internally, where the locus of control is with the teacher, the teacher has apparent control over what is to be taught (selection), what comes first and what follows (sequencing). In terms of external framing, which refers to “the controls on communication outside that pedagogic practice entering the pedagogic practice” (Bernstein, 1996:29) there are strong influences of the syllabus, time-frames, textbooks and worksheets (mainly test-driven worksheets) on teaching. Practices of Grade 4 teachers are directed mainly by the syllabus and the ANAs. Practices are therefore highly test-driven, as learners, from my observation in these classes, worked mainly from worksheets and assessment sheets. In other words, teachers often taught to assessments, as expressed by a teacher:

Sometimes I feel I do that [referring to teaching to assessments] for two or three consecutive weeks non-stop getting ready for tests. But I don't want to do that. They [the learners] are losing a lot because you just preparing them for a test which they going to write once off. I really don't want to do it. I try my best not to do it, you know with six weeks of teaching is all aimed at with writing one test or one assessment test (Grade 4 class teacher, Dumont Primary, 22 August 2012).

Another teacher expressed her frustration with the new Curriculum and the way things are set out especially the time-frames given for covering the syllabus. She complained,

...and then they need us to do this thing today, to do another thing the following day to do another thing while we have slow learners we suppose even to continue with that learner and then we are supposed to finish the work by end of September, the set time and then it becomes so strenuous to us...because it will make no sense if I can continue and carry on while I'm leaving most learners behind (Grade 4 mathematics teacher, Zola Primary, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013).

Even though the selection and sequencing are strongly framed, variations do occur in terms of the pacing principle, that is, the extent to which teachers and learners have control over the pacing of instructional knowledge. Most of the Grade 4 class teacher at Flamingo Primary and the Grade 4 mathematics teacher at Zola Primary controlled the pace at which their learners acquire content knowledge. This is evident in the following excerpt (Excerpt 6.4) taken from Grade 4 lessons taught by these Grade 4 teachers (see full transcript in Appendix, J).



#### Excerpt 6.4

Teacher, Zola Primary: Next to A, write your number, skip the line. I do have rulers underline your work. We have to be quick!

She shouts after noticing the boys in the corner talking: What you doing? Why you not writing? Hurry up. We must still mark.

Teacher, Flamingo Primary: You have ten minutes. We need to work faster and write quicker.

The words ‘be quick’, ‘hurry up’, ‘work faster’ and ‘write quicker’, and the mention of time “You have 10 minutes”, show that the teacher controls the pace at which learners work through activities. What is also evident is that learners do very little to alter the pace at which they learn. They seldom ask questions or ask the teacher to clarify what is required of them nor do they respond to questions.

The teacher at Dumont Primary does however alter the pace of the lesson according to the learners’ pace. She would monitor how long it takes for them to write, pause and wait on learners before continuing with a lesson as showed in Excerpt 6.5.

#### Excerpt 6.5: Language lesson – Grade 4 Class teacher Dumont Primary

*Teacher writes on the board ‘Language – informal letters’. This lesson is part of two other lessons that went before that dealt with ‘introduction to the letter’, ‘the body-the adventure’ and now learners need to write the conclusion.*

Teacher: This is the fourth and final paragraph in your story. It is shorter than 3 to 4 excuse me 2 to 3 sentences. Who can tell me what does the word ‘conclusion’ mean?

Learner 1 – The ending

Teacher: It’s the ending. How you going to end your story? How you going to wrap things up? Right turn to your planning stage with your keywords

*The learners open up their books which contains the planning. The teacher moves amongst the learners and notices some have not completed the previous paragraphs of the letter.*

Teacher: Why do I see so many gaps? Have you done your keywords for your fourth paragraph?

Learners [In unison.]: No, Miss.

Teacher: Well, you have to do that before you can write the paragraph. Now, turn to the planning page.

*The teacher waits till all learners are ready before continuing. She moves amongst the learners checking on their planning page.*

Excerpt 6.5 shows that the teacher has control over the selection (*'Language – informal letters'*) and sequencing (doing keywords before writing the paragraph) of knowledge. She also monitors to see what learners are doing and waits on all learners before continuing; this is indicative that she is willing to alter the pace according to what the learners have produced. Once she discovered that the learners did not plan (write keywords) she then stopped and provided them time to do so before continuing with the actual lesson. In my interview with this teacher she expresses how she works with learners who are struggling:

So when you doing new work, then I just do a general lesson. Then once I get to look at their books and see what's going on and they struggling with something, then in follow-up lessons I will try and bring those learners aside. Perhaps the easiest thing I find is to bring them to my desk on a one to one basis (Grade 4 class teacher, Dumont Primary 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012).

From my observations the teacher in these one-on-one sessions with learners would determine where the learner went wrong and then work with the learner till the work is understood. The learners interviewed all noted that when they struggle with an operation especially in mathematics that the teacher would help them as noted in my conversation with a learner:

Researcher: In the maths class yesterday you were adding and subtracting money. What did you not understand?

Learner: I didn't understand the borrowing

Researcher: Do you understand it now?

Learner: Yes

Researcher: How come you understand it now?

Learner: Because my teacher explained to me how to do it? (Grade 4 learner, Dumont Primary, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012)

This was confirmed by the 'above average' learner who noted that:

...she will explain it to you and then if some people don't understand she will explain it a bit more and then sometimes you'll understand and if you don't understand you just go to her desk and say you don't understand and she will explain that question to you (Grade 4 learner, Dumont Primary, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012).

In terms of framing at the level of the evaluation rule, variations are also evident. As previously noted, the evaluation rule is apparent when the teacher introduces learners to an

activity, gives clear instruction/explanations during the course of the activity, discusses the questions of the task/providing clarity, and monitors learners' work, and at the conclusion of the activity, deals with incorrect learner statements. The following excerpts 6.6 a, b and c provide some idea of the framing of the evaluation rule of each teacher.

#### **6.6 a: F<sup>-</sup> Evaluation criteria are unclear and explicit**

Teacher Flamingo Primary: So you must find the best adjective to describe the animals and this is a poem that we going to learn. So open your English books Grade 4. Let's make it a double clean page. You need to put a border around the activity. Keep exercise 4 and 5 in your flipfile. We going to paste this [pointing to Activity 3] and then write the answers. So when we study we can have the answers with the questions. The heading is adjectives and then the date. Make a pattern in colour then start. [The class becomes noisy in response to which the teacher shouts] I cannot handle this talking. You people are not listening. Lord have mercy on my soul. 'Adjectives' Write in colour pencil.

#### **6.6 b: F<sup>-</sup> Evaluation criteria are unclear and explicit**

Teacher Zola Primary: Turn to page 31 everybody, exercise 1 number A. Number A you will just write, you are not going to draw a line. You will write the first month that has 31 days that is, its name, semi colon, space with a figure, you write another one until you finish. Number B, give the months that have 30 days and you repeat the way we have already done in 31 days. So now let's do it. Let's go.

#### **6.6 c: F<sup>++</sup> Evaluation criteria are very clear and explicit**

Teacher Dumont Primary: You basically just going to end off your letter. You can in your conclusion thank Dr Seuss for taking time out to read your letter. You can just end off with your last thoughts or summarize your character. Summarise means just in one or two sentences wrap up or end off a description of your character to Dr Seuss before you thank him. Work with your keywords on the planning page. Once you got that down you going to turn to you letter and you going to take the information from your list of keywords and you going to write a very short fourth paragraph, probably 3-4 sentences approximately. When you going to end your letter off its going to be the fourth paragraph, you going to leave a line open underneath the last sentence of that paragraph and then who can tell me how do we end the letter off? What is the proper layout for ending off the letter?

*The teacher illustrates and verbally explains what needs to be done on the board for learners to see where the fourth paragraph ends, the open line and the ending off of the letter.*

Learner 3- Yours sincerely.

Teacher: OK, how else can you end off your letter?

*Teacher calls on different learners by name to give their version of how to end off the letter drawing on learners own knowledge-base.*

Learner 4: Yours truly.

*Answers of different learners are displayed on the board by the teacher.*

Learner 5- Kind regards.

Teacher: Good, 'Kind regards'. Is there another way that I could end it off?  
Yes, 'X'

Learner 6 answers: Best wishes.

Teacher: Good, 'Best wishes'. Underneath that you can leave a line open and write your full name to end off the letter. Get started.

Excerpts 6.6 a and b reveal that teachers place more emphasis on the procedure to follow as to what to cut, paste, write etc. but this is merely to get them started. What constitutes a correct production is not made explicit. The topic for the activity is made clear to learners in excerpt 6.a but not in excerpt 6b. The teacher, as shown in excerpt 6c, provides the learners with both the topic, clearly explains the procedure and what would constitute a correct application. Learners responses are written on the board for everyone to use. She walks amongst learners while they are busy to ensure that they understood what was required of them. The two previous teachers in contrast did not follow this through, as is evident in excerpts 6.7a and 6.7b

#### **Excerpt 6.7a Extract from Language lesson-Grade 4 teacher Flamingo Primary**

She turns to me and says: Miss, I'm coming now. Then she turns to the learners and says: Miss is here. You have to work I will be back now.

*The teacher leaves the classroom and only returns after the bell has rung for break. When she leaves the only a few learners continue working, the majority are either talking or out of their desks.*

The teacher in the above excerpt (Excerpt 6.7 a) left the class and learners were expected to complete the set task without direct interaction from the teacher. Only a few continued with the activity, while others were still cutting and pasting, with the 'at risk' learner (one of the research participants) out of his seat, disturbing other learners.

#### **Excerpt 6.7b: Extract from mathematics lesson-Grade 4 teacher Zola Primary**

*The teacher moves to the front of the class and stops at one desk to address a learner who appears not to have followed her instructions.*

Teacher: What are you writing?

Learner: Writing classwork.

Teacher: Next to A, write your number, skip the line. I do have rulers to underline your work. We have to be quick!

Another learner asked a question.

Learner: Excuse me, Miss. What is B?

Teacher answers by code-switching: List those that have 30 days

*This was followed by other learners requesting of the teacher to explain what is meant by C, D, E and F. She repeats these questions in isiXhosa. This is done without restating the question in a different way.*

The teacher [*She shouted after noticing the boys in the corner talking*]: What you doing? Why you not writing? Hurry up. We must still mark.

Teacher [*After a few minutes*]: Now, let's do the marking now. Take out your red pens, we going to mark.

*She did this without ascertaining whether all learners have completed the task. Not all learners had a red pen in fact only 4 learners had one which they had to share causing further disruptions. She then went through the activity requesting some answers from the learners and giving others. I observed some learners writing down the answers, especially the boys who did not attempt the activity at all.*

*When children shouted out answers she would reprimand them.*

Teacher: Number A, give me the list of the months that have 31 days.

*A learner wants to respond.*

Teacher [Shouting]: Don't answer unless I point at you.

*They then move through the activity. The teacher asked a question and requested certain learners to answer. This continues until they reach F in the activity, namely why February has 28 days in some years and 29 in others.*

Teacher: Why is this? What is happening?

Learner [attempting to answer]: When February has 28 days then we have 365 days a year.

*The learners stops and remains quiet.*

Teacher: Good, carry on. [She gets no response.] Who can help her?

The teacher gets no response then states: When February has 29 days then that year we have 366 days. What changed?

Learner: We add.

Teacher: How, which number do we add?

Learner: We add 1.

Teacher: You can say that February has 29 days every leap year. Just write 29.

*The teacher turns to me to speak. The learners wait on the teacher to continue but the bell rings. Learners pack up noisily and leave the class without the teacher dismissing them and other learners enter.*

Excerpt 6.7b shows that learners were given only a few minutes to work on the activity. The teacher did not monitor whether or not learners were working correctly. The teacher often code-switches by restating the questions in isiXhosa but not elaborating what the question requires learners to do. Answers are dealt with quickly and the teacher does not monitor whether all learners have completed the task before marking. Learners mark their own work so the teacher is not aware of whether they are marking correctly or just writing in answers. I observed learners writing in answers after they are given by the teacher. It is difficult to say whether they understood the answer given or whether they were merely writing things down. The responses of learners were not corrected or reformulated. Correct answers were not displayed on the board.

I now turn to the hierarchical rule, namely the mode of control at the level of regulative discourse which is mostly positional for all three Grade 4 teachers. These teachers maintained a physical distance between themselves and their students. The authority of the teacher in the classroom is due to his/her position as teacher and therefore implicit.

Strong classification is evident at the level of interdisciplinary in both the language and mathematics lessons. Strong classification at the level of the inter-discursive rule (between everyday and school knowledge) is also observed. Reference is made to everyday knowledge especially when making examples, but this is done merely to understand the topic or concept being dealt with and is not incorporated into the lesson.

The classification of space-the internal classification/teacher-learner space is quite bounded at both Flamingo and Zola Primary. Here, teachers generally stand at the board when teaching and children remain in their desks. The classification of internal space in the Grade 4 class is weak. The teacher generally enters learners' space monitoring their work and interacting with individual learners. Learners at times enter the teacher's space, especially when they are struggling with tasks.

The classification of the external space, between the outside and inside space, varies across the three schools. The boundaries between outside and inside the grade 4 classroom at

Flamingo Primary are blurred. There are constant interruptions—people entering the class from outside as well as the teacher leaving the class. This often causes interruptions in lessons and can at times lead to confusion for learners in the class. One learner observed, “Sometimes my Miss tells you a thing then she talks to another child...then I don’t know what she is saying” (Grade 4 learner, Flamingo Primary 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

I witnessed this first-hand whilst doing observation in this class when the teacher would allow others from outside the class to disrupt her lessons. She would enter into conversation with the person and forget where she ended off and then continue without first completing what she started. The school is situated in an Industrial area alongside a busy road and the noise level from outside often makes it difficult for learners to hear the teacher. The classification of external space at Zola Primary is weak. At Zola Primary when teachers are absent then surrounding classes are quite noisy. People enter the class without permission but the Grade 4 teacher does not allow this to disrupt her teaching time. Learners are not allowed to leave the classroom without permission from the teacher. On the other hand, the classification of external space at Dumont Primary is strong. There are seldom interruptions and surrounding classrooms are generally quiet.

Specialisation of agents in terms of voice is very weak in the case of the Grade 4 classrooms at Flamingo and Zola Primary. Learners are passive and seldom engage actively in classroom interaction. They only respond to teachers’ questions but seldom ask questions or ask for further clarification if they do not understand. In contrast, the teacher at Dumont Primary creates opportunities for learners to engage more in their own learning.

In terms of the instructional form, teachers in grade 4 teach in a homogenising way, not taking difference into consideration with learners not engaging in differential tasks. The reason for this is expressed by the different teachers in the following extracts:

There isn’t time, yes they definitely learn differently and with the big amount of failures we have within our classes. Half of this class has repeated already in the Foundation Phase...so there isn’t time and our classes are too big...I’m not LSEN trained. I didn’t do remedial or Foundation Phase training so for me it’s difficult to teach a child to start reading from A to Z... (Grade 4 class teacher, Flamingo Primary, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

I really feel that I do not know enough about remediation. Often parents of those learners [referring to those that struggle] when we meet request additional remedial work... but I do not feel that it’s necessarily suited to the needs of those learners who require that type of support (Grade 4 class teacher, Dumont Primary, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012).

Learners in these classes therefore receive the same lessons and are not exposed to differential tasks or activities.

In terms of classroom organisation, most lessons are taught using a whole class approach, especially at Flamingo and Zola Primary. The teacher at Dumont Primary does allow for some form of individualisation by pairing a weak learner with a stronger learner and working individually with mainly struggling learners. Not all learners benefit from this, as one learner revealed:

I just don't feel comfortable telling him and asking him [the boy who is stronger than her and whom the teacher paired with her] because he has his own work that he has to figure out and I can't ask him the whole time (Grade 4 'at risk' learner, Dumont Primary 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012).

Learners across the three grades expressed that they often call on their partners (learners sitting next to them, behind or in front of them) when they do not understand the teacher or did not hear the instructions, amongst other reasons, as is evident from learners in various interview sessions:

Once my friend he got his answer right but it was [marked] wrong so he told the teacher: 'But this is the right answer'. So she said: 'Who else has the same answer as you in their book?' So my friend said me, so she didn't even look at my answer. She marked it wrong, when it was right (Grade 4, 'average' learner, Dumont Primary, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012).

My friend X helps me. She sits at the back of me. Sometimes my Miss say we can't stand up then I ask her [X-name omitted] to help (Grade 4, 'at risk' learner Flamingo Primary, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012).

X: [Name omitted]... because she always help me if I don't understand. She reads to me the questions (Grade 4, 'below average learner, Flamingo Primary, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012)

My friend who sits next to me we help each other. I'm too shy to ask the teacher. She [The partner] explains it to me and that's how I get the answer and if she gets the answer wrong then I explain it to her, the right way (Grade 4 'average' learner, Dumont Primary, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012).

X: [Name omitted] my friend helps me when I'm struggling to understand the teacher (Grade 4 'average learner' Zola Primary, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013).



Learner movement is restricted and as a result learners will often turn to other learners sitting next to them or in front or behind them if they require help. They may only be out of their seats to facilitate marking or when they receive permission from the teacher.

### 6.2.3 Case 3: Pedagogic practices in Grade 7 - Instructional and regulative discourse

This section deals with the pedagogic practices of Grade 7 teachers across the three selected schools, and how these practices are experienced by teachers and learners.

**Table 58: Summary of the structuring of the pedagogic discourse in Grade 7 (mathematics) across the three schools**

			<b>Flamingo Primary: Grade 7 Mathematics teacher</b>	<b>Dumont Primary: Grade 7 Mathematics teacher</b>	<b>Zola Primary: Grade 7 Mathematics Teacher</b>	
<b>1. Classification and framing of pedagogic discourse: instructional and regulative</b>	<b>Selection &amp; sequencing</b>		F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	
	<b>Pacing</b>		F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	
	<b>Evaluative rules</b>		F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	
	<b>Hierarchical rules</b>		F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>++</sup>	
	<b>Discourses</b>	<b>Inter-disc (subjects)</b>		C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>
		<b>Inter-disc (school/everyday)</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
	<b>Spaces</b>	<b>Internal</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>
		<b>External</b>		C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
	<b>Agents</b>	<b>Specialisation of voice</b>		C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>
<b>2. Instructional form</b>	<b>Content</b>		Uniform/ no differentiation	Uniform/no differentiation	Uniform/ no differentiation	
	<b>Classroom organisation</b>		Communalized/ whole class teaching	Communalized/w hole class teaching	Communalized/ whole class teaching	

As in Grades 1 and 4, the teachers in these Grade 7 mathematics classrooms have apparent control over the selection and sequencing of lessons. I explained previously why I say ‘apparent control’ but just to recap, lessons are strongly framed ( $F^{++}$ ) both internally ( $^iF^{++}$ ) and externally ( $^eF^{++}$ ). Internally where the locus of control is with the teacher; the teacher has apparent control over what is to be taught (selection) and what comes first and what follows (sequencing). In terms of external framing, which refers to “the controls on communication outside that pedagogic practice entering the pedagogic practice” (Bernstein, 1996:29), strong influence of the syllabus, time-frames, textbooks and worksheets (mainly test-driven worksheets) on teaching is evident as in Grade 4.

Framing at the level of pacing (tempo at which learner acquisition takes place) is strong ( $F^+$ ) in the case of Flamingo and Zola Primary. Here the words ‘come, come’, ‘quickly’ and ‘finish’ show the teacher has control over the pace of the lesson. Learners are given time to work through activities but the teacher controls the amount of time. Learners seldom ask questions when they do not understand or do very little to alter the pace of the lesson. Excerpt 6.8a and 6.8b illustrates teachers having control over the selection, sequencing and pacing of knowledge being transmitted and acquired.

**Excerpt 6.8a Extract from mathematics lesson -Grade 7 teacher Flamingo Primary**

**Segment 1- Introduction of the lesson**

*Teacher stands at the board. Greet learners who are settling into their seats.*

Teacher: Look at the board quickly. Will you settle down. X [*addressing a learner-name omitted*] I’m not going to speak again. We did speak this morning. Come, come.

*Learners quieten down and the teacher continues.*

Teacher: I was a bit disturbed Grade 7s. The sum we did yesterday. It says, “Write the shaded area in the diagram as a percentage, and then as a decimal fraction and lastly as a common fraction. [*Teacher was referring to a test /activity learners did the previous day which they appear to have done incorrectly*].

*The teacher drew the diagram on the board and then she addresses the whole class.*

Teacher: How many blocks are across?

Learners [answer in unison]: 4.

Teacher [Pointing to the diagram]: How many blocks down?

Learners: [respond in unison] 4.

Teacher: So when I multiple the two to get the area, how many blocks do I end up with?

Learners: 16 blocks.

Teacher: Yes 16. How many are shaded?

Learners: 4.

Teacher: 4 out of the 16 – 16 blocks so the whole thing is 100%

*There is a knock at the door. The teacher ignores the interruption. Even though learners turn their attention to it, she still continues with the lesson.*

Teacher: Isn't it so? 16 will give me 100% what do you think 8 blocks will give me, which is exactly half?

A boy: [Sitting in front of the class] 50%

Teacher: Right so what do 4 blocks give me?

Same learner: 25%

Teacher: Excellent! And you could not determine that. And when I look at the decimal fraction of 25%?

Teacher: [After a few learners shouted out the answer] don't shout out! Put up your hands!

[She then points to one learner] Yes, X

Boy: 0,25.

Teacher: Excellent and you did very well in that test yesterday.

Teacher: [Continues as learners sit quietly] And as a common fraction?

*No response.*

Teacher: 4 over 16 [She writes the fraction on the board] I can use it like that but it is best to what? [She addresses the question to the 'above average' learner.]

Learner: To simplify it.

Teacher: Yes to simplify it 4 goes into 4

Learners: [In unison] Once.

Teacher: 4 goes into 16?

Learners: [In unison] 4 times.

Teacher: So what is the common fraction there? Was this so difficult? No! Some people must take note what we do in class really. We cannot afford not to be successful in maths. We need to pass maths. I talk everyday...

## Segment 2: During the course of the lesson

*Teacher instructs learners to take out the worksheet and go to 6.2. Some learners are noisy, and looking for the worksheet, while others are ready.*

Teacher: So let's look at the worksheet page. We going to do some equations. Go to 6.2, right at the bottom of the page. Let's solve some equations.

The teacher reads the question: Find the value of the letter in the equations below then put in a number to see if the equation works out?

*She writes  $x+5=9$  on the board.*

Teacher: What number added to 5 will give you 9

Learners: [Answer in unison.] 4.

Teacher: [Writing on the board as she is speaking.] So we going to say  $x = 4$ .

*She writes below this:  $x+5=9$  and  $9-5=4$*

Teacher: How do we prove x is equal to 4?

*Learners sit in silence and no one responds*

Teacher: If you want to find out what 'x' or 'a' or 'y' or 'k' is then you do the substitution to check if your answer is correct. I just wrote now  $4+5=9$ , so I know the answer is 9.

*The teacher then does another example and asked one of the boys to do the sum.*

Boy writes on the board:  $8+b=13$        $13-5=8$

$$b=5$$

Teacher: Now do the substitution.

Boy writes:  $8+5=13$

Teacher: [Addresses the 'at risk' learner.] X, did you understand?

'At risk' learner: Yes [Looks down as if confused.]

Teacher says: Not sure, hey?

*She then continues by working through two other examples using multiplication and subtraction. Now only a few learners are responding to her questions which she directs at the whole class.*

Except 6.8a, indicates the teacher's apparent control over the selection (using equations) and the sequencing (revising previous work, then doing equations). With respect to the pace at which learners work, it is controlled by the teacher, learners seldom alter the pace. They

answer mostly in unison or questions are directed at particular learners (mostly average and above average learners). From my observations, not all learners participate in the lesson. Similar observations were evident in lessons taught by the mathematics teacher at Zola Primary as illustrated in excerpt 6.8b.

**Excerpt 6.8b: extract from Mathematics lesson- Grade 7 teacher Zola Primary (see full transcribed lesson in Appendix J)**

Teacher: Today we going to multiple if the signs are the same and you multiple then the answer will always be positive for example  $-2 \times -9 =$  is?

*It appears that the learners have been introduced to the application before.*

A learner shouts out: 18.

Teacher: A negative times a negative is a?

Learners: [Answer in unison.] Positive.

Teacher: [Writes on the board and reads out.]  $+2 \times +9$

The same girl as before answers: +18

Teacher: Yes, a negative times a negative equals a positive and a positive times a positive equals a positive. First multiply the number then write the sign.

Teacher: Any questions?

*No one responds. Learners are sitting at their desks. Some have their books open. No one writes down what the teacher was explaining.*

Teacher: Let us pray the mathematics prayer. Close your eyes.

Learners: [With their eyes close recite.] A negative times a negative equals a positive; a positive times a positive equals a positive.

Teacher: OK. A negative times a positive equals a negative.

Teacher: Any questions?

Learners chorusing: No, Miss.

Teacher: You understand?

Learners chorusing: Yes.

Teacher: We going to do the exercise if there are no questions.

*Teacher writes on the board. Learners write down the exercise.*

The excerpt (6.8b) shows that the teachers have control not only over the selection and sequencing of the lesson but also over the pace at which acquisition takes place. Chorusing

answers is a common practice in the teaching of mathematics in this class, as is evident from the ‘maths prayer’ which learners repetitively recite. According to the teacher, “It’s one of the strategies you use. They close their eyes and visualize what they see, so that it is easy for them to remember”. Whether or not they understood the application does not appear important. Different learning styles of children were not acknowledged in this pedagogical interaction which appeared strongly framed and uniform. In my interaction with a learner from this class, I asked if he understood multiplying integers as the teacher explained it. He said: “Yes” and recites the ‘maths prayer’. But when asked to do the sum  $+8 \times +2 =$ , he incorrectly wrote  $-10$  for  $+3 \times +4 =$ , he answered  $-7$ .

In contrast, the teacher at Dumont Primary waits on learners and allows learners to ask questions which are then responded to. Here the framing is weak (F). Opportunities are created for learners to alter the pace of acquisition. As indicated by the mathematics teacher in our interview session. As he explained:

My lessons are not a full hour and it doesn’t continue for more than 30 minutes at a time. I take into consideration their attention span, and after 10 minutes ease up... so that the slower one’s can catch up but then it’s almost the end of the year. ... This group that we have this year work much slower so we must just slow things down ... slow down the pace, but the volume of work get shortened but we need to cover all the work. In a whole lesson there would be around 15 to 20 minutes where they could come interact with the teacher. So when they start working and they come to you to explain the problem you actually see the diverse nature of their problems and all of them don’t have the same problem so because they come individually you can assist them in what they need ... (Grade 7 maths teacher, Dumont Primary, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Even though the teacher alters the pace and allows for individual learners to come to him for help, not all learners however feel free to go to the teacher when they have problems as is evident in the following extract taken from my interview with Grade 7 learners:

It’s not extremely free [to approach the teacher] it’s like an ‘unspoken rule’ do not go more than twice to Sir that would mean that you were really not listening (Grade 7 ‘above average’ learner, Dumont Primary, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The fact that learners do not approach the teacher for help is elaborated on by other Grade 7 learners:

I’m scared. I actually wanted to ask if I could rewrite the test on data that I failed. I wanted to ask but I am scared. Like I don’t speak in class, I don’t

raise my hand to ask questions... Sometimes I give the wrong answer and the way I pronounce the words sometimes people will laugh and the teacher will just say, 'It's wrong' (Grade 7 'below average' learner, Dumont Primary, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Being shy or scared is expressed by another learner. As she puts it, "I'm shy to ask because I'm scared she [the teacher] will shout at me" (Grade 7, 'average' learner Flamingo Primary, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

It is common for these learners to elicit help from other learners sitting near to them instead of asking the teacher. This is confirmed by one learner in an interview session:

I have friends who struggle with maths, but they don't understand but they don't want to ask the teacher because they think the other children will make fun of them because they don't know... they would ask me...then I explain the best I can and if they still don't understand I say 'go ask Miss' [referring to the mathematics teacher] but they don't want to because they scared that the children will make fun of them. But that children that are making fun, they also don't know (Grade 7 'above average' learner Flamingo Primary, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The learners who are poking fun are normally the 'at risk' or 'below average' learners. I alluded to the many ways learners disrupt instructional time in Chapter 5, but in the excerpts below and in the fully transcribed lessons (see Appendix J) I describe how this 'disruptive behaviour' can impede on instructional time. A learner confirms this by saying

Today wasn't like most days ... there wasn't much chaos like on a different day... because most of the time when we doing activities there is always noise. Like today [in the maths class] there is the ringleader laying back in his chair and saying something to his friend that is on the other side of the class and Sir is watching him and they don't get that he is watching... It's like a virus when one person starts laughing or does something idiotic then the next person and the next then soon all chaos breaks loose (Grade 7 'above average' learner Dumont Primary, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2015).

Another learner explained: "They, the rude children, make a noise in class then you can't hear, or work or anything" (Grade 7 'average', learner Flamingo Primary, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Learners who disrupt lessons I came to discover are aware of what they are doing and why they are doing it as evident from the following two extracts taken from the interviews I had with these learners:

Extract 1:

Mam, in term 1 some of my subjects I failed because I wasn't concentrating on my work...I talk and make jokes...But I stopped doing that it's not helping me to pass (Grade 7 'below average' learner Dumont Primary, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Extract 2:

...because I struggle with reading Miss and I struggle with writing, I get nervous then I just want to do something just to get out the I 'soema' [for no reason] stand up then I 'soema' start laughing then my miss will say 'Get out of the class'. Then I get out.

[When asked if he worked noting that from his books that it is practically empty, he replied]: "No, I fidget around...play with a pencil, throw it around, fidget - that's when I don't understand the work (Grade 7 'at risk' learner Flamingo Primary, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

A teacher expresses her experience with children you disrupt lessons:

I feel children have lost the motivation to learn. I especially see it with X [the 'at risk' learner who often is guilty of such acts] telling me on a daily basis 'If you going to force me to work, I'm going to get cross with you', or shouting at me in class when I insist that he works. ...you speak to him, then he says 'Ok Miss' then he just, then he just now he'll be shouting at me again. You going to see that (Grade 7 mathematics teacher, Flamingo Primary, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The framing at the level of the evaluation rule varies across the three grade7 classrooms. The following excerpts (6.9a and 6.9b) extracted from the mathematics lessons taught shows that the framing is quite weak (F<sup>-</sup>) in 6.9a and very weak (F<sup>-</sup>) 6.9b:

#### **Except 6.9a: Mathematics lesson- Grade 7 teacher Flamingo Primary**

Teacher: Children look at your pages (worksheet referred to earlier) You are going to now do exercise 6.2. You going to paste this (learners are already fidgeting and becoming noisy) No! listen first! You going to paste this on the left hand side of your maths book and then you going to do the answers on the right hand side. You going to do 'a' to 'g' and leave a space, after each one. What is the heading going to be?

A few learners: Using equations.

Teacher: Excellent. Today's date and using equations.

*The teacher returns to the table and some learners are busy some cutting and pasting, others have already started working and a few are talking or just sitting.*



The teacher in the above excerpt (6.8a) does inform the learners about the topic and provides the procedure to be followed but does not work through the tasks with the learners. The teacher does not monitor learners' work or check whether they are working at all. She sits at the table while learners are busy.

**Excerpt 6.9b: Mathematics lesson-Grade 7 teacher Zola Primary**

*The teacher leaves the classroom to attend to something outside. Learners appear busy and are reasonably quiet. She returns shortly then writes on the board 'multiplying integers'*

$$+9 \times -4 =$$

$$+17 \times -2 =$$

$$+10 \times -13 =$$

$$-2 \times -4 =$$

*After writing the exercise, the teacher instructs learners.*

Teacher: Any questions?

*No response from learners*

Teacher: Let's do our mathematics.

*After a few minutes when the learners become noisy the teacher stands up from her table and addresses the whole class.*

Teacher: Are you finished?

Learners: No, Miss.

*When the noise level increase, the teacher instructs learners to take out what she calls the 'government book' or the learner workbook. The learners who completed the activity now have to continue with an unrelated activity.*

Teacher: Let's go to page 4. Starting from number 1, arrange numbers from smallest. Start from the smallest number.

*The teacher comes to me and explains what the blue books are. She turns to the learners,*

Teacher: If there are any questions, raise your hands.

*Not everyone in the class is working. When the noise level increases the teacher becomes angry and shouts: Finished!*

Learners: No.

*She sits at the table and explains about the 'government book'. She does not monitor what the learners are doing. This continues till the end of the period.*



In excerpt 6.9b, we note that the teacher merely writes the heading and activity on the board. The respective procedures are not explained. Learners are given two unrelated activities without working through the activities or correcting the first activity. The instructions and whether learners are working correctly remains unclear. The teacher sits at the table and therefore does not engage with learners.

In terms of the evaluation criteria, what constitutes a correct production is made quite explicit in the lesson taught by the Grade 7 mathematics teacher in the following excerpt (Excerpt 6.9c).

**Excerpt 6.9c: Mathematics lesson - Grade 7 teacher Dumont Primary**

*He writes on the board: 'Financial Maths'.*

*Learners are given a new worksheet. Teacher works through the activities with learners.*

Teacher: Look at the first scenario. A painter is painting. Which costs will he cover? First, we get different types of painting. One can paint a house or do an actual painting.

Teacher continues: What will you need if you were painting a painting?

Learners call out: Brushes, canvas, paint

Teacher: You need to know this. These are costs incurred.

A boy asks: Human resources will that count?

Teacher: No, that will be labour costs. We just looking at the cost of the raw material the frame, brushes and canvas. You must know these things about financial maths since you would apply it in EMS.

Teacher continues by writing on the board: The raw materials cost R125, 00 for one painting.

This we write as Cost Price = 125 per painting. The Selling Price – you going to sell each painting for R500. Do you think he's making more than 100% profit?

Learners: [Answer in unison.]Yes, Sir.

Teacher: What will 100% profit be? Remember what we said. In certain instances, we go beyond 100% . If he sells it at 100% profit what will it be?

A boy: 250

Teacher: How much profit is he actually making?

Some learners respond: 300%

Teacher: Good Artists need to make reasonable profit because it will take some time to sell one painting.

*Learners are expected to write down the application while the teacher is working through the calculations with them. The teacher does not check whether they have written it down or whether they have written it correctly from the board. Extra time is not given.*

Teacher: Now, let's do some calculations. He's going to sell 25 paintings so what will the cost price be?

Teacher writes on the board: 1 is R125; 25 x125= R3125,00.

Teacher: What will the selling price be?

Teacher working on the board says: 25x500= R12 500. Who has these totals? How many should he sell to cover his costs?

*Teacher gives learners time to write down the operation. A girl who completes the calculation shouts 6 paintings. Another teacher enters the class speaks to the teacher and leaves.*

The teacher continues: So he will start making a profit by the 7<sup>th</sup> one.

*Teacher starts the next calculation working with learners.*

Teacher: You buy a couch for R2500 pay 15% deposit and R190 instalments for 12 months. How much interest did she pay on the couch?

*He then allows the learners to complete the calculation. He moves amongst learners to monitor what they are doing but does not show them individually if they are on the right track. After some time, he returns to the board and writes while explaining.*

Teacher: How many calculated the deposit first? You must do that if you want to know the full HP price.

The 'above average' learner participant responds: Sir, I did the deposit plus the instalments to get to the interest.

*A boy starts to cough loudly but is ignored by the teacher. Some boys laugh in response to the one coughing. Some are fidgeting and not paying attention. This I observed throughout the lesson but the teacher will give them a stern look and continue teaching.*

Teacher responds to 'above average' learner: Yes, you can as long as you set it up correctly and show all the calculations.

*Teacher explains and writes it down.*

Teacher says: Total price is equal to the deposit plus the interest. He writes on the board

$$\begin{aligned} TP &= D + I \\ 375 + (190 \times 12) \\ HP &= R2655 \end{aligned}$$

Teacher: You have to subtract the two to get the interest.

He shows on the board:  $HP-CP\ 2655-2500=R155$  interest.

Teacher: You have to show what you did, all calculations. If you haven't got it do it for corrections. Write it down.

The bell rings. The teacher says: Quick pack up.

Excerpt 6.9c indicates that the teacher makes the instructions explicit. He works through the activity with learners and allows the learners to make injections during the lesson. Learners know what a successful production is. Explanations as to how to proceed are clear and explicit and steps, as to what constitute a correct production, are displayed on the board. The teacher however does not check if the steps are correctly transcribed or if learners have completed the corrections.

Teachers in Grade 7 across the three schools mainly exercised positional or imperative control. Framing thus at the level of the hierarchical rule is very strong ( $F^{++}$ ). These Grade 7 teachers are fairly strict and maintain a physical distance between themselves and their learners. As one teacher expressed it:

I got very high expectations for my learners. I expect them to be punctual, expect them to do their work. X [learner's name omitted] will tell you I'm very demanding...all the classes here know that I'm so strict...ek is 'n kwaai juffrou [I am a strict teacher] but we don't always want to shout. They [the learners] want it because they getting it from home (Grade 7 teacher, Flamingo Primary, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Another teacher felt that being strict or stern is the only way to work with what she calls an 'exceptionally tough group' of learners. She adds:

Children who are not coping academically and they are the trouble makers should be put in one class. We lower the level of work with them, get to where they are at, use their learning styles ...they get to Grade 7 they've been a problem all along, now hitting puberty. It's incredibly extreme (Grade 7 language teacher, Dumont Primary, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015).

I alluded to how certain learners interrupt their own learning and those of others earlier in this section.

I now turn to relations between discourses, that is the intra-disciplinary relations. Where the coding is  $C^+$  (strong classification); knowledge previously learned is briefly referred to in

lessons or when doing tasks. Themes are seldom inter-related. Where the coding is weak C<sup>-</sup> (weak classification) reference is made to other themes so as to see the relation to other forms of knowledge studied. At times, previous knowledge is drawn on too and accepted.

The classification between everyday knowledge and school knowledge is strong. Only subject specific knowledge is dealt with, especially in mathematics. In the theme on Financial Mathematics, the teacher does draw on everyday knowledge when providing examples. Here the boundary between the everyday and school knowledge is blurred but in other lessons only subject specific knowledge is dealt with.

In terms of internal classification, the space between teacher-learner in certain cases, like in the Grade 7 mathematics class at Flamingo and Zola Primary, is mostly bounded (very strong classification C<sup>++</sup>). The teachers and learners remain in their own space throughout the lessons observed. As mentioned, these teachers are quite strict, but allow learners to enter their space to facilitate marking and grant permission. The teacher at Dumont will at times enter the learners' space or learners can approach him individually but for most of the time the space is quite bounded (C<sup>+</sup>/quite bounded). As one learner put it, "It's not extremely free but only a few times you are allowed to get up and go ask".

The classification of external space, the space between inside and outside the classroom, is mostly bounded (very strong classification/ C<sup>++</sup>) with respect to Flamingo and Dumont Primary Schools. These teachers do not allow any interruptions from outside. The surrounding classrooms are fairly quiet. The classification of external space for the teacher at Zola Primary is quite unbounded. The teacher leaves the classroom without informing learners while the surrounding classrooms are generally noisy. The latter could be due to teachers staying absent and leaving their classes unattended or it could be due to the construction work being undertaken.

Specialisation of agents in terms of voice is very weak in the case of the Grade 7 classrooms at Flamingo and Zola Primary. Learners are passive and seldom engage actively in classroom interaction. They only respond to teachers questions and seldom ask questions or ask for further clarification if they do not understand. In contrast, the teacher at Dumont Primary creates opportunities for learners to engage more with their own learning.

In terms of the instructional form, teachers in grade 7 teach in a homogenous way, not taking difference into consideration, with learners not engaging in different tasks. As expressed by a

learner: “All of us get the exact same worksheets it’s been like that since the beginning of the year” (‘above average’ learner, Dumont Primary 14<sup>th</sup> August 2012). Another learner who normally achieves high marks for mathematics said that she felt ‘bored’ when the teacher spends too much time going over the same thing, as she got it the first time, adding: “I do get bored because I know the work already and I’ve done it over and over so I would want something more advanced (‘above average learner, Flamingo Primary, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012). Teachers in the following extracts express why they are unable to teach to different learners needs or learning styles:

I try to get worksheets out for lower achievers but I find that the concepts that are lacking needs a whole new reteaching and with the big load we carry we cannot do justice to them. I would prefer if they gave one or two hours per day where children could go to a particular teacher for support (Grade 7 mathematics teacher, Dumont Primary, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2012)

Some children need to go back to basics and need to see the oral physical presentations for maths, and sometimes I don’t have the time to go back and do that. I teach to the whole class and do the same worksheets, as I said we have so much work that I really do not have the time to make extra worksheets...(Grade 7 mathematics teacher, Flamingo Primary, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

Nowhere in the two week cycle does it allow for that. Nowhere does it allow for you to spend time providing feedback, remediation work. I have to give feedback to 95 stories 32 in this class (Grade 7 language teacher, Dumont Primary, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012).

The extracts above reveal that teachers are aware that children learn differently but they felt constrained either by time or class size to accommodate learner differences.

In terms of classroom organisation, most lessons are taught using a whole class approach, especially at Flamingo and Zola Primary. The teacher at Dumont Primary does allow for some form of individualisation by allowing learners to come to his table if they do not understand but as noted not all learners feel comfortable approaching the teacher.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter was on pedagogy, more specifically how pedagogy is delivered in three selected grades across three selected public schools, and how it is experienced by both teachers and learners. Different modes of pedagogic practices are evident across the three

grades. There are common features in the way teaching is done at the three schools in Grade 1. Teaching in this grade is marked by a differential ability discourse where learners work in homogeneous ability group and are given differential tasks, with the method of teaching however remaining the same. I also found that children are positioned differently by these groupings, given the unintended messages being relayed to learners as being part of the group. For some the practice of ability grouping has an enabling effect whereas for others it has a disabling effect. The framing of the instructional discourse is mostly strong where the teacher has apparent control over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation criteria of knowledge being transmitted. However, when it comes to the interpersonal relations between teacher and learner, the framing is weak, as authority is taken for granted and therefore implicit. The teacher-learner interaction is more open where teachers are increasingly personal in their approach, leading to a more relaxed classroom atmosphere.

Then in Grades 4 and 7, the practices are more test-driven or assessment based (fragmented teaching approach) where teachers teach a more homogenised pedagogy and not teaching to different needs and learning styles of learners. Teachers in these grades tend to teach in more restrictive rather than in expanded (more meaningful) ways. They seldom explain why what is wrong is wrong or why, when learners get it right, it is right. Here, teachers seldom engage with topics or concepts in a way that could lead to comprehension of these topics or concepts. There is evidence of strong framing over the instructional discourse, that is strong framing over the selection, sequencing, pacing and evaluation criteria of knowledge being transmitted by some Grade 4 and 7 teachers, specifically at Flamingo and Zola Primary Schools. On the other hand, at Dumont Primary both the Grade 4 and 7 teachers do attempt to create opportunities for weaker framing at the level of pacing. When it comes to the hierarchical rule, the authority of the teacher is more explicit where teachers in these grades exercise more positional or imperative control. They tend to maintain a physical distance between them and their learners. Learner movement in in the grade 4 and 7 classroom space is very restricted, whereas in Grade 1 learner movement is not, as teachers and learners are in each other's spaces frequently.

I also found, from the evidence presented in this chapter, certain learners being 'interrupters' of their own learning. I alluded to this in chapter 5, and now data in chapter 6 show how they employ various strategies to interrupt their own learning or interrupt instructional time. This was evident mostly amongst 'below average' and 'at risk' learners. These interruptions often

push the teacher into the regulative discourse, with the result that teachers place more emphasis (mostly time) on conduct, behaviour, cooperation, and what is expected of learners, that is the moral order of the classroom leaving very little time for emphasising the instructional discourse (content).

The following chapter, Chapter 7, draws together the contextual findings of chapter 5 and the pedagogical findings of chapter 6, to offer a deeper analysis of the issues that arose in these chapters in order to understand the factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the three selected public schools.





## CHAPTER 7

### 7 ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION

#### 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an analysis and discussion of the findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5, I presented findings on the background contextual factors which characterised each of the selected public schools. I offered in-depth descriptions on the context of the three schools, the reported experiences of participants in these schools, how they fared in internal examinations and systemic tests, as well as the way in which they experienced these tests. In other words I provided a way to understanding the role of context in performance, indicating how context actually influences the participants' dispositions, the way in which cultural capital is distributed amongst different schools and the influence it has on the way in which certain dispositions have been embodied and interiorised amongst the actors in these schools given their external reality. In Chapter 6, I elaborated on the pedagogical findings, characterising each teacher's pedagogic practices in terms of the instructional context, as well as the regulative contexts. In other words, I illustrated how pedagogy is delivered in these selected classrooms, across three selected grades in the three selected public schools, and how it in turn, it is experienced by both teachers and learners.

My initial assumption was that one could clearly distinguish schools in terms of class but I found this not to be the case. As mentioned, school communities are not always 'traditional' school communities serving children of one particular class. Zola Primary, one could say is a neighbourhood school situated in a working class area serving working class learners. However, Dumont and Flamingo Primary are not neighbourhood schools. These schools are mixed, serving learners from varied socio-economic backgrounds. Both schools are situated far from the communities thus undermining the concept of neighbourhood schools. Sekete, Shilubane and Badiri (2001:27) confirmed this. They found that 49% of learners in their study are "from other residential areas than these in which schools are located". They did a study of 120 selected urban schools in five provinces in South Africa. According to Fataar (2007:10), "mainly black and coloured children travel daily to remote former coloured, Indian and white schools, with little similar cross racial movement into former black schools". He adds that:

Enormous sacrifices are made in order to access the ‘proper’ schools...School choice is understood and negotiated as a key resource in positioning aspiring kids for later life. The exercise of such a choice depends on the ability to pay school fees, which requires large financial outlay for these mostly struggling families (Fataar, 2007:10).

So, where learners can be classified individually as coming from a particular class, certain schools in this study cannot be classified as such.

I discovered that there is a strong knowledge base from which to draw on when researching learner achievement (see Chapter 1, Table 3), where the reasons given thus far for learner achievement levels in South African education is both complex and multiple, ranging from contextual factors to school related factors to classroom related factors. The problem with previous research is that it mainly used teacher behaviour as a predictor for learner achievement and failed to look at the learners’ behaviour and perspectives for their own achievement. My study attempts to do just this by looking at learner achievement from the perspective of the learner in relation to his/her teachers and principals.

In the following sections I provide an analysis and discussion of the analytical categories which emerged from the analysis process. The descriptive data presented in Chapter 5 and 6 are analysed here in relation to the conceptual and analytical lenses I presented in Chapter 3 where I combined the seminal work of Bourdieu and Bernstein, to understand the complexities surrounding learner achievement levels. This chapter is therefore divided into two main sections: contextual analysis and discussion, followed by the pedagogical analysis and discussion to uncover the manifold reasons for learner achievement at three selected public primary schools, across three phases of schooling and in three specific grades.

## **7.2 Contextual analysis and discussion**

The analytical categories discussed in this section emanate from the findings presented in Chapter 5 which provided the background contextual factors which characterised each of three selected schools.

### **7.2.1 A sense of embodiment: An interiorisation of one's external reality**

The findings emanating from Chapter 5 provide evidence that learners come with disparities into schools given their varying home contexts and as a result of their primary socialisation. What I saw was that working class learners at more affluent schools are struggling with the same issues as working class learners from the poorer school. These issues include low expectations, lack of motivation, high rates of absenteeism, a kind of internalisation of failure, which can be attributed to constant poor performance, poor language usage, struggling to cope with the demands of school, amongst other things. It appears that learners from working class homes come into these schools with an embodied sense of deficit and it is consistently linked to their cultural capital. There are two forms of cultural capital at play here: embodied cultural capital and objectified cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). For Bourdieu (1984:243), embodied cultural capital can be described as “long lasting dispositions of the mind and body” as internalised from one’s personal and social environment. These unconscious schemata (*habitus*) are acquired through lasting exposure to particular social conditions and conditionings, and are shared by people subjected to similar experiences (Wacquant, 2006). It therefore explains why working class children, who have both an “individual and class-based *habitus*” (Bourdieu, 1990:91), have similar home and school experiences. Objectified cultural capital refers to investments in cultural goods such as pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, amongst other things or as Bourdieu (1984:243) states these goods are critical in “the struggles in which agents wield strength and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital and therefore to the extent of embodied capital”. Earlier research (Coleman, et.al., 1966; DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 1989; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999), have demonstrated that family background is crucial to the patterning of educational success or failure. What is clear from these studies and what I have discovered is that cultural capital is associated with social class, transmitted from parent to child and has a significant effect on educational attainment. More recent research (Dumais, 2002; Lareau, 2003; Jaeger, 2009) provide empirical evidence linking social class to the possession of cultural capital and in turn to educational attainment. The questionnaire responses, and individual Learner Profiles denote that of the 36 learner participants, 19 (53%) can be classified as working class, and of the 19, 12 (63%) are ‘at risk’ of failing or performing below average in both language and mathematics. Three particular contextual factors emerged from the analysis, which could explain why working class

learners' at different schools seem to have acquired the same embodied sense of being in the world, namely: primary socialisation (growing up in a working class community and home), the misalignment between language used and spoken in the home and that required to succeed in school and the lack of parental involvement. All three factors can be explained using Bourdieu's (1992) framework showing the inter-relationship between cultural capital, habitus and field. Interviews with teachers and principals across the three schools reveal that working class learners have different home experiences than their middle class counterparts. Principals and teachers descriptions of the townships, in which working class children reside, speak of the manifold social problems to which children are exposed daily, like alcohol abuse, crime, high rates of unemployment and poverty. Although this is the harsh reality for most working class learners, for learners at Zola Primary, the situation is exacerbated by growing up in a semi-rural area where poverty is especially rife (100% of the learners at this school make use of the school's feeding scheme), and it appears that alcohol is a huge problem (parents coming to intervention meetings intoxicated or not turning up at all, the visible presence of the bottle store located near the school, which children encounter daily on their way to school). Using Bourdieu's theoretical constructs of habitus, field and cultural capital is especially useful in understanding how 'long-lasting' exposure to impoverished and harsh social spaces, like the township appear to shape these learners minds and bodies, instilling in them certain dispositions, which predispose them to speak, act and behave in particular ways. Lingaard & Christie (2003:320), concur that "growing up in a working class family develops particular class-based habitus", which helps one understand why these learners "operate in ways that are compatible with their social situations". From my classroom observations it is apparent that working class children, who perform poorly, speak and act in ways that are not conducive to their learning; they cannot be left unattended, one would often find them disturbing others, not working, they find it difficult to concentrate and from their classwork books it is evident that they seldom complete tasks. Here, Bourdieu (1985) notion of embodiment (through a process of internalisation) is crucial to understanding how one's social reality becomes inscribed in one's mind and body. Nespore (1997:119), in his observation of the relationship between children and their neighbourhoods, uses the term 'bodies in space' to show how "the body is rendered as a visual display or text readable to an outsider's gaze".

In addition, the data in Chapter 5, show that working class learners do not speak a 'corrected' language, use poor sentence construction, do not have a rich vocabulary, lack background

knowledge and speak a 'mixed' language (for example the mixing of English and Afrikaans), which appears to originate in the home and seems to be connected to working class children and their parents, especially at Flamingo and Dumont Primary. Teachers note that this stems from the home where parents themselves speak a mixed language, do not speak a corrected language and therefore are unable to correct their children's language. Here both Bourdieu's (in Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997), concept of 'linguistic' capital (an embodied form of cultural capital) and Bernstein's code theory helps in understanding how language, which is "transmitted through families, depending upon the families position in a modern division of labour" (Collins, 2000:68) can be an inhibiting factor. Language appears to be linked to social class since for Bourdieu (1997), language "is not just words for the expression of ideas but rather is generated through and within social hierarchies". My data show that there is undoubtedly a mismatch between the language spoken and used in working class homes and that required for success in school. The working class learner respondents, especially those who are underperforming, speak a 'restricted' language which makes it difficult for them to make meaning and cope with the demands of schooling. This is especially the case for Grade 1 learners. There is evidence that these learners struggle to read, they come across as not having enough background knowledge, and struggle with aspects like word sums and comprehension, amongst other things. Bourdieu (1997), sees language as a form of capital (linguistic capital) noting that "of all the cultural obstacles, those which arise from the language spoken within the family setting are unquestionably the most serious and insidious for especially the first years of school,...[where] language is seen as the first points of teacher judgements" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977:40). It is also the case for those working class children who have to learn in a language that is completely different from their home language. Here I am referring to Grade 4 to 7 learners at Zola Primary, as well as those attending Flamingo and Dumont Primary whose home language is Afrikaans and parents insist that their children get educated in English. I will return to the issue of language later in this chapter.

Furthermore, the lack of parental involvement also appears to have a disabling effect on these participants' achievement levels. The findings suggest that there is a disjuncture between what teachers are saying about parental involvement and what learners are saying about parents being involved. Learners, in interviews, explained how parents helped with homework especially reading, spelling of words, and preparing for tests, yet this form of help appears to be insufficient. On the contrary, teachers and principals maintain that parents,

especially parents of working class learners, are not involved, some do not help with homework, have nothing educational in their homes, do not spend enough quality time interacting with their children. Teachers at Zola Primary in particular, are of the view that poor parents are unable to help their children. They attribute this to the social problems facing the community (alcohol abuse is rife in this community), parents' being illiterate, having nothing educational in the home and parents working long hours and therefore not interacting with their children. Similar problems appear to face working class learners at Flamingo Primary. At Dumont Primary the problem stems from parents working long hours and as a result there is very little personal interaction between parent and child. The issue of time and investment in resources that could facilitate learning appears to be crucial elements of parental involvement. The questionnaire responses show that parental investment in 'household cultural goods' or in Bourdieu's words 'objectified cultural capital' is higher in middle class homes than in working class homes. Children in working class homes, especially learners at Zola Primary, have very limited access to cultural goods (objectified cultural capital) like radio, television, computers, books, internet access etc. that could facilitate their learning. The questionnaire responses show that only 9% of poor families at Zola Primary have access to these 'cultural goods', whereas 47% and 77% of learners at Flamingo and Dumont Primary, respectively, have access to all of these goods. Furthermore, my interviews with learners from different social class backgrounds revealed different parenting practices. Middle-class children disclosed that they spend more time on school-based activities at home like: doing homework, engaging with difficult concepts, doing projects and reading books. Their parents, through these investments create an educationally rich home environment, practicing a form of parenting Lareau (2003) refers to as 'concerted cultivation' thus placing more emphasis on children's structured activities and language development and reasoning (purchasing of educational books or providing pocket money to purchase books). Their working class counterparts seem to spend more time on free play; playing ball games and less time on organised activities placing more emphasis on the 'accomplishment of natural growth' (Lareau, 2003:32). The practices of middle-class parents are therefore more congruent with school practices than that of working class parental practices which could account for why working class learners find school alienating and end up performing poorly. Bernstein's (1973) code theory could also apply here noting that success in school requires an elaborated code or school code, which middle-class children are socialised into before they enter school. Working class families, on the other hand, socialise their children in a more restricted or community code, which could account for them

struggling in school. Studies done by Hasan (1991, cited in Collins, 2000) and Hoadley (2005) provide evidence to support Bernstein's view.

Parental involvement appears to be beneficial at all levels of schooling but even more so in Grade 1. Grade 1 teachers have noted that certain learners especially those who are at risk of failing are 'babyish', display low emotional levels or they display a sense of immaturity and ultimately are 'not school ready'. This being the case despite the fact that all children in my study attended Grade R and one would assume that they would be school ready. Grade 1 teachers seem to either blame the parent for encouraging this behaviour or they attribute it to the lack of routine and structure these children could have experienced in the home and in Grade R. This immaturity is visible, not only in the way these Grade 1 learners speak (tone of voice), but also in their mannerisms (crying and seeking attention). What is evident is that these children are often identified as in need of intervention merely because they struggle to cope with the demands of Grade 1, as a result they often resort to various coping mechanisms like: talking, laughing for no reason, disturbing others, and as a result of this they do not complete tasks, are placed in low ability groups, they struggle to read age appropriate books (they read what other learners call 'baby books'- books containing pictures and only a few descriptive words). Ngwaru (2012) notes that parental involvement in earlier years of schooling is crucial for shaping a child's social and emotional development since this will facilitate cognitive development. Group interviews with Grade 1 learners, regardless of class or race, reveal that parents do help, especially with reading and spelling. Children explain how their parents, mostly mothers, will spell out words, repeat the words, monitor work and assist with reading. This form of help, from more specifically working class parents, appear to be insufficient and seem not to have any significant impact on these learners progress in school. This insufficiency could be attributed to the fact that working class parents orientate their children in a restricted code, when "schools are predicted on an elaborative code" (Bernstein, 1996:161). In addition "working class parents are often positioned as uncaring, uninvolved and unconcerned" (Crompton-Lilly, 2003:60). Teachers and principals at these schools often hold deficit views of working class children and their parents, which can be seen in their description of working class families like: they have nothing in their homes, they are not involved in their children's schooling, they are illiterate and incapable of helping, etc.

From the above discussion one gets the sense that context (coming from somewhere) matters. As mentioned, working class children, across the three schools and across the three phases of

schooling, experience the same embodied sense of deficit due to continuous exposure to 1) harsh and volatile social spaces, 2) poor language usage, and 3) lack of parental investment in time and resources. These are all linked to cultural capital (in this case embodied, objectified and linguistic cultural capital), and it therefore shows that there is undoubtedly an interiorisation of their external reality. This argument is consistent with Bourdieu's (see Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) views on the interiorisation of the exteriority and the exteriorisation of the interiority, which explains how the outside (one's social reality) becomes inscribed in the body and mind (over time and space), and how the inside (that which has been internalised), is manifested in various ways on the outside.

Although it is clear that one's social context (family and community upbringing) matters, one cannot however homogenise by assuming that all children coming from poor backgrounds or working-class families have the same embodied sense. What I am alluding to is that there are learners from working-class backgrounds, who do come with this embodied sense of deficit, the assumption here is that they will not perform to standard. In this case we can homogenise because they actually do not perform according to standard. It is therefore what these learners bring into schools and that schools, in turn have to deal with, that matters. This explanation is in line with Bourdieu's analytical framework since there appears to be no correlation between the habitus of the home and the habitus of the school. According to Marsh (2006:149) these learners are 'cognitively dislocated' due to the 'lack of congruence' between the habitus of the home and habitus of school. However this does not mean that I can generalise. There seems to be more of a differentiation from learners coming from affluent backgrounds. Here the assumption is that they are all performing but my evidence show that they are not all performing. This analytical category therefore works in certain cases but not in others, for example how do we explain those from working class backgrounds that despite all odds are performing? Similarly, how do we account for the poor performance of those learners who come with ready-made cultural capital from wealthier middle class families into schools? The answers to these questions lie in Bourdieu's theory of structure and agency, to which I now turn.



### **7.2.2 Construction of agency: The ways in which learners exercise their agency is reinforcing underachievement**

Kemp (n.d:6) argues that “structure and agency must be considered in the context of any sincere attempt to explain and understand social action”. Bourdieu’s theory of structure and agency can be particularly useful to understanding how learners are socialised into particular dispositions, how these embodied dispositions are framed and shaped within a particular field, in this case the educational field and the sub-fields of the school and classroom, how learners through their practices and actions affect their positioning in the field and are affected by the constraints and opportunities evident in the practices and actions of others in the field, and ultimately how this accounts for varied educational outcomes. Bourdieu (1992) explores the ‘dialectical relations’ between structure (objective structures) and agency that is manifested in the habitus (structured dispositions). Nash (2001), uses the SDP model (Structure-Disposition-Practice) to expand on Bourdieu’s view on the relationship between structure and agency, noting that “it is as simple as this: social positions generate social dispositions and social dispositions generate social practices” (Nash, 2001:58). From my observations, in these selected schools, it is apparent that when children enter these schools, they come into a social interaction situation where they need to make sense or make meaning, and they need to cope. In other words, they have to exercise their agency. Their agency, I argue, is being informed and constructed in schools in particular ways, which appears to be reinforcing underachievement. So it is not only what they coming into school with, it is what they are doing or not doing (exercising their agency) in school, and what school (structure) is doing to them that appear to matter.

The analysis revealed, as mentioned in the previous section, that there are working class learners (33% of the learner participants) who come into to school with an embodied sense of deficit, and the assumption is that they are not performing and there is evidence (LITNUM test scores, internal examination results and ANA results) to support this fact. The LITNUM benchmark test scores for mathematics Grade 6 (2012) show that only 22% of learners at Flamingo Primary managed to gain a percentage pass rate of above 50% and 0% of the learners at Zola Primary got above 50%, compared to the 67% at Dumont Primary which houses mostly middle class learners. Both Flamingo Primary and Zola Primary because of the schools poor performance are LITNUM focus schools. Working class learners inability to achieve has been linked to their home and community context, more specifically their

experiences in the home, which I linked to speaking a restricted language and the lack of parental investment in time and resources, more specifically, their limited access to household cultural goods required to facilitate their learning. Bourdieu's framework, showing how habitus, field and capital are interlinked, gives more specificity to what is happening here. These learners come with this embodied sense into schools, not having the required habitus or field-specific capital (cultural capital) required to cope with the demands of schooling. Once in school, more particularly inside the classroom space, these learners, especially those who do not achieve the required results, are marked or labelled as struggling, lazy, slow, or as in the case of Dumont Primary, marked as being OT (in need of Occupational Therapy) or ADD (suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder), and as a result of this positioning are caught in repeated patterns of failure, which they also internalised or embody. Davies & Hunt (1994:390) are of the view that "being positioned as one who belongs in or defined in terms of the negative or dependent term, can lock people in repeated patterns of powerlessness". In addition, learners who come to school with this embodied sense of deficit, are more likely in Grade 1 to end up being placed in low ability group where they are exposed to less work and where teachers hold low expectations of these children. In Chapter 6 I alluded to the unintended consequences of being assigned to a low-status group noting that certain children appear to internalise the unintended messages being relayed to learners as being part of the group. According to Zevenbergen (2003:8-9), "these structuring ordering practices like, ability groups create different potential for capacity building". For certain learners being in a low-status ability group have a disabling effect. In group interviews with Grade 1 learners those struggling will say that they are slow because they in a slow group. They see themselves as "weak and incapable learning agents" (Panofsky, 2003:426). Furthermore, those attending Zola Primary appear to be further inhibited by the school and classroom contexts. The school is poorly resourced, there are high rates of teacher absenteeism, overcrowded classrooms, teachers' are poorly prepared and learners' (Grades 4 to 7) are being taught in a language that is not their home language, amongst other things.

Grades 1, 4 and 7 working class learners across the three schools who are performing below average, who have been identified as being at risk of failing are often seen in negative terms (struggling, lazy, slow, OT and ADD). These learners therefore exercise very little agency. They manifest their agency by making certain choices: they either lapse into disruptive behaviour (do not concentrate, put in very little effort into their school work, talk, laugh, play and do not listen to their teachers) where they use conscious strategies to be thrown out or

they choose to withdraw (do not speak, seldom engage in classroom activities or never ask or respond to questions or become disinterested). They have what Bernstein (1996:98) asserts as having an “alienating subject-position”, which he assigns to learners who disregard both the instructional and regulative classroom discourses.

Previously, I indicated that we cannot generalise because there are working class learners (‘average’ and ‘above average’ learners in my study) who do perform. 19% (7) of the learner respondents from poor socio-economic backgrounds, despite the constraints placed on them coming from working class homes, in terms of ‘parental socialisation’(coming from working class homes) and ‘parental investment’ (not possessing the field-specific capital), and the constraints placed on them by attending a working class school like, Zola Primary, still manage to obtain good results. The working class learners coming from low socio-economic homes with very little household cultural capital, enter schools, like Zola Primary, which is poorly resourced, where there are high rates of teacher absenteeism, where children (especially in Grade 4-7) are taught in a language which is not their home language and where teachers are poorly prepared. The internal results of these learners provide evidence that they are performing in language and mathematics, and they are doing so in the absence of a supportive and enriching classroom environment. Here cultural capital does not appear to matter. These learners possess what Nash (2012) and Swann (1999) refer to as having a ‘habitual willingness’, a willingness to be educated or they possess an ‘educated habitus’ or what Bernstein (1996:98) calls a “committed subject positioning”. Their willingness to learn is linked to possessing certain non-cognitive personal dispositions. As Swann puts it

Students who succeed at school do so because in consequence of their ambitious, academic self-confidence and positive responses to schooling; they reveal a habituated willingness to be educated in accordance with the concept of the educated person that continues, despite ambiguities and contradictions to be transmitted by school (Swann, 1999:266).

My interviews and observation of individual working class learners mainly in Grades 4 and 7, especially those attending Zola Primary, provide evidence of this. They speak with self-confidence, possess a forward-looking personality, they ask questions in class, borrow books from school to do extra work at home, are not afraid to approach the teacher for help, are co-

operative in class and have a clear vision of what they want to become in future. These working class learners therefore manage to transcend their contextual (field) positioning by displaying a willingness to learn. In other words, these particular learners possess a strong and positive sense of “committed” agency, and they do this despite the odds stacked against them growing up in a working class family and attending a working class schools, like Zola Primary. So in their case social class does not seem to matter neither does the lack of cultural capital. They seem to have internalised a form of “resilience or ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real or perceived barriers” or what Yosso (2005:78), interprets as ‘aspirational capital’.

As mentioned, there however seems to be more of a differentiation from learners coming from affluent backgrounds. Here the assumption is that they are all performing but my evidence show that they are not all performing. Forty-seven percent (17) of the learner participants come from middle class homes where their home experiences are very different from the 53% (19) of learners coming from working class homes. These middle class children (7 learner respondents at Flamingo Primary and 10 learner respondents at Dumont Primary) come with ready-made capital (objectified cultural capital and linguistic capital), from middle class homes and enter schools, like Flamingo Primary (quintile 4 school), and more specifically, Dumont Primary (quintile 5 school) that are better resourced where teachers seldom stay absent and where they are taught in a language similar to their home language. They therefore enter these better-off schools from homes where they are orientated in both an elaborative and restricted code (Bernstein, 1973), where parents practice a form of parenting known as ‘concerted cultivation’ Jaeger (2009), and yet some perform and others do not.

Those that do get the desired results make up 30% of the learner respondents (‘average’ and ‘above average’ group). They do so because like their working class counterparts, who are achieving good results, they possess a ‘habituated willingness’, an ‘educated habitus’ or a ‘committed subject-positioning, where they committed to both the instructional and regulative discourses of the classroom. They seem to possess similar ‘non-cognitive’ personal dispositions or as Swann (1999:266) notes that “the human would be learner is motivated not only by a desire to do something, she or he may also be spurred into action as a consequence of wanting to know”. These middle class learners experience of schooling is “like a fish in water: [they do] not feel the weight of the water” (Bourdieu & Wacquant,

1992:127), mainly because their habitus is congruent with habitus of the school. In my individual interviews with this group of learners and from my classroom observations it was apparent that these learners love learning, speak positively about their school and teachers, they are avid readers and invest their pocket money in books, and their parents invest time and resources in the home (create opportunities to learn, spend time on homework, projects and purchase household cultural goods to facilitate their learning), amongst other things. These learners then, use this knowledge and skills (embodied through their primary socialisation) to “build new stocks of capital” (Nash, 2012) in school. They consistently obtain good grades in both language and mathematics (as evident from internal examination results and ANA results), they are marked or coded by teachers as ‘brilliant’, ‘smart’ and ‘hardworking’ (receiving praise and being viewed in the positive) and as a result of this they acquire other rewards (merit awards or educational credentials). Teachers hold high expectations of this group of learners and speak about them in more positive terms than they do working class underperforming children. These children are labelled positively as ‘brilliant’, ‘excellent’, ‘respectful’ or having ‘manners’. They possess a habitus that is normally rewarded by teachers. As confirmed by Wilcox (1988, cited in Panofsky, 2003:421), who noted that “high-status students are given more opportunities to develop self-presentation skills, such as speaking and presenting before a group, and they receive considerable guidance and praise doing so”. This is reiterated by Davies & Hunt (1994), who assert that “they know how to behave and in doing so become members of those social scenes in which the teacher is positioned as authoritative and they are positioned as co-operative students”. As a result of their positioning, being positioned as co-operative, these middle class learners are more visible to their teachers. These learners have a positive and strong sense of agency which translates into consistent good academic performance; they perform well in both mathematics and language as is evident from their internal results in Chapter 5, tables 24 and 36. Their home habitus is therefore congruent with their school habitus, which accounts for their levels of achievement. This also seems to be the experience of those working class learners who are able to achieve and perform at the expected levels required by the school.

There are middle class learners, who do not get the desired results (14% of the learner respondents), despite the fact that they come from better -off home backgrounds into better-off schools. Here the assumption is that they should be performing well, but they not. They exercise very little “committed” agency, which does not get them the desired results. Instead

they knowingly lapse into disruptive behaviour in different ways: some tease each other, put very little effort into their schooling, interrupt lessons by laughing or playing or as at Dumont Primary use their knowledge of technology to disrupt lessons. The latter was observed mainly amongst Grade 7 learners who used their cellphones and knowledge of computers to disrupt their learning and interrupt instructional time. These children therefore display what Nash (2012:27) asserts as “a different conception of what is worth knowing than school”. In interviews with certain learners especially the boys playing soccer and becoming a soccer star appeared to be more worth knowing than school. For these learners, the need for social acceptance and belonging or ‘fitting in’, appears to be stronger than an investment in their education. From my classroom observations it is clear that these learners, who are in the minority, do not only disrupt their own learning but also the learning of others. I am of the view that if they came into the school with a different way of exercising their agency their results will be different. Their choices, which is reinforcing underachievement, is informed by peer pressure and having a sense of belonging and fitting in, which in turn is informed by other pressures like consistently getting poor results. Certain learners noted in our interview sessions that they do try to improve, they stop playing, listen to their teachers, do homework and spend time studying but they still underperform. It could be that their investment or as Jaeger (2009) points out ‘children’s investment’ is not high enough to enable them to absorb and convert the cultural capital that they do possess (through primary socialisation and parental investment in time and household cultural goods) into educational success. Furthermore, it is evident from the questionnaire responses that learners are aware that what they are doing is not helping them academically yet they are willing to take the risk. In tables 23, 34 and 46 Grade 4 and 7 learner respondents provided reasons for their poor performance, especially in mathematics, and from their responses one gets the sense that although many of them found the subject difficult, others simply did not like the subject or felt that they did not put in the effort or they were lazy. These reasons were given by most of the learner respondents during our interview discussions they simply did well in subjects that they liked and poorly in those subjects that they disliked or they admitted to not doing homework, not putting in the effort or simply being lazy. This dovetails with Nash’s (2012:27), view that “the reason why some students make more progress than others is almost as simple as this: some want to be educated more than others and possess an effective habitus that generates practices in accordance with that desire”.

From this discussion it can be asserted that it is not only what learners are coming into school with, it's what they doing in school and what school is doing to them that appears to matter as well. So it is not only an issue of possessing cultural capital it is something else that is being constructed within the environment of the school, through exercising their agency in relation to different kinds of forces they are dealing with. These forces, like peer pressure or having a need to fit in, consistently underperforming and not getting the required results or the nature and context of the school (poor infrastructure and high absenteeism of teachers at Zola Primary), construct particular learner dispositions, which in turn constructs varying levels of agency. The ways in which they exercise their agency are not only reinforcing underachievement but it is also pushing the teacher into the regulative discourse and in turn comprising the instructional discourse, as explained in the following section.

### **7.2.3 Teachers Talk: Why teachers are being pushed into the regulative discourse compromising the instructional discourse**

My analysis of the data indicates that teachers are being pushed into the regulative discourse, which constitutes the moral order of schooling in terms of conduct, character and manner (Bernstein, 1996), and appeals to the value of honesty, rules of conduct, cooperation, obedience and duties of a student (Morais, 2005). This is evident in the amount of normal time certain teachers spend on regulating disruptive behaviour, which is reflected in the ways learners exercise their agency. When teachers are pushed into the regulative discourse, less time is spent on the instructional discourse, which refers to the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of knowledge (Bernstein, 1996). In other words less time is spent on relaying the content. Bernstein (1996) makes reference to the relationship between pedagogic discourse and time. For Bernstein (1996:49) “any pedagogic discourse will punctuate time, it will dislocate time”. In a pedagogic practice time refers to acquisition (Bernstein, 1996). A number of things are informing this practice. Here, both Bourdieu and Bernstein's theories are used to develop the analysis.

One way of explaining why teachers are pushed into the regulative discourse is that teachers themselves come into schools with an embodied state or particular dispositions, endowed with particular cultural capital, which informs their agency. They coming into schools with different disposition, embodied over time and acquired in various social spaces, therefore they articulate their environment differently. So where teachers come from, could explain

their actions and practices. In Chapter 4 (table 10) I profiled the 10 teacher participants, which revealed that the majority of these teachers were trained under the apartheid education system, which was underscored by an education philosophy known as ‘fundamental pedagogics’, an authoritarian pedagogical philosophy where the child was regarded as ignorant (passive receiver of knowledge) and undisciplined in need of guidance from the teacher (Hoadley, 2005). Hofmeyer (1993), Chisholm (1993) and Enslin (1990) reported on the crushing effects of fundamental pedagogics on teachers’ practices and actions. Furthermore, 8 teachers received their pre-service teacher training from teacher training colleges and 2 from a university. These colleges, similar to schooling in South Africa under apartheid (see Chapter 2) were divided along racial lines. The training of these teachers, under an apartheid system, thus differed significantly (Freer, 1993; Enslin, 1984).

One could say that teachers’ social positions generate particular social dispositions (*habitus*) which in turn generate particular practices (Nash, 2012). Lasky (2005:900) notes that “teacher agency is part of a complex dynamic; it shapes and is shaped by the structural and cultural features of society and school cultures”. It must be mentioned that not all of Bernstein’s tools or constructs could explain what was empirically found in this study especially with regards to teacher agency.

At Dumont Primary for instance, the Grade 1 teacher comes into the school environment with a ‘white’ middle class *habitus*, which is reinforcing a particular ‘white’ middle class ideology, which could be as a result of her early socialisation and her subsequent training. In other words her middle class social position, which generates her middle-class disposition, is informing her teaching practices. She often diagnoses learners, who are at risk of failing as being OT or ADD, which is popular middle-class talk when children struggle to learn. Furthermore, her deficit discourse about learners and their parents appear to be informed by her disposition (middle-class *habitus*), and the kind of background she’s coming from. This teacher lapses into the regulative discourse because for her the child is a discipline issue and not an educational issue. Gill (2003:8) is of the view that teachers must begin by developing an awareness of their own *habitus*, meaning the existing dispositions, values, attitudes and practices they commend”. Gill (2003) further asserts that



The problem here is when teachers assume that their values, attributes and practices are shared with and are the same as those of their students, rather than declaring their own position and inviting recognition of others positions (Gill, 2003:9).

The problem, for Pillay (2004) is compounded if teachers are not trained to work with learners from different cultural backgrounds and class positions since according to Pillay (2004:5) they end up “mapping problems that emerge onto students, rather than on the system that needs to be modified”. Furthermore, it is evident that this Grade 1 teacher at Dumont Primary identifies more with learners who display characteristics closer to her own middle class habitus. She appears to favour those learners who possess a ‘school habitus’ those whom she labels as brilliant or smart. These learners are given more opportunities to enhance their learning. They are often called on to answer questions, to read out loud, they are frequently called on to respond to questions and often receive praise, whilst others, normally working class learners, are ignored even when they have an answer, are given less work and they are often diagnosed as having OT or ADD. The differential treatment of children as seen in this class, through the verbal and non-verbal messages being relayed by this teacher, could account for why certain learners, more particularly working class learners, manifest their agency by lapsing into disruptive behaviour.

The Grade 4 teacher at Flamingo Primary is constantly pushed into the regulative discourse. She spends most of her classroom time on trying to get the moral order of the classroom right. This is evident in the time she spends shouting at learners to be quiet, to sit down and in the way she reprimands learners which often punctuate the time needed to relay content (instructional discourse). Furthermore, constant interruptions from outside the classroom further punctuate instructional time. It’s not so much about learning but getting learners to be disciplined, to listen and to concentrate. In other words it is about getting the regulative order right. I am of the view that it is no coincidence that the majority of teachers at Dumont Primary School are able to spend more time on the instructional discourse mainly because the school functions according to middle-class ideals and it does not appear to have a big discipline problem. In addition the majority of the children, as mentioned, are from middle class homes where they have been socialised in ways that are more compatible with school. Teachers at Zola and Flamingo Primary are under a lot of pressure trying to meet the middle-class ethos of schooling. They are therefore more likely to have a strong moral imperative in their approach to learners. For Hoadley (2005), the reason why teachers in working-class

settings adopt a more moral approach towards their learners is that “*in working-class context, the student is first a child and then a learner, and in the middle-class context, the student is first a learner and secondly a child* (Hoadley, 2005:235, emphasis in the original). As mentioned, the children entering these schools are mainly from working class homes, they appear to act in ways that are compatible with their home environment. Teachers and principals in our interview sessions provided detailed descriptions of the deep rooted contextual constraints facing their schools, which often spills over into the school and classrooms. As noted earlier, there is clearly an interiorisation of the learners’ external reality. This accounts for why teachers, especially in Grade 1 spend most of their instructional time on teaching values, speaking about behaviour, trying to get learners to work together as a group, and getting them to listen. One needs to take into consideration that schools operate in particular ways, and therefore teachers are under pressure to construct this middle-class ethos schools ought to have. So they need to get learners to function in particular ways. In other words, schools by their very nature are constructed according to middle-class ideals and what appears to be happening at schools, especially those housing learners’ from working-class backgrounds, and they end up pushing the learners into the middle-class capital the school ought to have. Both Bourdieu and Bernstein point to the middle-class ideals of schooling. Bourdieu (1974) in his article: *The school acts as a conservative force: Scholastic and cultural inequalities*, clearly makes this point. Here he offers a social explanation of how school act as a conservative force, including some and excluding others. As Nash (2001:58) explains:

Bourdieu’s thesis that the School acts as a conservative force to exclude the mass of working-class students by recognising as educable only those with a dominant habitus and thus excluding others by its active neglect, offers a different perspective on the reproduction process (Nash, 2001:58).

Within a Bourdieuan framework, ‘misrecognition’ is crucial to understanding the social dimension of schooling. Nash (2001) is of the view that the massive failure of working class students as a group is created within and by the school system, with its arbitrary preference for middle-class modes of thinking. Schools, therefore by their very nature are designed to meet the interest and needs of the dominant class (middle-class) thus misrecognising and excluding the interest and needs of the working-class.

Schools, therefore foster a middle-class ethos (middle-class ideology and beliefs), and aim at getting learners to behave, perform and achieve in the requisite way. There appears to be a good reason for this since it doesn't help to romanticise being working class - there appears to be no real investment in schools for working class lives. Being middle class holds a greater sense of social mobility, better deportment of self, better interpersonal hygiene, basic decency and manners. It appears that schools like Zola and Flamingo Primary are under pressure to get learners to behave, perform and achieve in the requisite way, this in turn will facilitate the acquisition of educational credentials and in turn educational credentials are an important mechanism through which health and social well-being are transmitted (Sullivan, 2002). In order to get learners at these schools to perform and achieve teachers first need to undo many of the dispositions children are coming into school with. In other words they need to alter their behaviour, which pushes them into the regulative. But children are exercising their agency through resisting these attempts at every point. Their agency is reinforcing underachievement since, as mentioned in the previous section (see. 7.2.2), some learners have a different conception of what is worth knowing than school (Nash, 2012). Constructing schools according to this middle-class ethos is reflected in the levels of achievement which has both a national and international dimension. Nationally, government is attempting to construct middle-class achievement and forcing this middle-class ethos on all schools. The national systemic tests is a clear marker of the extent to which government is forcing this middle-class ideal of schooling. In an attempt to get learners 'educated' or develop an 'educated learner' in terms of his/her behaviour, in terms of his/her achievement national priority is being placed on assessment and curriculum coverage. The mistake here is that it does not necessarily mean that if one emphasises achievement that it will capture the other two as well. I will return to the issue of assessment later in my discussion (refer to 7.3.3).

The construction of cultural capital in and of the school includes language in a very critical way, since the construction of the schools middle-class cultural capital is dependent on a particular language and that language happens to be English. Language for Bourdieu (1991:648) "is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power". Teachers, at Zola Primary in particular, use code-switching as a means of getting their learners to gain access to the middle-class cultural capital of the school, yet code-switching reduces literacy levels because learners are not acquiring the literacy required for them to fully access and pass the standardised tests. Code-switching is a model used by

teachers to enable learners to understand the content which is written in English (McDonald, 1990). This analysis is confirmed by Desai (2012) who observed that

Teachers' often resort to using a learner's mother tongue (which they have in common with the learner) in spoken communication in order to make themselves understood. However, all written communication and formal assessments in such context is expected to be in the unfamiliar language, English in this case (Desai, 2012:1).

In engaging with this model of code-switching teachers are enacting the 'logic' of symbolic violence, which for Bourdieu (1977:24) means, "Symbolic violence, in contrast to overt violence of the usurer or the ruthless master; it is gentle, invisible violence, unrecognised as such...". Bourdieu calls a "logic of symbolic violence...according to which dominant lifestyles are almost perceived, even by those who live them, from the destructive and reductive point of view of the dominant aesthetic" (in Panofsky, 2003:417). According to Panofsky (2003) "when these structures of differentiation operate, they produce the sorting mechanism in schooling" (ibid). She however asserts that it is important to note that the cultural workings of the dominant aesthetic in schooling are largely invisible, appearing natural, and are not to be understood as maliciously enacted by educators"(ibid). It is only through analysis that these practices of symbolic violence become or are made visible.

From the discussion thus far, which sheds light on the contextual analytical categories emanating from the findings chapters, there is clearly a need to understand the nature of the learner, what he/she brings into school, the way he/she makes sense of school, exercise their agency, the way in which this in turn, is pushing teachers into the regulative, and the implications this has for constructing the middle-class ethos in schools. The more we understand the context of our learners, where they are coming from, the more equipped we will be to deal with it. In a working class environment we have to factor in that teachers themselves have different dispositions and come with different cultural capital and this appears to complicate things. I now turn to a discussion which sheds light on the complex processes of pedagogical relations by focusing on the analysis of the pedagogical findings, in terms of pedagogic practices and the nature of pedagogic relationships, and how these account for differential educational outcomes.

### 7.3 Pedagogical analysis and discussion

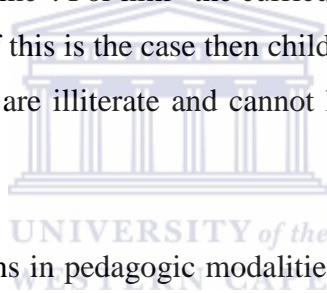
The analytical categories discussed in this section emanate from the findings presented in Chapter 6, which focused on pedagogy, more specifically how pedagogy was delivered in the three selected public schools, and how it was experienced by both teachers and learners in these schools.

#### 7.3.1 The framing of pedagogical practice: Relaxing framing in terms of pacing

In Chapter 3 (3.3), I discovered that classification and framing are at the heart of Bernstein's thesis. The analysis indicated that principals and teachers in my study are highly appreciative of the strong classification of content in terms of the syllabus, lesson plans, worksheets and textbooks. However, this thesis is illustrating that framing is far more important to consider. The notion of framing simply put: "framing is about *who* controls *what*" (Bernstein, 2000:12), is crucial in this analysis, mainly because for Bernstein (1996:30) 'change can come at the level framing', more specifically at the level of pacing and evaluation. Arnot and Reay (2004), note that the concept of framing carries with it many of the central arguments about the reproduction of social inequalities. They point out that initially the concept of framing was used only to refer to 'the degrees of control teachers and pupils had over the mode of transmission' (Bernstein, 1977:89). In more recent writings Bernstein developed the concept of framing to refer to "teacher-pupil relationships and their role in creating the pedagogic arena, game or specific practice" (Bernstein, 2000:180). According to Arnot and Reay (2004:138) "Bernstein's latest definition was that framing is concerned with how meanings are put together, the forms by which they are made public and the nature of social relationships that go with it".

The data presented in Chapter 6, which characterised selected teachers' pedagogic practices, showed that certain teachers, especially at Flamingo and Zola Primary, are overly feeling constrained by the strong classification of content and not seeing the possibility of the permutation of framing. What these teachers then land up doing is taking control of pacing (rate of acquisition) landing up framing it unnecessarily strong. The coding values captured in table 56 that characterises the teachers' pedagogic practices in terms of instructional and regulative discourses, showed that Grade 1 teachers across the three schools have apparent control over the pacing of lessons taught. Here the external framing ( $^{\circ}F$ ) is strongly regulated

by the syllabus, themes, time frames. These discursive practices therefore leave teachers with very little opportunity for exercising agency (Potma, 2012:55). Grade 1 teachers use words like ‘be fast’, ‘hurry up’, ‘are you done’ or time is mentioned repeatedly (you only have 10mins) indicating the apparent control of teachers over the pace of the lesson. I observed that learners do very little to alter the pace of acquisition. They seldom ask questions and often do not respond to the teachers questions. When learners do respond it is often in unison (chorsing of answers), making the instructional form communal and not individualised. At the level of evaluation, whether the evaluation criteria are explicit or implicit, one could see that teachers at Flamingo and Zola Primary made little attempt to elaborate on what was required to complete activities or elaborate on the meanings of concepts and how to proceed is often unclear. The teacher at Dumont Primary however appears to take time to make the evaluation criteria explicit, and therefore framing at this level is very strong. Bernstein (1977:4) argued that “strong framing and particularly strong pacing rules requires two sites of acquisition- the school and the home”. For him “the curriculum cannot be acquired wholly by the time spent at school” (ibid). If this is the case then children who come from working class homes, especially where parents are illiterate and cannot help their children will be further disadvantaged.

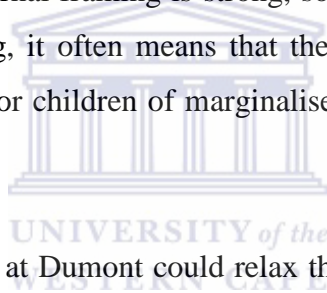


The analysis does reveal variations in pedagogic modalities across schools, and especially in Grades 4 and 7. The Grade 4 teacher at Dumont Primary for instance, will relax the pacing at certain times allowing the learners to ask questions and respond to questions. It is evident that she uses what I term ‘productive feedback’ in her engagement with her learners especially those who struggle with certain aspects of the work. I observed her calling learners to her table for one-on-one sessions, and through a process of questions got them to identify their mistakes and then guided them to the correct answer. Grade 4 learners who were exposed to this type of feedback found it beneficial, it got them to understand not only where they went wrong but also how to get it right in future. They welcomed the fact that they could feel free to approach the teacher for help. For this teacher to relax the framing at the level of pacing and evaluation, she had to weaken the hierarchical rule (move from positional control to personal control), weaken the classification of spaces (between the teacher and the student), and make the evaluation criteria explicit (learners knew how to proceed and what constituted a correct answer), which she does through ‘productive feedback’ or more ‘individualised’ feedback. Similar observations were made in the Grade 7 language and mathematics classroom at this school. Here teachers would control the selection and sequencing of the

lesson but would relax the framing at the level of pacing (allow learners to make injections) and at the level of evaluation criteria (making the criteria clear and explicit). They also tend to draw on their learners own knowledge base. What is however, apparent in this school especially, in the Grade 1 and 7 classrooms, is that not all learners' voices are specialised through pedagogy. Learners who are marked as 'bright' or 'smart' by the teacher ('average' and 'above average'), normally ask questions and respond to questions posed by the teacher. Others are either disengaged (withdrawn) whilst others are apathetic or disruptive. This shows that children can have different experiences of schooling, even if they occupy the same classroom space.

Relaxing the framing at the level of pacing is one way Bernstein (1996) suggest that learners could control their learning but what we are seeing in certain school contexts, as at Zola and Flamingo Primary, respectively, is that teachers are under pressure to construct schools according to middle-class ideals, which is complicated by a number of things (most of which I discussed earlier) such as: learners coming with an embodied sense of deficit into these schools, exercising agency by lapsing into disruptive behaviour, entering schools that lack infrastructure and where teachers stay absent (as at Zola Primary), and where teachers are under pressure getting them to listen and behave. In other words, teachers are under pressure to construct a middle-class ethos these schools ought to have. As mentioned, learners are often 'interrupters' of their own learning and that of others. Evidence of this can be seen across the three schools and in all grades. Excerpt 6.3, in Chapter 6, provides evidence of how a learner punctuates instructional time, which resulted in the teacher using the instructional time to regulate the learners' behaviour. These teachers, given the strong external framing and given the pressures alluded to earlier, do not see the possibility of relaxing the framing. What I am seeing is that certain teachers fail to make the evaluation criteria explicit. They fail to explain why what is wrong is wrong or if learners get it correct why it is correct. There appears to be very little or at times no engagement with 'concepts' that could lead to comprehension of those concepts. By making the evaluation criteria explicit, learners will acquire, what Bernstein (1996) calls the recognition rule (they will be able to read the context and their position in it) and the realisation rule (they will know what constitutes a correct production). In other words they would have acquired the legitimate pedagogic code needed to succeed in school (Bernstein, 1996). Having the realisation rule would "enable the learner to select the relevant meanings and produce the text according to these meanings" (Morais, 2002:560). These learners will then be able to speak, act and write

in the appropriate ways (Nyambe & Wilmot, 2012). Bernstein (1996:128) notes that without the realisation rule “these children in school then will not have acquired the legitimate pedagogic code, but they will have acquired their place in the classificatory system”. With the strong emphasis on the regulative discourse, learners are able to read their context and their position within that context but it does not mean that they would be able to produce the legitimate text. Furthermore, teachers are under pressure in terms of time; in terms of covering the syllabus, and in terms of meeting the requirements of the ANA tests. Teachers, in Grades 4 and 7 practices are mainly test-driven, as learners, from my observation in these classrooms, worked mainly with worksheets and assessment sheets, and there is a heavy reliance on the textbook leading to more fragmented teaching. I argue that because the external framing (<sup>e</sup>F) is very strong it does not allow teachers the space to relax framing at the level of pacing. As mentioned, the external framing refers to the controls on communication outside the pedagogic practice entering the pedagogic practice (Bernstein, 1996:29). Bernstein warns that “where external framing is strong, social class may play a crucial role. Where external framing is strong, it often means that the images, voices and practices the school reflects make it difficult for children of marginalised classes to recognise themselves in the school” (ibid).



I found the reasons why teachers at Dumont could relax the pacing and make the evaluation criteria explicit is because these teachers display a higher level of confidence which can be seen in their level of qualifications (subject specialisation is stronger). Coupled to this they teach in a context that is better-off in terms of infrastructure, teachers being present and where they do not have a discipline problem. Their prior exposure to other learning contexts (the English teacher who taught in England and the mathematics teacher who taught at high school level) meant that they have a strong pedagogical base. In addition, learners, coming mostly from middle-class backgrounds with the required cultural capital, and some (those who display a willingness to learn) are able to articulate themselves better. They ask questions, demand attention and display characteristics associated with the ‘ideal learner’. These learners’ are able to take control of the rate at which they learn. In contrast teachers and learners at Flamingo and Zola do not display the same confidence so learners do not interject when the teacher teaches. This could be attributed to a number of things: their social positioning (coming from a working class background with an embodied sense of deficit and not possessing the field –specific capital), their dispositions (possessing a habitus in line with their social positioning), their positioning in the classroom space (positioned in the negative)



and the practices this generates (their agentive action). In addition, their teachers are coming with particular dispositions that inform their agentive actions, which explain their lack of confidence. Teachers in their questionnaire responses admitted to feeling more confident to teach language than mathematics. Hoadley (2005) found a difference in practices based on teachers' social class backgrounds, their social class positioning and their training. According to her:

In the middle class context there was a strong classification of the instructional and of agents, and weaker framing of the hierarchical rules, i.e. the social relations between teachers and students. The converse was true in the working-class setting, where the instructional was more weakly classified, pedagogic identities were weakly classified, and the relation teacher-student was more strongly framed (Hoadley, 2005:256).

She suggests that “although all teachers had undergone a form of specialization with respect to teaching, their strategic positions were very different, and these aligned with teachers' different social class positions” (ibid).

From the analysis one can say that there are two distinct pedagogical modalities emerging from the data. On the one hand, the analysis points to an ‘expanded pedagogical modality’, practices which are more in line with teaching and learning at Dumont Primary and is characterised by: a relaxing of framing at the levels of pacing (learners have apparent control over the acquisition of knowledge) and evaluation (evaluation criteria is clear and explicit-productive feedback), where teachers exercise more personal control (they are more approachable) and where learners voices are specialised (opportunities that could lead to the specialisation of learners' voice is evident). This mode of pedagogy appears to be linked to better-off schools housing mostly middle-class learners, and more importantly this pedagogical modality is getting learners to perform and achieve the required results.

On the other hand, the analysis also points to a ‘constricted pedagogical modality’; practices more in line with teaching and learning at Flamingo and Zola Primary, respectively, which is characterised by: strong framing at the levels of pacing (learners do not alter the rate at which they learn) and evaluation (evaluation criteria are unclear and implicit), where teachers especially in Grades 4 and 7 exercise more positional control or imperative control (maintaining a physical distance between them and their learners) and where learners voices are not specialised (opportunities are seldom created that could lead to the specialisation of the learner's voice). This mode of pedagogy appears to be linked to both Flamingo Primary

(a mixed school in terms of social class), and Zola Primary housing mostly working class learners. Hugo and Wederkind (2013: 147) used Bernstein to analyse the inner logic of pedagogy since for them “Bernstein opens out for us a rigorous training programme for the pedagogic imagination by forcing us to work through a combinational matrix with very simple rules but with profound consequences”. For Hugo and Wedekind (2013:147), this “peculiar focus on the strength or weakness of the boundary rather than on the actual message being transmitted enables a flourishing of the pedagogic imagination, precisely by stripping away the millions of variations in possible messages”. They however warn that

Identification of an optimal pedagogy for the working class student in one subject, in one grade or one context cannot be optimally applied in all contexts. ...weak pacing might be optimal for working class children at grade 8 level in Science in more developed contexts; applying this insight as a rule for working class children in general is fatal (Hugo & Wedekind, 2013:149).

I therefore cannot generalise by saying that the combinations (in terms of classification and framing values) used at Dumont Primary, will work at all schools. One needs to understand the context, the grade level and the type of subject being taught, and how this in turn influences decisions on whether or not to relax framing in terms of pacing, or whether or not to strengthen or weaken the boundary strength of other variables. By focusing on pedagogy in terms of pedagogic practices and the nature of pedagogic relations one gets to see how learners of different social class backgrounds experience schools differently and how this in turn results in differential educational outcomes, to which I now turn.

### **7.3.2 Differential learning experiences: The construction of a homogenised and standardised learner identity**

For Mcfadden & Munns (2002:362), curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, which Bernstein (1986) refers to as the three message systems of schooling, “convey powerful messages that shape the learners educational identity”. In the previous section (see 7.3.1) I alluded to the fact that teachers are under pressure in terms of time- in terms of covering the syllabus, and in terms of meeting the requirements of the ANA tests. In addition, teachers at certain schools, appear to be under pressure trying to get learners to behave, perform and achieve in the requisite way so as to meet the middle-class ideals these schools ought to have. These pressures or constraints are not only pushing teachers into the regulative discourse but it is

also constructing particular types of learner identities. What I am seeing is the construction of a homogenised and standardised learner identity. In my view, the ANA tests contribute to the construction of these homogenised and standardised learner identities. This explains why there is this constant push to get learners to operate in the same way. The aim is to test everyone in the same way but everyone is not the same. But the purpose of testing is to move learners from different backgrounds with different abilities towards the norm. I argue that this overwhelming need to homogenise learners to perform in these standardised tests, does not allow for differentiation. Yet the purpose of differentiation, teaching to different learning styles and learner interests, is to get them to the same point anyway. In broader theoretical terms in the construction of the 'learner' the point is to work with different abilities to get them to the same point. The only problem is that teachers themselves admit that they do not know how to work with difference.

So although teachers advocate that they teach to different learning styles they end up giving learners, especially Grade 4 and 7 learners, the same tasks. Teachers therefore tend not to differentiate in their pedagogical encounters with their learners. My interviews with teachers at these schools reveal that they are aware that children learn differently, since they are able to identify the different styles (visual, auditory or tactile learners), and teachers at Dumont Primary in particular, go as far as to diagnose learners (OT and ADD). In their pedagogical interactions with learners they see them as different, yet they teach them as an "amorphous entity" with what can be described as "distant proximity" (Du Plooy, 2010:134). Teachers 'unmediated pedagogical styles' and 'undifferentiated teaching approaches' or 'pedagogies of same' (Lingaard, 2007) and Hayes (2003), all point to a type of pedagogy, described as thin pedagogising, which involves,

an emphasis on a narrow school knowledge code, framed by regulative motives that teachers are meant to comply with ...Emphasis on the redistribution of the school code leaves little or no space for working with identity constructions of difference... (Fataar, 2012: 52-75).

This form of pedagogy that does not recognise difference, could account for learners having very different experiences of learning in South African schools (Christie, 2008). Learners in this study, across the three phases of schooling, certainly have different classroom experiences.

In Grade 1, for instance, the analysis reveals a strong ability discourse, where learners are grouped in homogeneous ‘ability’ groups (learners with similar ability levels are grouped together) for reading and mathematics. As mentioned in the previous discussion, experiences of learners in lower ability groups differ from those experienced by higher ability groups in terms of teacher expectations, curriculum coverage and the pacing of content. Grade 1 teachers, as is evident from the data presented in Chapters 5 and 6, held low expectations of the lower ability group, worked at a slower pace to deliver lower levels of content (evidence of teachers focusing more on the regulative- getting them to behave, listen and concentrate), and as a result end up not covering the required content the group requires to write both the internal examinations and the standardised test (ANAs). Even though learners in these groups are exposed to less work and being taught at a slower pace, the method of teaching (the ‘how’) is the same (homogeneous). These learners are therefore not exposed to different teaching methods that speak to their learning styles and draw on their individual knowledge base. Teachers, as evident from their interview responses, do not have the ‘know-how’ to work with difference in order to bring learners to the same point. They end up referring learners to the LSEN teacher or to a therapist, as in the case of Dumont Primary. The only problem is that there is only one LSEN teacher per district and their focus is mainly on Grade R, so they are restricted in the services they can provide. Furthermore parents at Dumont Primary have to pay for therapy and not all parents have the means to do that. Zevenbergen (2003:8), points out that ability grouping becomes a structured ordering practice (in Bourdieu’s language), in that it produces different, objective (in terms of test scores) and subjective (in terms of dispositions), outcomes. Power is therefore being conveyed differently through practice of ability grouping. I spoke earlier about the unintended messages that are being relayed to learners as being part of low-status group. I also provided evidence that showed how they end up internalising and embodying their positioning in the group and how they end up reproducing this positioning. The fact that learners see themselves as slow because they are in a slow group, and are seen by others in the negative (being called ‘lazy’ or ‘slow’, or ‘babyish’ or being described as ‘not knowing stuff’) gets internalised in their habitus. These learners then act in accordance with this positioning which often hinders their chances of success in school. Learners, from our group interview discussions, are aware of what they should do in order to move up a group, in fact they want to be ‘fast’ but because of their positioning in these groups (structures) and the way they exercise their agency (agency) they remain entangled in repeated patterns of failure. Teachers note that learners do move up and down in groups but the data indicate that this is more likely

to happen in higher achieving groups. Those in lower achieving groups tend to stay in lower status groups throughout the foundation phase of schooling.

As mentioned, in Grade 4 and 7, teachers generally do not teach to difference. Teachers can read their learners as being different but end up teaching them as if they are the same. From my classroom observations in these classrooms I observed that learners are given the same worksheets and do the same activities. Teachers, as Du Plooy (2010:134) describes “enact their pedagogical practices in the classroom in a homogenising manner, failing to make distinctions amongst them”. Teachers, in interview sessions, provide the following reasons for not being able help ‘struggling learners’ (referring mainly to learners who require some or other form of intervention) or why they teach using undifferentiated (communalised) teaching approaches. They attribute this to: workload (in terms of preparing learners for tests and monitoring learners work), demands of the curriculum (in terms of time needed to cover all aspects of the curriculum, re-teaching concepts and having follow-up lessons), class size (mainly at Zola Primary), training (referring to initial teacher training where they were not taught to do remedial teaching). According to Du Plooy (2010:134), they fail to see what consequences knowing these students could have for their practices”.

Grade 4 and 7 learners, in individual interviews, concur that they are taught in the same way, and they get the same worksheets, assessments and tests. Learners, especially those that do perform, end up having to sit through repeat lessons, having to do routine tasks that they have previously mastered, whilst teachers mainly spend time regulating disruptive behaviour which results in them having to teach things over and over again. This could account for why ‘above average’ learners in this study end up feeling bored and why they yearn for more advanced work, which were not forthcoming because teachers, as mentioned do not have the time or know-how to help individual learners. For Rose (2005:133), learner identities “are produced and maintained by the moral order of the classroom and school”. Rose (2005) illuminates the nature and dominance of the regulative discourse, revealing how learners are stratified into different learner identities, which could account for why some learners experience schooling as their pathway to the future, and others experience schooling as irrelevant and alienating (Rose, 2005:133). Zevenbergen (2003: 10) is of the view that the internalisation of structuring practices like: ability grouping and assessments or examinations, differently position learners so as to enhance or hinder their chances of success in school. I now turn to assessment, as a message system of schooling, more specifically the ANAs, which is delinked from framing and in turn is hindering achievement.

### **7.3.3 Assessment as a message system of schooling: A case of the ANAs being delinked from pedagogical framing**

South Africa is fast becoming a test-driven nation. This we see in the adoption of the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) which was piloted in 2008 and in 2011 the first ANA tests were conducted nation-wide in Grades 1 to 6 in literacy and mathematics (Chisholm & Wildeman, 2013). Kanjee & Moloi (2014:90) concur that South Africa is moving towards assessment as a key driver for improving teaching as well as learning in schools” This is confirmed by Chisholm and Wilderman (2013:92) who assert that “the purpose of the assessments are intended to improve the quality of schooling by enabling the analysis of weaknesses and implantation of appropriate intervention”. For Carnoy et al (2012:52) this form of testing “can be useful to pinpoint the level of student performance against certain school variables at a single point in time but are less useful in explaining why students in some classrooms achieve more than others”. The ANAs reveal that there are huge disparities between the schools in this study in both language and mathematics scores, as is evident from tables 50, 51 and 52 in Chapter 5. Principals and teachers in this study appear to value testing and see it as a diagnostic tool to identify problem areas so that they could bring about improvements. The timing of the test, as well as problems associated in the administering the test, are some of the negative aspects associated with standardised testing. Christie, Soudien and Gilmour (2012), Chisholm and Wilderman (2013) and Spaul (2015) speak about the dangers of standardised testing, especially the ANAs. Gilmore et al (2012) view standardised testing as narrowing of the goals of education to what is tested, encouraging a ‘teaching to the test’ syndrome, which for them could result in the hollowing out of education. My research provides evidence of this ‘teaching to the test’ syndrome especially amongst Grades 4 and 7 teachers, which not only leads to fragmented teaching but constructs particular learner identities, as mentioned in the previous section. Teachers, in this study revealed that the language used in the test is not the language learners are familiar with. This forces them to teach to assessments, as is evident in Grade 4 and 7 classrooms, especially at Flamingo and Dumont Primary. Furthermore, a considerable amount of time is spent on preparations for test leaving very little time to cover all aspects of the curriculum. I observed teachers’ practices in these classrooms as being mostly test-driven where they teach mainly to assessments using worksheets and other test related activities. This does not only lead to

fragmented teaching but as mentioned, the ANAs is aiding in the construction of particular learner identities, that of homogenised and standardised learner identities.

For Bernstein, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are linked. As mentioned in the previous section, these three message systems of schooling play a crucial role in the formation of a learner's educational identity. The way things are classified (curriculum), will therefore influence the way things are taught (pedagogy) and the way things are taught will ultimately affect how they are assessed (assessment). With assessments being paramount it's going the other way around. Not that Bernstein would necessarily suggest a linear movement of these message systems. This reversal of how things are working, with the over-emphasis on standardised tests like the Annual National Assessments (ANAs), is not necessarily problematic given the fact that the knowledge (content) learners require is given. More specifically, the classification is strong in terms of 'what' to teach. The framing for each subject is explicit in terms of what needs to be covered (selection is explicit) and by when (timeframes are given). Most of the teachers and principals in this study were highly appreciative of the strong framing in terms of selection especially being provided with the syllabus, worksheets and textbooks. However, the 'how' needed to deliver this content in order for learners to meet the requirements of the ANAs is not explicit. It is not clear in terms of sequencing and pacing, although it is clear in terms of topics to be covered but in terms of pedagogy it is not clear. The kind of language required to execute this is not clear. Neither is it clear in terms of the kind of resources required or the kinds of activities teachers and learners ought to engage in that would reinforce that particular content. So there appears to be some kind of delinking of assessment from pedagogical framing and this contributes to learner achievement levels. In fact this delinking of assessment from pedagogical framing is exacerbating underachievement. Teachers also revealed that they require resources, especially for mathematics (concrete materials like: counters, sticks amongst other things), as well as help with activities and designing programmes that could help in bringing learners coming from different social background with different abilities to the same point. The analysis revealed that not all children, given their primary socialisation or differentiated school experiences are the same, yet there is an overwhelming need to homogenise them and to get them to perform in the ANAs, testing them as if they are the same. If the language is made clear, if resources are given, if the kinds of activities required to bring all learners with different abilities to the same point is clear, then it will make sense to test them in the same way.

## 7.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to offer an analysis and discussion of the findings emanating from Chapters 5 and 6. It provided both contextual and pedagogical reasons for learner achievement levels across three phases of schooling and in three selected schools. There is clearly a need to understand the nature of the learner, what they bring into school, and the way they make sense of school by exercising their agency. The way this in turn, is pushing teachers into the regulative, and the implications this has in constructing the middle-class ethos in schools. The construction of cultural capital in and of the school includes language in a very crucial way. The more we understand the context of our learners, where they are coming from, the more equipped we will be able to deal with it. We also have to factor in that teachers themselves have different dispositions and come with different cultural capital which informs their agency, and in a working class context (at poorer schools) this appears to complicate things. Pedagogically, teachers, overly feeling constrained by the strong classification and framing of content are under pressure in terms of time, in terms of covering the curriculum and in terms of meeting the requirements of the ANAs, that they do not see the possibility of the permutation of framing. Coupled to this their undifferentiated teaching approaches (not being able to teach to difference) and the overemphasis on assessment (teaching to test) is not only resulting in fragmented teaching but it is constructing particular types of learner identities; homogenised and standardised learner identities, which in turn is reinforcing underachievement. Furthermore, there appears to be a delinking of framing from assessment. Even though it is clear what the learner ought to know (selection of content), the framing that is assumed in the ANAs is not explicit for teachers; it is not clear in terms of language, it is not clear in terms of resources, it is not clear in terms of the kind of activities they ought to be engaged with that could reinforce the content neither does it indicate the pace to bring different learners, with different learning abilities to the same point. This brings me to the final chapter where I provide the conclusions and implications of this study.



## CHAPTER 8

### 8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter commences with an overview of the study, followed by a summary of the key findings that emanated from this research, which is looked at in relation to the research questions. This is followed by a reflection on the theories used to frame the study, where I look at what worked and what did not work. I conclude this chapter by considering the implications of the study and by offering recommendations for further study.

#### 8.1 An overview of the study

This dissertation set out to investigate the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa, more specifically in three selected public primary schools in the Western Cape. International and national systemic tests show that South Africa's education system is indeed in crisis. I came to learn that the identifiable factors (see Chapter 1, 1.4 and Table 2) that are argued to have contributed to learner achievement levels thus far are multiple and complex, ranging from contextual factors, to school related factors to classroom factors. In other words, I came to realise that it cannot be said with certainty which of the identifiable factors, and in which context, appear to be more salient than others. What is clear is that there is a strong knowledge- base on the complexities surrounding learner achievement levels in South Africa from which to draw. These studies reveal that over the past three decades researchers have mainly studied teachers' behaviour as predictors of learner achievement and drew largely on teachers perceptions as to why learners succeed or fail. Learners' perceptions about their achievement levels, their behaviour, what they are doing or not doing, is understudied and poorly understood. In fact, Moloi and his co-authors (2010) in their search for literature between 2007 and 2010 yielded no studies on learner perceptions regarding factors that contributed to their academic success or failure.

The main aim of this study was therefore to investigate the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels across different phases of schooling. This broad aim was based on two objectives: 1) To offer a comprehensive overview of the theories, debates and concepts relating to learner achievement levels, and 2) To provide an analytical account of the factors influencing learner achievement levels in South African education. This aim and subsequent

objectives translated into the following research questions, which framed and guided the research process. The main research question was: What are the possible factors contributing to learner achievement levels in South Africa? A study of three selected public primary schools in the Western Cape. The sub-questions flowing from this main question were:

1. What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling?
2. In which ways are learner achievement levels influenced by the curriculum, more specifically curriculum change?
3. What is the nature of pedagogic practices in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling, and how do these account for learner achievement levels in these phases?
4. How does the role of the teacher, in the pedagogic relationship, influence learner achievement levels, and how are such influences experienced in practice by learners?
5. How does the learner's racial, class and gender identities relate to his/her achievement levels?

This study is located within a qualitative interpretivist's research paradigm, using a multiple case study design. A qualitative interpretivist research paradigm is warranted mainly because this study set out to explore and explain a complex educational phenomenon (making it particularistic), the end product, this thesis, which doubled as the case study report, made use of thick descriptions, offering detailed narrative accounts to understand the phenomenon (making it descriptive). My intention with this study was not to generalise the findings but to extend the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study (making it heuristic).

Methodologically, I take the reader through three phases of doing empirical research: from the planning, design and preparation phase, to the data collection phase and ending with the analytical phase of the research. I tried throughout this process to maintain a 'chain of evidence' by offering detailed accounts of all methodological procedures followed. Unique to this study and to qualitative research in general is my pilot study report, a full account of my pilot study phase of this research, which is often lacking in most qualitative dissertations. I offer this as a learning tool for other novice researchers doing similar research in similar settings using similar data collection methods.

Two levels of sampling took place. Firstly, I purposively selected the macro cases or empirical points where data was collected. This comprised of three selected primary public schools. Secondly, I selected the micro cases or conceptual cases used for analysis. These comprised of the bounded cases or units of analysis, namely Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners, in relation to their teachers and principals.

A study of this nature required multiple data collection instruments to collect data from multiple sources. I made use of questionnaires (926 learner questionnaires were completed and 32 teacher questionnaires were completed). I observed literacy and numeracy lessons in selected Grades 1, 4 and 7 classrooms using direct observations informed by work done by Hoadley (2005) and based on Bernstein's framework. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three principals, 10 teachers and 36 learners across the three schools. I also used document sources, like: learner profiles –used to profile learners, CEMIS information–used to profile schools, LITNUM and ANA reports to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Theoretically, this study is housed in the domain of sociology, more specifically sociology of education. I combined the conceptual lenses of two leading social reproduction theorists, namely, Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein. Both these theorists provided the conceptual and analytical lenses to understand the complexities and multiple ways of understanding how social inequalities are perpetuated through and in the practices of schooling, more specifically differential educational outcomes. On the one hand, I used Bourdieu's constructs methodologically to frame the way I designed the questionnaires and interview schedules and then, conceptually, to make sense of the role of context in learner performance. In other words, I worked largely with the concepts or theories of Bourdieu to provide an understanding of how context actually influences people's dispositions, the ways in which 'cultural capital' is distributed amongst different schools, and the influence it has on the way in which certain dispositions have been embodied and interiorised by the actors in these schools, given their exteriorisation. Furthermore, I looked at ways in which these actors construct their agency within these schools and how they make sense of their external reality.

On the other hand, I used Bernstein's constructs methodologically to characterise teachers' pedagogic practices, in the instructional and regulative contexts, according to different classification and framing values. These codes, which was introduced by Morais and Neves

(2003) and elaborated on by Hoadley (2005) based on Bernstein's work, were used methodologically to show my own observations in these classrooms to describe how pedagogy in each of these selected schools and across the three selected grades is actually delivered and experienced by both teachers and learners within these classrooms. Conceptually, Bernstein's theories helped in understanding the nature of these teachers' pedagogical practices, as well as the nature of pedagogical relations between the teachers and learners and how these could account for differential learner outcomes. The following key findings emerged from the data collected. The findings are discussed in relation to the research questions.

## **8.2 Summary of key findings in relation to the research questions**

### **1) What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling?**

The findings revealed that there are contextual and pedagogical reasons for learner achievement levels across three phases of schooling and in the three selected primary schools. The contextual findings denote that there is clearly a need to understand the nature of the learner, what he/she brings into school, and the way he/she makes sense of school by exercising their agency. Learners who displayed a "committed" sense of agency normally get the desired results required by the school, whereas those who displayed a "non-committed" sense of agency did not get the required results. Furthermore, learners who displayed a "non-committed" sense of agency push teachers into the regulative discourse, and this has various implications for constructing the middle-class ethos in these schools. The construction of cultural capital in and of the school includes language in a very crucial way. The more we understand the context of our learners, where they are coming from, the more equipped we will be able to deal with it. We also have to factor in that teachers themselves have different dispositions and come with different cultural capital which informs their agency, and in a working class context (at poorer schools) this appears to complicate things.

Pedagogically, teachers, overly feeling constrained by the strong classification and framing of content are under pressure in terms of time, in terms of covering the curriculum and in terms of meeting the requirements of the ANAs, that they do not see the possibility of the permutation of framing. Coupled to this these teachers' undifferentiated teaching approaches

(not being able to teach to difference) and the overemphasis on assessment (teaching to test) is not only resulting in fragmented teaching methods but it is constructing homogenised and standardised learner identities, which in turn is reinforcing underachievement. Furthermore, there appears to be a delinking of assessment from pedagogical framing, which is exacerbating underachievement.

## **2) In which ways are learner achievement levels influenced by the curriculum, more specifically curriculum change?**

It is clear from my discussion on curriculum reform in Chapter 2, that there were many curriculum reforms, interventions and strategies introduced post 1994, all in pursuit of quality education for all learners in South Africa, which moved from C2005 (OBE) to NCS (RNCS) to NCS (CAPS). It is also apparent that these curriculum changes have not as yet brought about the required results. International and national systemic test, which I discussed in Chapter 1, revealed that South African education is in crisis. Blaming curriculum reform in my opinion is flawed mainly because we cannot operate in an environment without policy reform. What is clear is that government policy is useful and necessary, but it remains insufficient. Teachers in this study are highly appreciative of the latest curriculum reform more specifically they welcomed the strong classification of knowledge to be taught in terms of the syllabus, lesson plans, worksheets and textbooks. Even though ‘what’ to teach is clearly indicated, the ‘how’ to teach is not made explicit. Ultimately, the way things are classified (curriculum) influences the way things are taught (pedagogy), and in turn influence how things are assessed (evaluation). Currently, with the over-emphasis on assessments, especially the ANAs, things are going the other way around. Even though the classification and assessment is strongly linked, there appears to be a delinking of assessment from pedagogical framing, which is exacerbating underachievement. In other words, the kind of language required to execute the tests is not visible, the kind of resources (eg. mathematical aids and materials, like counters and sticks) required are not available, the kind of activities learners ought to engage in so as to reinforce the content is not clear. If these things are made explicit then it will make sense to test learners, coming from different socio-economic backgrounds and having different abilities, in the same way.

### **3) What is the nature of pedagogic practices in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling, and how do these account for learner achievement levels in these phases?**

The findings revealed two types of pedagogic modalities – an ‘expanded pedagogy’ and a ‘constricted pedagogy’; pedagogic practices associated mainly with Grades 4 and 7, each having a different effect on learner achievement levels. The ‘expanded pedagogy’, is mostly linked to better-off schools, schools that are well-resourced and schools that mostly house learners from middle class backgrounds whose home habitus is congruent with the school habitus. This pedagogic modality is characterised by a relaxing of framing at the level of pacing and at the level of evaluation. Even though the selection and sequencing of knowledge is strongly framed teachers manage to relax the pacing allowing learners to have control over the rate at which they learn. Furthermore they provide ‘productive feedback’ where they explain why what is wrong is wrong or if learners get things correct why they are correct, offering a deeper engagement with concepts. In addition the teacher’s authority is implicit – the hierarchical rule is therefore weakly framed since teacher exercise more personal control – the teacher is more approachable and engaging thus creating opportunities for the learner’s voice to become specialised. More importantly, this ‘expanded pedagogic’ modality leads to better results as is evident in this thesis.

The ‘constricted pedagogy’ is mostly associated with poor and impoverished schools which houses mainly working class learners whose home habitus is incongruent with the school habitus. This pedagogic modality is characterised by strong framing in terms of sequencing, selection, pacing and evaluation. Here the evaluation criteria are implicit and unclear, teachers exercise more positional control- they maintain a physical distance between them and their learners, and opportunities to specialise the learner’s voice is limiting. As a result these learners seldom get the required results. It should however be noted that these teachers are under pressure- pressure in terms of curriculum coverage, pressure in terms of covering the syllabus within rigid time-frames, and pressure in terms of meeting the requirements of the ANAs. As a result they do not see the possibility of the permutation of framing and end up framing their lessons unnecessarily strong, which results in them leaving their learners behind.

Practices in Grade 1, across the three selected schools, are marked by a strong ability discourse, where the framing over the instructional discourse is strongly framed. This structuring practice (in Bourdieu's language) positions learners differently and ultimately leads to differential educational outcomes. In addition, the verbal and non-verbal messages being relayed by teachers to different ability groups is being internalised and embodied by learners. This practice of ability groups, which is mainly practiced in the foundation phase, can have an enabling or disabling effect depending on the learners social positioning (coming into school with the recognised field-specific capital), their dispositions (individual and class-based habitus) and their positioning in the group. Those who are marked in negative terms are ultimately trapped in repeated patterns of failure. Those learners marked positively have more opportunities to build cultural capital in school.

#### **4. How does the role of the teacher, in the pedagogic relationship, influence learner achievement levels, and how are such influences experienced in practice by learners?**

The teacher participants in this study are pushed into the regulative discourse compromising the instructional discourse. There are a number of factors informing this practice: a) teachers themselves are coming into schools with an embodied state or particular dispositions, endowed with particular cultural capital which informs their agency; b) In certain schools, like Zola and Flamingo Primary, teachers first have to get learners to behave before they can get them to learn, perform and achieve in the requisite ways; c) the cultural capital in and of the school includes language in a very crucial way since it is dependent on a particular language and that language is English. In engaging learners in the model of code-switching, as is evident at Zola Primary, teachers are enacting the 'logic' of symbolic violence. Here code-switching is used to get learners to understand the content but it does not provide them with the language required to be successful in internal examinations and standardised tests.

Teacher talk, their deficit discourse about their learners, labelling them as OT and ADD, or marking them in negative terms, as lazy, slow and struggling is concerning. The data revealed that these children have different classroom experiences compared to those marked in positive terms, as being bright, smart and having manners. This differential treatment, which can be linked to social class, has differential outcomes. Those marked in negative terms often display a 'non-committed' sense of agency- normally in the form of disruptive behaviour,

whereas those marked in positive terms display a more ‘committed’ sense of agency. The latter group of learners are given more opportunities to build cultural capital in these schools.

### **5. How does the learner’s racial, class and gender identities relate to his/her achievement levels?**

It findings indicated that learners from poor backgrounds come into these schools with an embodied sense of deficit, which I am seeing across schools, and it is consistently linked to their cultural capital, more specifically embodied, objectified and linguistic capital. Three particular contextual factors emerged from the analysis, which could explain why working class learners’ at different schools seem to have acquired the same embodied sense, namely: primary socialisation (prolonged exposure to harsh and volatile social spaces – home and community), the misalignment between language used and spoken in the home and that required to succeed in school and the lack of parental involvement (parental investment of time and resources). The narrative data emanating from Chapter 5, therefore disclosed that there is undoubtedly an interiorisation of their external reality.

Although this is useful in explaining why working class children might find it difficult to perform in school it does not explain those working class children who despite their external reality and in the absence of good teaching still manage to get good results, and it does not explain why learners from better-off homes, with the cultural capital recognised in schools, who are expected to perform well but end up not performing. Here, a more nuanced way of how things work is needed.

According to the findings, learners when they enter these schools and classrooms they come into a social interaction situation where they have to make meaning and cope. They have to exercise their agency, and the way in which their agency is being constructed in these schools is reinforcing underachievement. So it is not only an issue of cultural capital that they coming into school with something else is being constructed within the environment of the school through the exercising of agency and in relation to different kinds of forces learners are dealing with. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, in exercising choice, some show a willingness to learn, others lapse into disruptive behaviour, where they use conscious strategies to be thrown out of the class, tease each other, laugh or play. Others are apathetic, displaying a ‘non-



caring' attitude, whereas others withdraw, do not ask questions nor do they participate in classroom activities, and others, especially those at more affluent schools (like Dumont Primary), use their 'high-tech dispositions (knowledge of computers and cell phones) to interrupt lessons. Playing, talking or laughing are strategies or coping mechanisms adopted mainly by Grade 1 learners when they do not understand the work. For Grades 4 and 7 learners the strategies they adopt has more to do with 'fitting in' or having a sense of belonging. For them it appears that social acceptance has greater worth than progressing in school. Added to this, teachers themselves are coming with particular dispositions informed by their cultural capital and shaped by their positioning in different fields, and in a working class context this is complicating things.

### **8.3 Reflecting on the theoretical framework that framed this study**

As mentioned, in this thesis I combined the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein in search of a more holistic way of studying this complex problem. Bourdieu's theories on the interplay between habitus, field and capital, particularly his notion of 'cultural capital' was useful in understanding the ways in which learner identity is constructed and shaped through early socialisation but also by ones position in the social space of the school and the classroom. Furthermore, through engaging with his constructs and immersing myself in the ways in which others have used his work (as I have done in Chapter 3) I came to the realisation that although his theories can be used to explain how different children experienced schooling differently, which he does in terms of the relationship between the individual and the social, he does not show it in terms of pedagogy. For this I turned Bernstein since he adequately explains how pedagogic practices, the internal logic of pedagogy can be linked to achievement. Before I reflect on Bernstein's theoretical framework allow me to say that there were areas where Bourdieu's thesis could not be used especially to explain certain aspects of learner behaviour, taking into consideration that learners in Grades 7 are transitioning into the adolescent phase of their development and this could also be a reason why they withdraw and become disengaged from schooling or why they have this strong need for social acceptance and act out in the ways they do. For this we might have to turn to the work housed in psychology especially the work of Erickson (1980) that looks at the relationship between identity and the life cycle, more specifically on identity development in adolescence.

Bernstein's work was extremely challenging to work with seeing that his internal language of description evolved over time, which meant that the meaning of certain constructs changed over time, making it difficult for me to grasp. Furthermore, as mentioned, I used a Classroom Observation Schedule (COBS) previously used by Hoadley (2005) and informed by the theoretical framework of Basil Bernstein. One of my main concerns during the piloting of this instrument was finding ways to avoid forcing empirical evidence to fit the well-established COBS. Helping in this regard, and as mentioned in the pilot study report, was audio recording the lessons and using a COBS summary sheet, which, whilst observing, doubled as a coding sheet and an analytical memo (a space for jotting down ideas, feelings and initial perceptions whilst observing). This extra "theoretical labour" (Gamble, 2004:51), combining both audio and written methods to observe, created 'a mosaic of data': the written notes capturing the 'real-life' details (expressions, silences, movements, interruptions) that the audio recorder failed to capture. As a result, I was able not only to 'identify themes as they emerged in the field' but also begin the analysis process. Bernstein's thesis helped in this thesis to unravel the internal logic of teachers' pedagogical practices. In other words, it was useful in understanding how pedagogy, different modalities of practices, works to reinforce underachievement. Furthermore, it helped to get my 'pedagogical imagination' (Hugo & Wedekind, 2013) to flow thus opening up the many possibilities on how pedagogy and assessment in terms of framing could change in order to provide all learners with the tools to succeed in school.

#### **8.4 Implications and recommendations for further studies**

Whilst this study focused on learner achievement at three selected schools, with varying school context, the findings holds various implications for teaching and learning, opening up possibilities for further study.

1. Parental involvement is a crucial contributing factor in ensuring learner achievement. It is especially necessary in the foundation phase of schooling, where home should be an extension of school so as to consolidate new knowledge learnt. However, there appears to be a disjuncture between teachers' views on parental involvement and what learners are saying regarding their parents being involved in their learning. Teachers often feel that parents are not involved where there is evidence in this thesis to prove the contrary. It appears from learner interviews that

parents are involved in helping them learn and consolidate work at home but this seems insufficient.

**Implications:** There are parents who work long hours and as a result cannot help their children. At the same time there are parents who are illiterate and unable to help their children. Teachers could consider running workshops with parents to outline exactly how they could help in their children's schooling or find alternative ways to consolidate the work.

**Recommendations:** The Department could employ researchers from different universities to conduct a systematic review in search of a parental involvement model that would benefit learners, especially those in the foundation phase of schooling, and those coming from poor backgrounds where there are high levels of illiteracy amongst parents and where parents tend to socialise their children in a more restrictive code, whereas schools favour a more elaborative code.

2. Learners appear to be 'interrupters' of their own learning and the learning of others. This study reveals that some learners exercise their agency in ways that are reinforcing underachievement. They use conscious strategies like, disruptive behaviour, to punctuate instructional time. If they come into schools with alternative ways of exercising their agency the results will be different.

**Implications:** It is evident in this study that teachers are forced to regulate disruptive behaviour and learners seem to offer resistance at every point. For these learners the need for social acceptance and the need to 'fit in' appear stronger than an investment in their schooling.

**Recommendation:** Researchers could consider cross-discipline qualitative research, especially between sociology and behavioural psychology, into how teachers could get learners to move towards a more committed-subject positioning where they acquire the instructional discourse and react more positively towards the regulative discourse.

3. The findings show that teachers in this study teach in undifferentiated ways as if all learners learn in the same way. The purpose of differentiation, teaching to different learning styles and learner interest, is to get them to the same point anyway.

**Implications:** This study revealed that teacher respondents do not know how to work with difference especially in cases where the nature of the problems learners'

encounter in schools is too diverse. As indicated, learners in the Foundation phase work in ability groups and are assigned animal names as a means to differentiate between them. The implication of this is that it promotes labelling. In Grades 4 (Intermediate Phase) and Grades 7 (Senior Phase) there is no differentiation. The teacher respondents assert that they never received adequate training in how to work with difference, neither do they have the time and as a result they are unable to design effective intervention strategies to help their learners especially those at risk of failing.

**Recommendations:** Initial teacher training programmes could include courses to provide beginner teachers with the tools and know-how to work with difference taking into consideration different learning styles and learner interest. In this way they will be able to bring learners coming from different social class backgrounds and different levels of ability to the same point.

4. School location is problematic. Zola Primary, as mentioned is situated amongst a hub of activities (near a taxi rank and bottle store) which learners are exposed to on their way to school. Whereas Flamingo Primary is situated in an industrial area and at times is completely isolated, and as a result the school is often vandalised. Teachers also complained that they cannot work after hours or give extra classes in fear of being attacked or robbed.

**Implications:** In the long run the Department of Education could avoid putting schools in places where learners are exposed to negative influences or in the short term, together with community forums, they could prohibit certain businesses from being erected near schools.

**Recommendations:** To investigate the impact of school location on learner achievement levels or to explore how school location attributes to school-based violence.

5. It is clear from my discussions that South Africa is becoming a test-driven nation and that standardised testing is here to stay. I have been critical about standardised testing especially the ANAs, in that we are testing learners as if they are the same but they are not the same.

**Implications:** The Department of education should take into consideration not only the time when these tests are written, but also the language or vocabulary used in the

tests. These, amongst other things need to be taken into account to benefit learner achievement levels.

**Recommendations:** To explore how ANAs are taken up in local contexts, how they are experienced by both teachers and learners, and how these standardised tests could be used to improve learner achievement in South African education. It appears as if the Department of Basic Education realised the problems associated with the ANAs. The postponement of the ANAs for the current year (September 2015), testifies to it.

## 8.5 Conclusion

This final chapter restated the problem, which this thesis sought to address, namely an investigation into the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa, more specifically in three selected public primary schools in the Western Cape. I provided an overview of the study, revisited the key findings emanating from the research process, reflected on whether the theories used to frame the study worked or not, and provided the implications of the findings for various stake-holders, as well as opened up the possibilities for further research. I came to the realisation that what happens in schools and classrooms can make a difference. In other words, pedagogy –how we teach, and pedagogic relations-how we engage with our learners can make the difference. What is coming out quite strongly in the end is that in order to improve the quality of education for all children in South Africa we need further studies that illuminate their views on their own achievement levels.

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## **10 APPENDICES**

### **A – Permission form the WCED**

### **B- Information Sheet**

### **C- Consent forms:**

- **C1-Principal consent form**
- **C2-Teacher consent form**
- **C3-Parent consent form**
- **C4-Learner consent form**

### **D – Questionnaires**

- **D1-Teacher questionnaire**
- **D2-Learner questionnaire Grade 1**
- **D3-Learner questionnaire Grade 4 and 7**

### **E- Observation Schedule**

- **E1- Classroom Observation Schedule**
- **E2- COBS summary sheet**

### **F- Interview Schedules**

- **F1-Principal interview schedule**
- **F2-Teacher interview schedule**
- **F3-Learner interview schedule**

### **G- Pilot Study Phase- full pilot study report**

### **H- Case Study Protocol**

### **I- Representative lesson for each Grade 1 teacher with the COBS summary sheet and reflective notes where available.**



**J-Representative lesson for each Grade 4 teacher with the COBS summary sheet and reflective notes where available.**

**K-Representative lesson for each Grade 7 teacher with the COBS summary sheet and reflective notes where available.**



## **APPENDIX A: PERMISSION FROM WCED**



Directorate: Research

[Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 476 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20120508-0045

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Lucinda Du Plooy  
Faculty of Education  
UWC

**Dear Mrs Lucinda Du Plooy**

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE POSSIBLE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **01 May 2012 till 30 March 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE: 08 May 2012**

## **APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET**

### **TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE POSSIBLE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE.**

---

My name is **LUCINDA DU PLOOY** and I am currently a PhD student at the University of the Western Cape. My research, titled above, focuses on learner achievement levels. It will be an honour for me to have you participate in this research project.

Please note that your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the project at any time. You will be asked to participate in one or more of the following processes:

- An interview
- To complete a questionnaire
- To be observed in the classroom

My research will not interfere in any way with the normal functioning of the school or with learning in the classroom. In addition, the school and all participants in the study will remain anonymous. Permission to conduct the research will be obtained from the Western Cape Education Department.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information about this research project.

**Researcher: Lucinda Du Plooy (Mocke)**

**Contact details email: [lduplooy@uwc.ac.za](mailto:lduplooy@uwc.ac.za)**

**Phone no: (021) 959 3001 / 0741358396**

**Faculty of Education**

**Institution: University of the Western Cape**

## **APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS**

### **C1 -CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS**

#### **LETTER OF CONSENT**

**RESEARCH TITLE:** An investigation of the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa: A study of selected public schools in the Western Cape.

**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** Lucinda Lucille Du Plooy (Mocke)

I hereby give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for the purpose of data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in the research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested, and I am aware that I may refuse to have the interview tape-recorded.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may refrain from answering any or all questions which might make me feel uncomfortable and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I so wish. Information gathered from the study will be handled with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and I am reassured that there are no risks involved in participation in the study.

I consent to voluntarily participate in this research study by completing this form.

Signed:.....on.....this day .....at .....

## C2-CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

### LETTER OF CONSENT

**RESEARCH TITLE:** An investigation of the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa: A study of selected public schools in the Western Cape.

**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** Lucinda Lucille Du Plooy (Mocke)

I hereby give my consent to participate in this study and to be interviewed by the interviewer. This is for the purpose of data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in the research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested, and I am aware that I may refuse to have the interview tape-recorded. I also give my consent to complete the teacher questionnaire.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may refrain from answering any or all questions which might make me feel uncomfortable and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time if I so wish. Information gathered from the study will be handled with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and I am reassured that there are no risks involved in participation in the study.

I consent to voluntarily participate in this research study by completing this form.

Signed:..... on.....this day.....at.....

## C3-CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

### LETTER OF CONSENT

**RESEARCH TITLE:** An investigation of the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa: A study of selected public schools in the Western Cape.

**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** Lucinda Lucille Du Plooy (Mocke)

I hereby give consent to the interviewer to interview my son or daughter. This is for the purpose of data to be collected by means of an interview to be used in the research study. Permission to record the interviews has been requested, and I am aware that I may refuse to have the interview tape-recorded. I also give my consent for my child to complete the learner questionnaire.

I understand that participation is voluntary, that my child may refrain from answering any or all questions with which she/he might feel uncomfortable and that I have the right to withdraw my child from the study at any time if I so wish. Information gathered from the study will be handled with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect my child's identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and I am reassured that there are no risks involved in participation in the study.

I consent to my child's voluntarily participation in this research study by completing this form.

Signed:..... on.....this  
day.....at.....



### C4-Learner Consent Form

<b>SCHOOL CODE</b>	<b>LEARNER CODE</b>
--------------------	---------------------

**Make a cross (X) in the correct block**

**I agree to:**

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
participate in this research		
complete the questionnaire		
be interviewed by the interviewer		
be recorded during the interview		

**I understand that:**

- I can refuse to take part in this research at any time I choose.
- My name will not be used in the final research report/thesis
- I will not be harmed in any way by participating in this research study

The researcher explained the contents of this form before I completed it

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

**APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRES**

**D1-TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE- PERFORMANCE**

<b>School code:</b>	<b>Teacher code: GRADE .....</b>
---------------------	----------------------------------

**Please complete the questionnaire.**

**Make a cross (X) in the appropriate block**

1. How long have you been teaching in this grade?

Less than 5 years
-------------------

Between 5 and 10
------------------

More than 10
--------------

2. Where did you do your initial teacher training?

FET College	Teacher training college	University of technology	University	Other/ specify
-------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	------------	----------------

3. Which of the following subjects do you feel most confident to teach? State why?

Language
----------

OR

Mathematics
-------------

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Do you think you were adequately trained to teach this particular grade and learning area/subject?

YES	NO
-----	----

5. Do you keep abreast with curriculum changes, especially regarding the subjects you teach?

YES	NO
-----	----

6. Are discussions on learner achievement levels (learner outcomes) a priority at staff meetings?

YES	NO
-----	----

7. Who do you think is accountable for learner outcomes?[learner achievement levels]

**Make a cross in the correct block and then rank the items in the second block from 1 to 5. [1 is most accountable and 5 least accountable]**

Parents	School	Teachers	learners	Government

8. How often do you attend workshops [or any courses] to improve your content knowledge and keep abreast with new developments in your learning area?

Almost always	Often	Seldom	Not at all
---------------	-------	--------	------------

9. Do you hold high expectations regarding the overall performance of the learners you teach?

YES	NO
-----	----

Motivate your answer?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. How often do you discuss the learner's performance with the learner? [where learners are performing poorly]

Almost always	Often	seldom	Not at all
---------------	-------	--------	------------

11. How often do you discuss the learner's performance with parents? [where learners are performing poorly]

Almost always	Often	seldom	Not at all
---------------	-------	--------	------------

12. Do you think parents could help in improving a learner's performance?

YES	NO
-----	----

Motivate your answer?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



13. List five ways in which you can make a difference to a learner's performance?  
Suggest ways that could lead to academic gains for the student.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.


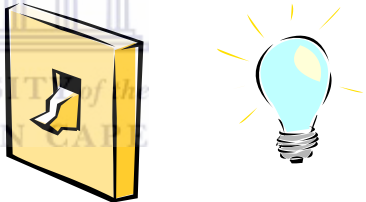
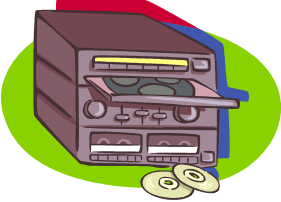
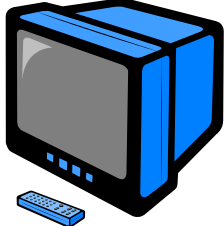

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire.



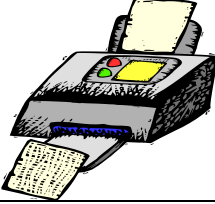
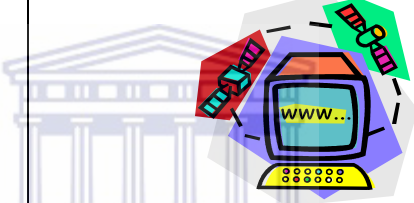


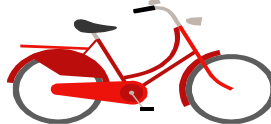


**D2-LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADE 1**



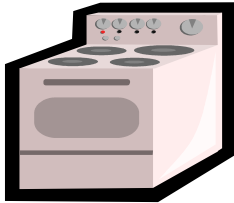

**School code:**  
**code:**

**Learner**

**Please complete the following questionnaire**

<b>THINGS IN THE HOME</b>		<b>Colour the correct block</b>
<b>Running Water</b>		
<b>Electricity</b>		
<b>Radio</b>		
<b>Television</b>		
<b>Telephone</b>		

<b>Cell phone</b>		
<b>Computer</b>		
<b>Printer</b>		
<b>Internet Access</b>		
<b>Laptop</b>		
<b>Books</b>		
<b>Bicycle</b>		
<b>Car</b>		
<b>Refrigerator</b>		

<b>Toaster</b>		
<b>Washing machine</b>		
<b>stove/ oven</b>		
<b>microwave oven</b>		

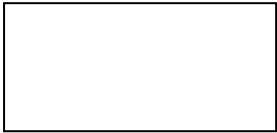
**NUMBER OF ROOMS IN THE HOME:**

State the number of each of the following rooms in your home: 1, 2 or 3

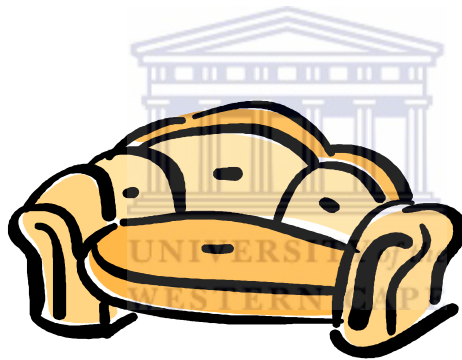
**KITCHEN**



# BEDROOM



# LOUNGE

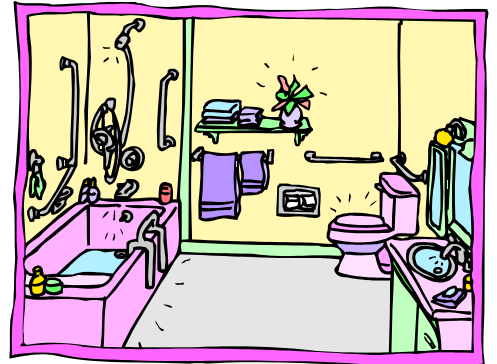


# DINING ROOM





## BATHROOM + TOILET



## TOILET



## GARAGE



## TOTAL NUMBER OF DOORS


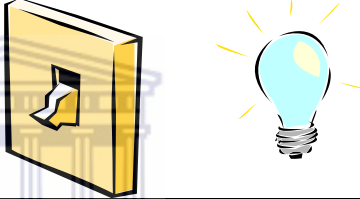
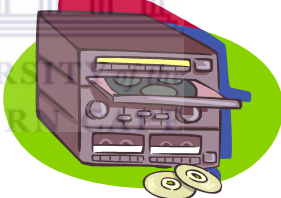
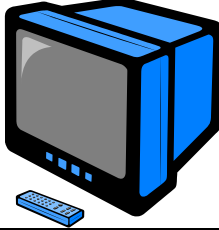


## D3-LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADES 4 and 7

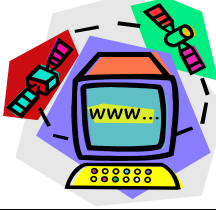
**School code:**

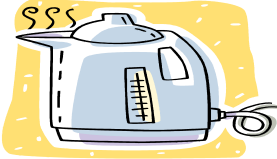


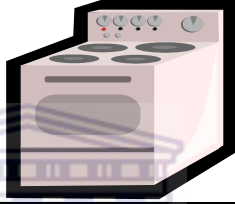
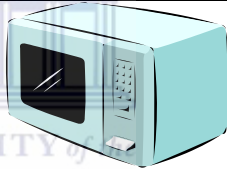
**Learner code:**

**Please complete the following questionnaire**

**Please make a cross (X) in the correct block if you have these items in your home.**

THINGS IN THE HOME		YES	NO
<b>Running water</b>			
<b>Electricity</b>			
<b>Radio</b>			
<b>Television</b>			
<b>Telephone</b>			
<b>Cell phone</b>			

<b>Computer</b>			
<b>Printer</b>			
<b>Internet Access</b>			
<b>Laptop</b>			
<b>Books</b>			
<b>Bicycle</b>			
<b>Motorbike</b>			
<b>Car</b>			
<b>Refrigerator</b>			

<b>Kettle</b>			
<b>Toaster</b>			
<b>Washing machine</b>			
<b>stove/ oven</b>			
<b>microwave oven</b>			

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WESTERN CAPE

<b>ROOMS IN THE HOME</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Kitchen</b>	
<b>Toilet</b>	
<b>Toilet/bathroom in one area</b>	
<b>Bedroom</b>	
<b>Lounge</b>	
<b>Dining room</b>	
<b>Garage</b>	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER (number of doors)</b>	

**REGARDING YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (achievement levels)**

**1. How would you rate your overall performance**

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Below average</b>
------------------	-------------	----------------	----------------------

**2. In which learning areas are you performing poorly?**

<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>LIFE SKILLS</b>
-----------------	--------------------	--------------------

**3. Why do you think your performance is poor in the areas ticked off in question 2?**


--

**UNIVERSITY** of the

**4. What do you think you can do to improve in the areas ticked off in question 2?**

--

**5. Who normally helps you when you do not understand your schoolwork and why?**

--

**6. Who helps you with homework and why?**



## APPENDIX E: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

### E1 – COBS INDICATORS

DISCURSIVE RULE-SELECTION (F <sup>+</sup> )				
The extent to which the teacher and learner have control over the selection of instructional knowledge				
1.In the exposition to a task and in doing activities	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
	<b>Almost or always controlled by the teacher</b>	<b>Mostly controlled by the teacher</b>	<b>Learners have some control</b>	<b>Learners have substantial control</b>
	The selection of tasks, activities and knowledge in the classroom is always or almost always determined by the teacher. Learners are rarely able to disrupt the selection to suit their own needs. Their interjections are generally dismissed or ignored or they are not seen to make any injections.	The selection of tasks, activities and knowledge in the classroom is determined by the teacher most of the time. On a few occasions is selection varied according to learner intervention or production.	Learners have the opportunity to vary the selection of tasks, activities and knowledge some of the time. Some learner suggestions are accepted, or the teacher alters selection according to learners' production.	Learners often make decisions around the selection of tasks, activities and knowledge in the classroom. They are given opportunities to determine the knowledge content of the lesson. The teacher alters the selection according to the learners' production, interjections, suggestions.

DISCURSIVE RULE-SEQUENCING (F <sup>++</sup> )				
The extent to which teacher and learner have control over the sequencing of instructional knowledge				
2. In the course of the lesson	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
	Almost or always controlled by the teacher	Mostly controlled by the teacher	Learners have some control	Learners have substantial control
	The teacher almost or always determines the sequencing of transmission of knowledge in the lesson. Any interjections potentially disturbing the order of learning are dismissed or ignored.	The teacher more than half of the time determines the sequencing of transmission of knowledge in a lesson.	Learners sometimes make decisions around the sequencing of tasks and activities in the lesson. They rarely given options regarding the order in which things happen.	Learners have the opportunity to vary the sequence of the transmission often. The teacher at times responds to learners' interventions by varying the sequence of learning.

DISCURSIVE RULE-PACE (F <sup>++</sup> )				
The extent to which teacher and learner have control over the pacing of instructional knowledge				
3. In the learners doing	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
	Almost or always controlled by the teacher	Mostly controlled by the teacher	Learners have some control over the pace	Learners have substantial control over the pace



<b>activities /tasks</b>	The pace at which learners work through tasks is always and almost always strictly controlled by the teacher. Injunctions to 'hurry up' or 'work slowly' and mention of time are frequent, and the teacher doesn't vary the pace according to learners' production. The teacher always or mostly always defers or ignores learners' questions and interjections, or learners make no interjections.	The pace at which learners move through tasks are mostly determined by the teacher. Time is mentioned quite often and on occasion the length of the activity is stipulated beforehand. The teacher accepts few learner interventions and questions. She answers questions briefly and moves on. Occasionally she varies the pace in response to learners' productions.	Learners work at their own pace. The teacher may exercise some control over the pace, but remains open to its variations. The teacher accepts some learner interventions and questions. She pauses briefly to make sure that all learners are ready to move on before doing so. The setting of parallel activities for learners who have finished may occur.	Learners work at their own pace. The teacher places no pressure on them to finish in a stipulated period. She may give them opportunities to 'catch-up'. The teacher accepts most or all learner interventions and questions and discussions may be extended or deviated as a result. Learners decide when they are ready to move on to other work. The setting of parallel activities for learners who have finished may occur.
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**DISCURSIVE RULE-EVALUATIVE RULES (F<sup>+</sup>)**

**The extent to which teacher and learner have control over evaluative criteria of the instructional knowledge pertaining to the meaning of concepts and principles and their appropriate realisation**

4. In the introduction/explanation/exposition to a topic or task	F <sup>++</sup> Evaluative criteria very clear and explicit	F <sup>+</sup> Evaluative criteria quite clear and explicit	F <sup>-</sup> Evaluative criteria quite unclear and implicit	F <sup>--</sup> Evaluative criteria very unclear and implicit
	Teacher always or almost always makes the evaluative rules available through exposition. Explicitly defines and explains the meaning of concepts,	Most of the time the teacher makes the evaluation rules available in an explicit and clear manner through explication and discussion. The	The concepts and principles being addressed in the exposition are sometimes unclear. Attempts are made to make the requirements for	Generally the teacher does not draw out the knowledge principles in her exposition. Very little or no attempt is made

	addresses key aspects of the knowledge or operations under discussion through questioning and explication. She makes it clear exactly how a task should be completed.	requirements for the successful completion of a task are generally clear, although there may be some aspects that remain implicit.	the successful production of the text available to learners, but these are often unclear or not articulated. Some ambiguity as to what should be done and how it should be done exists.	to make the requirements for successful production of a text available to learners. Learners are unclear as to how to proceed, or proceed in any manner they choose.
--	---	--	---	--

5. In the course of learners conducting an activity or task.	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>
	<b>Evaluative criteria very clear and explicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria quite clear and explicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria quite unclear and implicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria very unclear and implicit</b>
	The teacher constantly moves around and monitors what learners are doing and makes comments to the whole class and to individual learners. She repeatedly goes over what constitutes an appropriate performance.	The teacher make some points either to the whole class or to individual learners so as to clarify what is expected of them in the task.	The teacher makes a few comments during the course of the task and looks at some learners work, or attends to learner productions, however this is not sustained and the criteria for successful production are not made explicit to all.	The teacher looks at a few learners' work when it is brought to her attention. She rarely or never attends to their productions. Rarely she makes a comment to the learner. These are not extended to the whole class.

<b>6. In the kinds of verbal answers required of learners</b>	<b>F<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>
	<b>Evaluative criteria very clear and explicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria quite clear and explicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria quite unclear and implicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria very unclear and implicit</b>
	Learners are always or almost always required to give reasons for their answers. They may be asked to draw out a more general principle to support, clarify or modify their answer. In incorrect responses the teacher shows why the answer is incorrect. The teacher often elaborates on a correct answer.	Learners are often required to give reasons for their answers. They are sometimes asked to clarify or modify their answer. In incorrect responses the teacher shows why the answer is incorrect. The teacher often elaborates on a correct answer.	Learners are on a few occasions required to give reasons for their answers. In incorrect responses the teacher sometimes shows why the answer is incorrect. The teacher does not elaborate on a correct answer.	The teacher looks only for yes/no answers, or for learners to repeat what s/he has said. Incorrect answers are ignored, or the reasons for them are not sought. Correct answers are accepted, but are not elaborated on.

<b>7. At the conclusion of the task/activit</b>	<b>F<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>
	<b>Evaluative criteria very clear and explicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria quite clear and explicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria quite unclear and implicit</b>	<b>Evaluative criteria very unclear and implicit</b>
	The teacher makes specific	The teacher comments on what	Learners work is ticked and	The teacher looks at, ticks,

y	comments around what constitutes an appropriate production. There is rigorous evaluation of learners' production. She gives examples of both success and failure in task and may point to individual performances. Marking of work with comments on individual items in the activity will occur.	constitutes a successful production, directed more at the class as a whole and on general points. In marking of the work success and failure is indicated. Corrections may be done by the class as a whole.	signed or corrections are written up on the board but with little or no comment as to what constitutes an appropriate production.	and or signs the learners work making little or no comments on it. Students are not given access to the criteria for success or failure in their productions. Correct solutions are not displayed for learners.
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8. In the number of ways in which a concept/problem is represented in the exposition to a	<b>F<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>
	<b>Predominantly high level of variation</b>	<b>Some high level of variation</b>	<b>Mostly low level of variation</b>	<b>Predominantly low level of variation</b>
	The teacher predominantly presents the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways, using three or four different contents and strategies for presentation.	The teacher often presents the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways, using two different ways of presenting the problem, explanation, concept.	The teacher on a few occasions presents the problem, explanation, concept in two different ways.	The teacher seldom presents the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways, but tends to repeat the explanation. The teacher provides short single

topic/task or during its course				representations.
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9. In the number of ways in which a concept or problem is represented in response to questions from learners	<b>F<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>
	<b>Predominantly high level of variation</b>	<b>Some high level of variation</b>	<b>Mostly low level of variation</b>	<b>Predominantly low level of variation</b>
	The teacher predominantly restates the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways.	The teacher often restates the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways.	The teacher on a few occasions restates the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways.	The teacher seldom restates the problem, explanation, concept in a number of different ways, but tends more to restate the explanation as before.

HIERACHICAL RULE **TEACHER-LEARNER (F<sup>+</sup>)**

<b>The extent to which the teacher and learner have control over the order, character and manner of the conduct of learners in the relation between teacher and learner.</b>				
<b>10. When the teacher leaves the class or another adult enters the class</b>	<b>F<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>--</sup></b>
	<b>Positional</b>	<b>Mostly positional</b>	<b>Mostly personal</b>	<b>Personal</b>
	The teacher rarely or never give the learners reasons for why they are leaving/ left the classroom, nor do they explain the presence of another teacher/adult. The visiting teacher/adult are never greeted by the class by name.	The teacher rarely gives the learners some indication for why they are leaving/ left the classroom. The presence of another adult is explained if it pertains directly to a member of the class. The visiting teacher/adult is generally not greeted by the class by name.	The teacher often gives the learners some indication for why they are leaving/ left the classroom. The presence of another adult is explained if it pertains directly to a member of the class. The visiting teacher/adult is generally greeted by the class by name.	The teacher always gives the learners clear reasons for why they are leaving/ left the classroom. The reason for the presence of another adult is explained. The visiting teacher/adult is generally greeted by the class by name or introduced to them.

<b>11. In the physical interaction between teacher and learner</b>	<b>F<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>--</sup></b>
	<b>Positional or imperative</b>	<b>Mostly positional</b>	<b>Mostly personal</b>	<b>Personal</b>
	The teacher does not interact with learners physically affectionately. She may pinch or hit learners, or threaten them with a ruler or other implement.	The teacher seldom interacts with learners in a physically affectionate manner. The learner and teacher are physically distant.	The teacher will at all times embrace a learner, especially when the learner is distressed. The teacher is generally openly affectionate with learners.	The teacher frequently embraces or gently touches learners. Learners will often embrace the teacher in greeting.

12. When the teacher disciplines a learner or learners	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
	Positional or imperative	Mostly positional	Mostly personal	Personal
	The teacher becomes angry and admonishes the learner based on positional control and threatens further action (physical or non-physical). Rationales for actions are not provided by the teacher.	The teacher admonishes the learner using positional control. Rules and control are generally based on formal status relation teacher-learner, or on sex or age attributes of the child. Rules are generally stated, not explained.	The teacher listens to learners' reasons for their actions and reproves them based on personal or implicit positional control. Rules may be stated but the implications of behaviour is drawn out as well.	The teacher mostly listens to learners' reasons for their actions and provides a counter argument using personal control. The teacher emphasizes the implication of the learners actions for themselves and for others.



DISCURSIVE RELATIONS INTER-DISCIPLINARY RELATIONS (Between subject areas) (C <sup>+</sup> )				
The extent to which reference is made to knowledge from other subjects in the teaching of a particular content/s				
13. In referencing of knowledge in the lesson the teacher	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
	Seldom references other contents	Sometimes references other contents	Often references other contents	Very often references other contents
	There is very little or no referencing of content from other subject areas within a particular literacy or numeracy lesson.	Contents from other subject areas are sometimes referred to.	There is substantial referencing of contents from other subject areas to explain the topic under discussion or to revise or remind learners. Often a theme may predominate in the discussion.	Contents from other subjects are constantly referred to, to the extent that it is difficult at times to determine what the focus of the subject is. This often occurs through the deployment of a theme.

DISCURSIVE RELATIONS INTER-DISCURSIVE RELATIONS (Between school and everyday knowledge) (C <sup>+</sup> )				
The relation in the instructional knowledge between everyday and school knowledge.				
14. In the referencing of knowledge in the lesson	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
	<b>Everyday Knowledge is never/seldom referenced</b>	<b>Everyday Knowledge is sometimes referenced</b>	<b>Everyday Knowledge is often referenced</b>	<b>Everyday Knowledge is constantly referenced</b>
	Everyday knowledge is seldom/ never referenced. Only subject-specific content, operations and procedures are introduced. If everyday knowledge is introduced (by a learner or as part of materials) it is dealt with swiftly but not incorporated into learning.	Everyday knowledge is sometimes referenced. If everyday knowledge is introduced (by a learner or as part of materials) it is dealt with swiftly and partially or incorporated into learning so that it is the concept, operation or principal that is made explicit.	Everyday knowledge is often referenced. If everyday knowledge is introduced (by a learner or as part of materials) it is dealt with at some length and incorporated into the learning.	Everyday knowledge is constantly referenced so that the distinction between the subject topic or task and the everyday knowledge is not always obvious. If everyday knowledge is introduced (by a learner or as part of materials) it is dealt with extensively and may become the focus of the lesson.

RELATION BETWEEN SPACES (Specialisation of space for teaching and learning)(C <sup>+</sup> )				
The extent to which space/s in the classroom are marked off and specialised for teaching and learning, and the strength or insulation between the classroom and outside.				
15. Between inside and	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
	<b>Very bounded</b>	<b>Quite bounded</b>	<b>Quite unbounded</b>	<b>Very unbounded</b>



<b>outside the classroom</b>	The teacher rarely or never leaves the classroom. Learners' movement out of the classroom is strictly monitored and curtailed. There are few interruptions and these are generally formal (via intercom). The surrounding classrooms are generally quiet.	The teacher on a few occasions leaves the classroom and learners' generally remain in class or ask specific permission to leave the classroom. The surrounding classrooms are quiet.	The teacher generally remains in the classroom, but there are often disruptions from outside and children at times move in and out of the classroom. There are a few noise interruptions from outside.	Teachers and learners often move out of the classroom. There are often disruptions from other teachers, parents and learners. The surrounding classrooms are noisy.
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**RELATION BETWEEN SPACES (Insulation between teacher's space and learner's space)(C<sup>++</sup>)**

**The extent to which space/s in the classroom are marked off for teacher and learners, and the strength of insulation between teacher and learner's spaces.**

<b>16. In the movement between teacher and learner space</b>	<b>C<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>--</sup></b>
		<b>Very bounded</b>	<b>Quite bounded</b>	<b>Quite unbounded</b>
	The teacher and learners generally remain in their own spaces. The teacher mostly remains in her desk or at the blackboard and learners remain in their seats. Sometimes the learner may approach the teacher for help with permission, or the teacher on a few occasions may approach a	The teacher and learners generally remain in their own spaces but quite often move into each others' spaces particularly to facilitate the marking of tasks.	The teacher often enters the learners' spaces to monitor what they are doing and give assistance. Learners regularly approach the teacher.	The teacher spends the majority of the time in the same space as the learners, checking work, marking, assisting, instructing. She rarely sits at her desk. Learners approach her frequently wherever she is.

	learner in their space.			
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RELATION BETWEEN SUBJECTS (Learner)(C <sup>+</sup> )				
The extent to which the learners' roles are specialized with respect to the classroom and its practices				
<b>17. In the grouping of learners for different kinds of tasks and activities</b>	<b>C<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>--</sup></b>
	<b>Always or often specialised</b>	<b>Quite bounded</b>	<b>Quite unbounded</b>	<b>Seldom or never specialised</b>
	Learners are divided into ability groups for instruction, and are given differentiated tasks in most lessons.	Learners are divided into ability groups for instruction, and are given differentiated tasks in some of the lessons.	Learners are divided into ability groups for instruction, and/or are given differentiated tasks in a few lessons.	Learners are seldom or never divided into ability groups for instruction, and/or are rarely or never given differentiated tasks in the lessons.

<b>18. In the routine</b>	<b>C<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>--</sup></b>
	<b>Very bounded</b>	<b>Quite bounded</b>	<b>Quite unbounded</b>	<b>Very unbounded</b>

<b>activities engaged in by learners</b>	Learners do routine instructional tasks in the classroom without being told, such as reading, managing their own books, using activity books.	Learners do some routine instructional tasks in the classroom of their own accord; at times the teacher reminds learners what they should do. For most of the time learners manage their own books.	Apart from a few tasks, learners do not do routine instructional tasks in the classroom of their own accord but on instruction of the teacher. Some of the learners some of the time manage their own books.	Learners only do instructional activities in the classroom in response to the teacher's instruction. Learners do not manage their own books, but these are collected and distributed at the beginning and end of each lesson.
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<b>19. In the behaviour of learners</b>	<b>C<sup>++</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>C<sup>--</sup></b>
	<b>Very bounded</b>	<b>Quite bounded</b>	<b>Quite unbounded</b>	<b>Very unbounded</b>
	Learners work consistently, the teacher rarely or never disciplines them or tells them to keep quiet.	Learners generally work consistently. At times the teacher has to ask the learners to keep quiet or sit down.	Often the teacher battles to get learners to work quietly and consistently, especially towards the end of a task were she has to often tell	The teacher constantly tells learners to sit down or to keep quiet. All learners do not work consistently and are frequently playing,

			learners to sit down or be quiet.	talking or out of their seats.
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## E2- COBS CODING/SUMMARY SHEET

Teacher Code: .....

Lesson Code: .....

Subject: ..... Duration: .....

<b>1.DR-Selection</b>	In the exposition to a task and in doing activities	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>2.DR-Sequencing</b>	In the course of the lesson	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>3.DR- Pace</b>	In the learners doing activities/tasks	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>4.DR-Evaluation</b>	In the introduction/explanation/exposition to the topic/task	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>5.DR-Evaluation</b>	In the course of the learners conducting an activity or task	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>6 DR-Evaluation</b>	In the kinds of verbal answers required of learners	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>7. DR-Evaluation</b>	At the conclusion of the task/activity	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>8.DR-Evaluation</b>	In the number of ways in which a concept is represented in the exposition to a topic /task or during its course	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>9.DR-Evaluation</b>	In the number of ways in which a concept is represented in response to questions from learners	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>10.HR- Teacher/learner</b>	When the teacher leaves the class or another adult enters	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>11.HR-Teacher/learner</b>	In the physical interaction between teacher and learner	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>12.HR- Teacher/learner</b>	When the teacher disciplines a learner or learners	F <sup>++</sup>	F <sup>+</sup>	F <sup>-</sup>	F <sup>--</sup>
<b>13.DR-inter-disc-relations (between subject areas)</b>	In the referencing of knowledge in the lesson the teacher	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
<b>14.DR. inter-disc-relations (School and everyday)</b>	In the referencing of knowledge in the lesson	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>

<b>15. Spaces (spec. of space for teaching and learning)</b>	Between inside and outside the classroom	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
<b>16. Spaces (Insulated teacher/learner space)</b>	In movement between teacher and learner space	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
<b>17. Relations between subjects (learners)</b>	In the grouping of learners for different kinds of tasks and activities	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
<b>18. Relations between subjects (learners)</b>	In the routine activities engaged in by learners	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>
<b>19. Relations between subjects (learners)</b>	In the behaviour of the learners	C <sup>++</sup>	C <sup>+</sup>	C <sup>-</sup>	C <sup>--</sup>



## **APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES**

### **F1-PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**School code:**

**Principal code:**

1. Could you provide me with a brief history of your teaching career and sketch the path to becoming a principal? [courses you completed that contributed to your professional development]
2. In your opinion did your training adequately prepare you for your role as principal?
3. What do you regard as the core purpose of principalship? [rank what you regard as the core business of a principals work]
4. Researchers have more or less reached consensus that teachers are to blame for poor performance. What do you think of this comment?
5. What is your opinion of your school's performance in the recent Annual National Assessment tests? [with specific reference to Grades 1,4 and 7; literacy and numeracy]
6. What in your opinion are the reasons for learner achievement levels? [with reference to ANA and other systemic tests results]
7. Which strategies do you have in place to enhance learner outcomes?
8. How do you deal with at risks learners [how are they identified/monitoring strategies to improve learner outcomes/challenges you encounter in doing so]
9. In which ways do you lead and manage teaching and learning? [refer especially to classroom observations-monitoring, evaluating and supporting quality teaching and learning]
10. Which problem areas have been prioritized in the School Improvement Plan (SIP)?
11. Which strategies have been put in place to deal with problems identified in SIP?
12. How do you keep abreast with all the curriculum changes? [how are these communicated to the staff; which strategies are in place to ensure that these curriculum changes are successfully implemented in the classroom?]
13. How often do you call on District support, and what is the nature of that support?
14. How often do District Officials visit the school, and what is the nature of these visits?
15. What type of support would you prefer they offer?
16. What are your expectations of the teaching staff regarding teaching and learning?

17. Which strategies are in place to support, monitor and evaluate staff development in your school?
18. Could you describe the community that your school serves? [refer to community factors that enhance or constrain learning outcomes]





## F2-TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**School code:**

**Teacher code:**

1. Researchers have more or less reached consensus that teachers are to blame for poor performance. What do you think of this comment?
2. Do you think learners learn differently? [In which ways? Do you take this difference into consideration when preparing your lessons?]
3. In which ways is your classroom a resource centre for the children you teach?[also refer to the school as a resource centre/ what does it have to offer].
4. What is your opinion on the schools overall performance in the recent Annual National Assessment tests?[ with specific reference to literacy and numeracy]
5. What is your opinion of your learners' performance in the Annual National Assessment tests? [with specific reference to literacy and numeracy].
6. How can the level of achievement of poor performing learner's be raised? [strategies for improving learner achievement levels in your own learning area or grades that you teach]
7. What do you consider are the contributing factors for poor learner performance?
8. What kind of support do you need in terms of improving learner performances and from whom?
9. What are the expectations that you hold of the learners you teach?
10. Which resources do you draw on when preparing for lessons?
11. How do you keep abreast with the latest curriculum developments especially regarding literacy and numeracy?
12. How do you go about incorporating these curriculum changes into your current classroom practices?
13. Which teacher/staff development courses did you complete in the last five years and how did these courses benefit or improve your teaching practices?
14. Could you describe the community that the school serves [refer to community factors that enhance or constrain learning outcomes]?

## F3-LEARNER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**School code:**

**Learner code:**

1. How old were you when you started school?
2. Did you attend preschool? Where and When?
3. How old were you when you started Grade 1?
4. Which other schools did you attend before coming to this school?
5. Did you ever repeat a grade? If yes, which grade? Why do you think you had to repeat the grade?
6. What do you like best about this school? State why?
7. What do you dislike about this school? State why?
8. Which subjects do you like the most? State why?
9. Which subjects do you least like and state why?
10. Could you tell me about your overall performance? In which subjects are you performing well and in which subjects are you performing poorly?
11. Why do you think you are struggling with certain subjects and not with others?
12. What kind of support or help do you think you need to improve and from whom?
13. How do you learn? [think about when you need to learn something new or when you learning for tests, the how do you learn?]
14. Who helps you when you doing homework?
15. Do you think that reading can help you to improve in subjects that you struggling with? [do you read at home or just in school?/ what type of books do you read?/ how do you think reading can help you?]

## **G- PILOT STUDY PHASE OF THE RESEARCH**

### **PILOT STUDY REPORT: MOVING FROM PROBLEM TO PURPOSE**

#### **Introduction**

Full reports on pilot studies are not often found in research literature and even less in research using qualitative research methods (Prescott & Soeken, 1989; van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002; Kim, 2010). According to Prescott & Soeken (1989: 60), “pilot studies are likely to be underdiscussed, underused and underreported”. Van Teijlingen & Hundley (2002:3) note that “when reported, they often only justify research methods ... and their potential for other researchers appear to be ignored”. Kim (2010:191), who did a study of the uses of pilot studies in a qualitative inquiry, concurs that “although pilot studies are widely used very little is written about it”. The apparent reason why pilot studies are not often reported on is accredited to publication bias. Van Teijlingen & Hundley argue that “there is a tendency for journals to accept papers that have statistically significant results (van Teijlingen & Hundley 2002:1). This is confirmed by Provan (2010), who argues that “academic research papers need to be based on testable, verifiable data, which is obtained from a full survey, not from a pilot study” (2001:1).

Before writing this report, and as a means of verifying what the previous authors were alluding to, I did an advance search for accredited research articles, dealing with the issue of reporting on pilot studies, on EBSCOHOST; a multidisciplinary database which hosts other databases like, Academic Search Complete (with 7 300 journals), African Wide Information (consisting of 3.2 million citations), ERIC (covering 1.3 million records), PsycArticles (consisting of 80 journals) and SocIndex (consisting of 2.1 million records). I limited my search between 2000 and 2012, using the following search words or phrases: “Pilot Studies”, “conducting pilot studies” and “reporting on pilot studies”. This process only yielded 8 results; two were in the field of nursing, two in environmental health, two in medicine, one related to geography and one to the field of economics. I then did a further search on scholar.google.com., where I came across the *BMC Medical Research Methodology* journal, which contained a few articles suggesting how to go about doing and reporting on pilot studies, but these were mainly in the medical field (especially nursing) and they mostly made use of quantitative research methods. Besides the journal, I also came across two very useful articles reporting on the lessons learnt from conducting pilot studies using qualitative research methods, namely Sampson (2004) whose article is titled: “*Navigating the waves: the usefulness of a pilot in qualitative research*”, and Kim (2010) whose article is titled: “*The*

*Pilot Study in Qualitative Inquiry identifying issues and learning lessons for culturally competent research*". Each of these authors used different research designs in their studies; Sampson (2004) reported on lessons learnt in conducting a pilot study before embarking on ethnographic research and Kim (2010) highlighted the benefits and reported on lessons learnt from conducting pilot work from a phenomenological perspective. My research design is based on multiple qualitative case studies.

Kim (2010) provides confirmation of the lack of qualitative researchers in offering full reports on what they have learnt in the pilot phase of their research, after conducting a similar search for such reports. She however limited her search to include only academic scientific journals on pilot studies in qualitative research like: Social Work Abstracts, Social Service Abstracts, JSTOR, and ISI Web of knowledge, as well as scholar.google.com, using "pilot" and "pilot study" as keywords. She also did an advance search in the following peer-reviewed journals: *Qualitative Social Work*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Qualitative Health Research*, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* and *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. Her efforts revealed that there were only a few articles "that explored the benefits of qualitative pilot works and the role these works play in developing the main study" (see results in Kim, 2010:192). I also found whilst perusing doctoral dissertations using qualitative research methods that often scholars would only state that they have learnt from the pilot study or they tend to only report on one aspect that they piloted (the pre-testing of the questionnaire or survey). The actual lessons learnt, methodological challenges experienced and epistemological issues arising from the pilot study, that needs to be considered before embarking on a full study, remains unclear. Van Teijlingen et al (2001), argues that "researchers have an ethical obligation to make the best use of their research experience by reporting issues arising from all parts of a study, including the pilot phase" (2001:293).

The purpose of this report is therefore to offer a comprehensive account of my experiences in the pilot phase of my research, by illuminating not only the processes followed but by also highlighting the actual lessons learnt, which I believe could be of use to other novice researchers doing similar research, in similar 'real-life' settings, using qualitative research instruments. The format of this report is structured as follows: Firstly I briefly draw on literature that clarifies the meaning of the term 'pilot study' and explores the benefits of pilot work in qualitative research. I then turn my attention to my pilot study covering all the methodological areas from implementation (selection and gaining access to the site) to completion (exiting the site). Included in this is a discussion on the rationale for doing the

pilot, a description of the context in which the pilot was conducted, how I engaged with each instrument that I piloted, as well as an in-depth presentation of the lessons that I learned during each engagement. I conclude by looking at how the lessons learnt from the pilot study could be useful in contributing to the overall development of my main study.

### **Pilot Studies: Lessons learnt from literature**

The aim of this section is to briefly clarify what the term ‘pilot study’ means and to explore the possible benefits of pilot study work in general, and more specifically for researchers working within a qualitative methodological research paradigm.

As previously mentioned, the literature on pilot studies in qualitative research is lacking, since most of the literature where pilot studies feature, could be found in medical journals and these studies generally pre-test quantitative research instruments. Even though these studies were in medical journals, I did retrieve some useful information from some of these studies, which includes work done by Arain et al (2010), Thabane et al (2010) and van Teijlingen et al (2001). Thabane et al (2010) for example, offered an extensive discussion of the meaning of the term pilot study drawing on epidemiology and statistical dictionaries, as well as definitions from the Web (see Thabane et al, 2010: 1-10). Not to ‘re-invent the wheel’ from this I drew that pilot studies are small scale studies, commonly known as a ‘feasibility study’ or a ‘trial run’ in preparation for the main study (Thabane et al, 2010: 1-10). However, it could also mean the pre-testing or “trying-out” of a particular research instrument (Arain et al (2010); Thabane et al, 2010; van Teijlingen et al 2001). We can however gain a deeper understanding of pilot studies when we look at the reasons and benefits for conducting pilot studies. Van Teijlingen et al (2001), provides a useful table in this regard (see van Teijlingen et al, 2001:293). I extracted the reasons for conducting the pilot study from the aforementioned table, concentrating only on those aspects which applied to qualitative researchers and divided it into three broad categories: (1) **Designing and assessing a research protocol** (assessing whether it is workable and realistic; identifying logistical problems; assessing peoples willingness to participate; testing and engaging with the instruments), (2) **Working with preliminary data** (uncover potential problems relating to preliminary data collection; testing different analysis techniques and packages) and (3) **Resource considerations** (both in terms of time and human resources- using the pilot as a form of ‘self-training’ exercise in order to build one’s confidence to carry out research of this nature) (van Teijlingen et al, 2001; Thabana et al, 2010).

Kim (2010:191), who as previously mentioned is a qualitative researcher, argues that “the principle benefit of conducting a pilot study is that it provides researchers with an opportunity

to make adjustments and revisions in the main study”. In addition she provides the following reasons for conducting a pilot study in a qualitative inquiry, as being: “to assess the acceptability of an interview or an observation protocol ...to self-evaluate one’s readiness, capability, and commitment as a qualitative researcher...to train qualitative researchers and to enhance the credibility of a qualitative study” (Kim, 2010:193). Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) however warn that the successful completion of one’s pilot study still does not guarantee that the main study would be successful.

Armed with this information (the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ on pilot studies) I now turn my attention to offering a comprehensive report on my pilot study (the ‘how’ of the pilot work).

### **My Pilot Study: From implementation to completion**

This section comprises of four parts. I start by providing a rationale for conducting this pilot study. This is followed by a description of the site and a discussion on how I went about negotiating access. Next I show how I engaged with each instrument piloted, which includes the processes followed and the methodological and epistemological lessons learned during this phase of my research. I conclude by revealing some of the findings of this phase of the research, in order to shed light on certain questions I grappled with at the end of the pilot study.

#### **Background: Placing the pilot study within context**

The rationale for embarking on the pilot study is threefold: (1) to test the feasibility of my data collection instruments, (2) to uncover methodological and epistemological challenges of doing research before embarking on my main study, and (3) to assess the appropriateness of the research questions and theoretical framework of the main study.

#### **Description of the site and a discussion on gaining access**

The selection of the school where I conducted the pilot study was crucial; in that it had to more or less mirror one of the sites I would be researching in the main study. The eligibility of schools for the main study was based on the following criteria: socio-economic differentials, resourced and under-resourced schools and schools comprising of different racial compositions. My pilot school, to which I refer to as School X (a pseudonym) is a former House of Representatives (HOR) school or a former “coloured” school. One way to determine the socio-economic status of the school and its community is through the assigned quintile ratings. Quintile ratings of schools are based on a poverty rating system prepared by the National Treasury, where schools are categorised into 5 quintiles; a quintile 1 rating being the poorest school (which means the school is under-resourced amongst other things) and a quintile 5 rating the least poor (well-resourced school) (Gov. Gazette, 2006). What is

however interesting to note is that the rating systems are not always a true reflection of the school or the community it serves. School X for example, received a quintile 4 rating, which implies that the school is fairly well off and adequately resourced. However the majority of the children who attend the school are from surrounding poverty-stricken areas and the school is fairly under-resourced both in terms of physical and human capacity. Chudgar and Kanjee (2009) note that the quintile system is effective only in identifying schools at the extremes, but schools in the middle are often incorrectly identified.

School X is more than 100 years old and children are still housed in the original prefabricated classrooms, which are small with limited ventilation. Being the only English medium school in the area, the school is often inundated with learners wanting to attend the school which places huge strain on the limited spaces and resources available to the school. There are currently 1273 learners attending the school of which +/- 1000 are “coloured” and the rest are “black” learners. They are served by a teaching component consisting of 34 permanent staff members; 32 “coloured”, 1 “white” and 1 “black” teacher. The principal (who is in an acting position seeing that the previous principal retired), two deputy principals and four heads of department, who make up the school’s management team, are also “coloured”. There are four non-academic staff members and two administrative officials. The school fees amount to R460p.a. which some parents find difficult to contribute to seeing that some of them are unemployed. The school has one computer laboratory, one playground and one staffroom.

The pilot study phase started with negotiating access to the site. Maginn (2007) warns that “gaining access to culturally diverse sites to ask sensitive questions means that the researcher will need to be prepared to assert a range of strategies and tactics to win over the trust and confidence of gatekeepers and informants” (2007:438). Maginn (2007) provides a number of criteria which should be followed to gain successful access to the research site. Following I present the criteria coupled with my reflections on how I went about meeting these criteria:

### **Establishing Contact**

Regular telephonic discussions preceded my entry into the school. I came to realise that the secretary was the ‘gatekeeper’ to gaining access to the principal. It was important to build rapport with her.

### **Initiating Rapport**

It was important to be transparent from the outset. I personally delivered copies of the research instruments to the school, and this gave me the opportunity to engage with the principal. I also realised that I had to relinquish some control over to him by allowing him to be part of the planning around school visits. Together, we negotiated days in which to

conduct the pilot, as well as the assigned grades who formed part of the pilot. An Information Sheet (see Appendix 2) explaining the what, who and why of the research, accompanied the instruments.

### **Earning trust and confidence**

Teachers were made aware that this was a pilot study and that their contribution to this phase of my research was extremely valuable. I was also aware of my role as researcher and the power dynamics that underline the relationship between the researchers and the researched.

### **Securing permission**

Gaining the endorsement to conduct the research from the WCED and then from the principal helped in this process. Keeping to scheduled school visit dates was crucial. Teachers were aware that I would be at the school for the month of February on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. If for some reason I could not make it I would contact the school in advance and make sure to reschedule the visit. To a large extent the way in which I approached the school also helped in this process.

### **Eliciting data from observations and interactions from various actors who line the front and back stages of the setting**

I found it easy to initiate conversation with a range of people irrespective of their position in the school. I found entering into dialogue with the school nurse, the caretakers or even the cleaners at the school turned out to be valuable. They interact with all role players on a daily basis so one gets to learn more about the context and ethos of the school from them, besides the actual research participants.

### **Lessons learnt in gaining access to the site**

Previously, I reflected on the challenges I experienced in gaining access to the school, noting that the official consent by the Western Cape Education Departments (WCED), granting permission to do research in schools, does not necessarily guarantee successful access to the school. Researchers are often viewed with suspicion by principals and teachers. As researchers we therefore have to constantly be aware of “the relationship between researcher and the research subject and the sensitivity of interactions and negotiations” (Hoadley, 2005:85). The role that researchers play is re-emphasized by Kim (2010, drawing on Hill, 2006) who notes “considerations such as ‘who do I (researcher) want to be?’ and ‘who do I want to be to them (participants)’ are must-ask questions in conducting qualitative research, adding that “one should be guided by an ethic of caring in a culturally appropriate way, which requires continuous reflection about the role of the researcher” (Kim, 2010:198). This also includes acknowledging that research is a highly invasive process and often the



researcher has to conduct research in inimical and sensitive environments. We therefore have to recognize “how we are positioned in relation to participants and how this shapes the research process” (Hill, 2006, in Kim, 2010:198). Journalising one’s thoughts, feelings and biases is one way of reflecting on the issues raised in the above discussion. This is confirmed by Spradley (1979) who suggests using a ‘personal log’ as a way to ‘enable a person to take into account personal biases and feelings, to understand their influences on research’ (1979:76). I kept three journals, one for each of the respective sites visited.

### **Engaging with data collection instruments: Methodological and epistemological lessons learnt**

In this section I present the data collection instruments piloted, by looking at how each was applied and with whom (my engagement with each instrument in the pilot setting), adding in the findings elicited from each instrument piloted, before illuminating what worked and what did not work (lessons learnt from my engagement with each instrument). I then offer a discussion of the main findings and the outcomes of the pilot study phase of my research.

#### **The questionnaire: engaging with the teacher and learner questionnaire**

I piloted two questionnaires; a teacher questionnaire (refer to Appendix D1) and a learner questionnaire (refer to Appendix D2). In my initial negotiations with the principal it was agreed that I would pilot the instruments in 3 assigned classes (one in each of the following grades: Grades: 1, 4 and 7) and their relevant class and subject teachers. According to Thabane et al (2010: 5), “... a pilot study should be large enough to provide useful information about aspects that are being assessed for feasibility”. Sample size therefore does not appear to be a requirement for pilot work as long as the participants are representative of the sample in the main study (Thabane et al, 2010). Four teachers completed the teacher questionnaire; one Grade 1 teacher, one Grade 4 teacher and two Grade 7 teachers (one responsible for language and the other mathematics). The purpose of the teacher questionnaire was to provide me with an understanding of the teachers’ perceptions around issues of learner achievement levels (the focus of this study), especially in literacy (language) and numeracy (mathematics), which could serve as a basis for further probing in the interview sessions. For this reason the first half of the questionnaire dealt with issues pertaining to their experience and training in particular learning areas (subjects) and the second half dealt with questions relating more to issues surrounding my research focus, namely their perceptions on learner achievement levels. With regards to the learner questionnaires, I piloted two different learner questionnaires; one for Grade 1 and 4, which was mainly to determine their socio-economic status and one for Grades 7, which was

divided into two sections: the first section resembled the Grades 1 and 4 questionnaire and the second section contained questions relating to their scholastic performance. The learner questionnaire was completed by 118 learners; 32 in Grade 1, 40 in Grade 4 and 43 in Grade 7. I conducted the learner questionnaires myself. Although it was time-consuming and at times frustrating, however, personally administering the questionnaires helped in two ways: firstly I ensured 100% response rate and secondly I could identify problems as they arose. Following the same process in the main study will require thorough planning.

### **Lessons learnt from administering the questionnaires**

Carrim (2006:220) warns that “the context in which questionnaires are supposed to be administered and who is expected to respond are important considerations to raise”. He further adds that “the pragmatics of what is practically possible determines what can be done in research, and how” (Carrim, 2006:230). In his research project he found that “time, labour and finance are important material conditions that determine the possibilities of research” (Carrim, 2006:230). Similarly I found time to be a major consideration whilst administering the questionnaires; negotiating time to gain access to learners and considering the time it would take learners to complete the questionnaires were important decisions. Changes were made to the Grade 1 and Grade 4 questionnaire, whereas the Grade 7 questionnaire remained unchanged. Administering the learner questionnaire with Grade 1 learners was extremely time-consuming, since learners were unfamiliar with certain words on the questionnaire. I ended up having to repeat things and elaborating on the meaning of certain words. To facilitate this process, and on recommendation of the Grade 1 teacher, I decided to use visual presentations (pictures) throughout the questionnaire. From the Grade 7 questionnaire I elicited interesting responses surrounding learner performance which I allude to later in the report. These issues could be probed further in the interview sessions, especially regarding the subjects in which they were performing poorly and their perceptions on why they were struggling. Initially, as previously mentioned, the Grade 4 questionnaire was the same as the Grade 1 questionnaire (only focusing on socio-economic status of the learners). Informed by the responses to the Grade 7 questionnaire, I decided to change the Grade 4 questionnaire to resemble the Grade 7 questionnaire. In this way I could gauge Grade 4 learners understanding on issues surrounding their academic performance. The teacher questionnaires remained unchanged, since their responses were sufficient to use for further probing in interview sessions. I, however, found that providing teachers with the questionnaire in advance and allowing them with sufficient time to ‘sit with’ it, appeared to increase the quality of their

responses. On the other hand to ensure a 100% response rate I negotiated turn-in dates with teachers, which proved to be successful.

### **Findings extracted from questionnaires**

Based on the learner responses I could determine what they had access to in their homes, what they struggled with in school and why they were struggling. What was clear was that learners came from varying socio-economic background. From the 118 responses 18% could be considered poor, 55% average and 27% wealthy in terms of what they had access to in their homes. Furthermore I found that learners struggled mainly with mathematics; of the 82 Grades 4 and 7's 72% struggled with mathematics. The majority of these learners noted that they struggled with mathematics because they either did not like it or they found it to be complicated or difficult. From the teacher questionnaires teachers stated that they felt more confident to teach language than mathematics.

### **Classroom Observations: Engaging with the classroom observation schedule (COBS)**

Observations were conducted in two classrooms. The Grade 1 class was observed two days in succession and I observed one Grade 7 language class. The Grade 4 class was not observed. The reasons for the latter I will elaborate on later since this was one of the limitations in conducting the pilot study. As previously mentioned, my conceptual focus was on pedagogical practices within the classroom, which would include capturing the dynamics of classroom interactions. The same schedule was used in all observations (see Appendix 5). The COBS, which was used by Hoadley (2005) and informed by the theoretical framework of Basil Bernstein, was quite complex and lengthy. My main concern was using an established COBS based on such an elaborate and comprehensive theory. Gamble (2004) notes that

the researcher choosing to work within a Bernsteinian framework may initially find herself trapped in what feels like a labyrinth of concepts, all related yet all carriers of distinct meanings ... This brings with it the danger of encouraging the researcher to fit empirical evidence into pre-elaborate categories which are already available and to be lulled into a misconception that no further theoretical labour is necessary other than to verify an already established theory (2004:51).

Prior to piloting the COBS I had to immerse myself into the literature to gain an understanding of the many constructs being used in the COBS, in order to avoid misinterpretations. The piloting of the COBS allowed for the space to receive training in the use of the instrument, especially on finding ways to avoid forcing empirical evidence to fit the theoretical constructs being observed. Audio recording lessons and the use of a COBS

summary sheet (see Hoadley, 2005:92) helped in this regard. The latter served a dual purpose: firstly, it doubled as a coding sheet – making it easier to read the data and secondly it served as an analytical memo – a space for jotting down ideas, feelings and initial perceptions whilst observing.

### **Lessons learnt during classroom observation sessions**

The audio recording of lessons was useful in capturing the complexities and dynamics of both classroom practices and classroom interactions. Added to this, audio recording lessons allowed me to re-experience the lesson over and over again and this is especially useful when working with an already established COBS. I also found that combining audio and written methods (having an analytical memo) creates ‘a mosaic of data’, since the written notes capture the ‘real-life’ details (expressions, silences, movement) that which the audio recorder fails to capture, and one is able to “identify themes as they emerge in the field” (Flewitt, 2006:30). In other words it permitted me to do preliminary analysis whilst collecting data, which could only add to the richness of my findings. The written notes, allowed me to document my initial ‘ideas, thoughts, impressions, reflections, and feelings’ whilst observing (Kim, 2010:200). Kim (2010:200) notes that this is one way of separating one’s personal views and experiences from data collection, which appears to be challenging when collecting data. She suggests using peer reviewers or peer debriefers, which I could consider using in the main study in order to ‘probe my biases, to explore alternative meanings, and to clarify possible biased interpretations’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:308).

### **Interviews: engaging with the interview schedule**

I piloted three semi-structured interview schedules. One with the school principal, one interview schedule was designed for teachers and one for the learners. I used semi-structured interviews mainly because it allowed for greater flexibility, in that I could draw on the responses of participants elicited from the questionnaires and classroom observations and do further probing in the interviews, adding greater depth to the interview process. I interviewed the principal, 3 teachers (the Grades 1 and 4 class teachers and the Grade 7 language teacher), and 11 learners (2 Grade 1 learners, 4 Grade 4 learners, and 5 Grade 7 learners). I mainly used individual interviews however; the Grade 7’s were interviewed in a group (the reasons for this I discuss later under the limitations of the pilot study). The principal’s interview schedule (refer to Appendix F1), contained questions that would provide me with a more holistic picture of the school context, its practices and its culture. It also contained questions surrounding the schools performance in Systemic testing and the Annual National Assessment test, strategies the school had in place to improve learner outcomes and aspects

about schooling and the community that either enhanced or constrained learner performance. Two of the three teachers' interviews started with questions elicited from their responses in the teacher questionnaires and reflections on the lessons observed. As previously mentioned I was unable to observe the Grade 4 teacher and therefore could only draw from her responses on the questionnaire. The rest of the teacher interviews covered more or less the same conceptual areas (see attached teacher schedule in Appendix F2). I started learner interviews in the same way as the teacher interviews by reflecting on answers to questions stated in the questionnaires and aspects that arose from classroom observations (where possible). I then proceeded to the questions on the interview schedule, which was the same for all learners interviewed (see attached learner schedule in Appendix F3).

### **Lessons learnt from the interview sessions**

The flexibility allowed when conducting semi-structured interviews meant that there was no need to modify or change the interview schedules. There were, however, methodological challenges that arose that would influence the way interviews are conducted in the main study. Methodologically, I found the aspect of sequencing the data collection process, which was crucial to the interview process, far more challenging than what I expected. Initially interviews had to follow the questionnaires and classroom observations, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the practices and surrounding issues that spoke to learner achievement levels. This, however, was not always practically possible for two reasons: firstly, for the same pragmatic reasons I alluded to in the section: Lessons learnt in administering questionnaires and secondly, some learners failed to number their questionnaires making it difficult to use their responses in the interviews. Alternatively, I had to rely on teachers to assist in the selection of learners for interview sessions. This was problematic since the Grade 4 teacher, for example sent me her more academically strong learners, which meant that their responses were somewhat skewed. Administering the questionnaires myself and following a numbering system which corresponds with the class list, could help combat these practical problems in the main study. This would require a well-planned research protocol seeing that the main study is based on multiple cases. Besides the practical problems there were also deeper conceptual issues to consider; issues pertaining to conducting interviews with young children, to which I now turn.

Although interviews provide high quality data, researchers have to be aware of the ethical dilemmas especially when conducting interviews with vulnerable members of society, like children. Denzin (1989:83) notes:

...our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared them with us.

Denzin illuminates the importance of listening and protecting those who are willing to share their lived experiences with us. In the case of child-centred interviews this could entail reflecting on aspects related to gaining access to children, being aware of various communication and technical techniques prior to conducting interviews with young children, dealing with silences during interview sessions and avoiding aspects relating to 'suggestibility'.

Gaining access to children can be challenging since teachers and parents are the gate-keepers to children in research. After gaining the correct ethical clearances from the university as well as the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) I still had to get the consent of parents. I found working through the official communication structures of the school valuable in this regard. The school sent out a letter to the relevant parents explaining the research and my purpose at the school. This appeared to ensure a better response from parents. To gain the consent of the learners I attached the *Learner Consent Form* (see Appendix C3) to the questionnaire. This allowed me to explain the research process and their role in it, allowing them to ask questions and complete the consent form. The structure of the consent form was also important since it had to be age-appropriate. Gaining learner consent or "assent is an on-going process, since continued agreement and co-operation of the child is required" (Miller, 2000:1231). Even though learners consented to participating in all aspects of the research, entering into a dialogical relationship with learners was crucial, especially prior and during interview sessions. They had to be made aware of the purpose of the interview, why they were being recorded, how they could withdraw at any time. Flewitt (2005:556), suggests 'provisional consent' noting that "provisional consent is therefore on-going and dependent on the network of researcher/researched relationship based upon sensitivity, reciprocal trust and collaboration".

Thorough preparation for interviews with children is crucial. This is discussed at length by Cameron (2005) and Miller (2006). Cameron (2005) provides some useful technical techniques for child-centred interviews from managing the physical setting, to encouraging free narrative to put the child at ease and sharing the purpose of the interview. This is expanded on by Miller (2006) who provides some useful communicative strategies when working with children. She notes that asking children to speak about their 'normal day', their

likes and dislikes opens a pathway to other topics of discussion. Similarly I found free narrative to be very useful since children, especially the Grade 1 learners tend to be silent when faced with more tough questions. Allowing them to tell their story, and then to elaborate on aspects I felt were important to the research, was one way of extracting their views on the topic. I did however find that the younger children (the Grade 1's) were keen to express their views and were very articulate in doing so. Miller (2000) warns that "one should take care not to underestimate the awareness and maturity that some children possess when addressing issues of concern to themselves" (2000:1228).

One other area of concern was with dealing with silences during interview sessions and avoiding what Birbeck and Drummond (2005:584) refer to as "suggestibility". Cameron (2005:603) notes that "interviewers often need to sit in silence with a child and to resist the need to fill conversational spaces, particularly by asking questions". Cameron (2000) adds that one should view such silences as "active sort of silences... it means that whilst remaining silent the researcher or interviewer observes the child, maintains gentle eye contact and keeps distracting body movements under control". This was quite evident in interviewing male learners, who tended to be less responsive in interview sessions, especially with me being a female interviewer. I therefore had to consider ways to draw them into a discussion. One way was to relate to issues of interest to them, like sport and electronic games, and thereafter ease into the interview questions, in other words adopting a more sensitive approach to research. Cousins and Milner (2005:454) argue that "a sensitive approach to establishing rapport and conducting the interview is a necessity". I also found that audio recording interviews allowed me to be free to observe children and maintain eye contact. Selecting the right location in which to conduct interviews is also an important factor. Children need to be comfortable and distractions should be kept to the minimum.

Birbeck and Drummond (2005) speak to the issue of suggestibility. They found that children are more vulnerable to suggestibility mainly because of their "cognitive ability and the perceived power differentials between the researcher and the child" (2005:584). Birbeck and Drummond (2005:584, drawing on Spencer & Flin, 1993) found that "creating a supportive environment with uncritical acceptance of the child's responses is crucial in the establishment of attaining worthwhile, valid data".

In brief then, the lessons learnt at the various stages of piloting the research instruments provided me with valuable insight into the possible pitfalls of conducting research. These lessons will be particularly helpful in planning the research protocol for the main study. The

following table (Table 5) indicates the multiple data collection instruments tested in the pilot study and the number of respondents that participated in this phase of my research.

**TABLE 5: Summary of data collection methods and sources**

Qualitative instrument	Data Source	Number of respondents
Questionnaires	Grades: 1 Class teacher, Grade 4 Class teacher and Grade 7 language teacher and mathematics teacher	4
	Grades: 1(36), 4(40) and 7(42) learners	118
Classroom Observations	Grade 1 classroom	Numeracy and literacy lesson
	Grade 7 classroom	Language Lesson
Interviews	Principal	1
	Teachers	3
	Learners	Grade 1(2);Grade 4 (4); Grade 7(5)

### Limitations of the Pilot Study

One way of increasing the trustworthiness of one's research is to report on the limitations of the study. This holds for the pilot phase of the research as well. Bowen (2005:218) notes that "a study's limitations in terms of design, methods and findings should be specified".

There are two specific limitations that I want to specify, especially in terms of design of the pilot study. Firstly, there are the practical limitations which constrained the way the pilot study was conducted. I was unable to observe the Grade 4 class as well as the Grade 7 mathematics lessons. The Grade 4's were out on excursion during the time set out for this purpose and the Grade 7 teacher refused access to the classroom claiming that she had no prior knowledge of classroom observation. The teacher also refused to be interviewed. Re-negotiating access was not possible since the learners were busy with assessment tests. This affected the sequence in which data collection was planned but more importantly it impacted on the quality and depth of responses in certain (Grades 4 and 7) interview sessions. Secondly, I intended to conduct individual interviews with participants. "Individual interviews are the most common research method used in child and family research" (Cousins & Milner, 2005:452). However, due to the lack of time and appropriate space this



was not always practically possible. I was forced to subject the Grade 7's to a group interview because of the demanding Grade 7 assessment programme. Grades 7's seldom have 'free time' and I did not want to impede on teaching time. Although I took care to allow each person to answer in turn, I still found that certain learners dominated the discussion whilst others lacked the confidence to speak. My lack of training in conducting focus group interviews was a constraining factor.

### **Conclusion**

I want to offer a summary of issues that emerged during the pilot phase of my research in order to clear up three concerns that I grappled with at the end of compiling this pilot study report. Before doing so it should be made clear that the aim of this section is not to go into an in-depth discussion on the findings, since this will be dealt with later on in the dissertation. At the end of engaging with the research instruments I was left with the following three concerns: firstly, whether or not the findings of the pilot study made me want to change the selection criteria and nature of participants, secondly, whether or not the findings in the pilot study made me want to change the nature of the research instruments, and thirdly, did the findings shed any light on the theoretical framework of the study?

On the issue of whether or not the selection criteria and nature of participants needed to change, I found that I needed to be more explicit in my selection of learner participants. It was a given that learners would be selected from the following Grades, namely, Grades 1, 4 and 7. What was not explicit was the nature of the learner participants. Informed by the outcome of the pilot work, and noting that in a Case Study design it is important to replicate certain processes, the learners who will form part of the main study will be selected on the basis of their academic performance. Four learners out of each grade (an 'above average' learner, an 'average learner', a 'below average' learner and an 'at risk' learner) will form part of the study. A study of the Learner Profile, which provides the learners scholastic record, will help in the identification of these learners. The numbering of the questionnaires according to a class list would help to identify which of these learners completed the questionnaire. This will be useful when exploring responses for interview sessions. It will also help me to focus on those particular learners as they interact with teachers during classroom observations.

## **APPENDIX H: CASE STUDY PROTOCOL**

Adapted from a template designed by Brereton, Kitchenham, Budgen and Li (2008:7-8)

### **CASE STUDY PROTOCOL**

#### **Overview**

The main objective of this research project is to investigate the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels across different phases of schooling. This will be achieved by conducting multiple case studies using multiple data collection methods (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, direct observation and documentary sources) to extract data from multiple sources. The unit of analysis is Grade 1, 4 and 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals.

#### **BACKGROUND**

This study is informed by poor performance of South African primary schools in literacy and numeracy. To support this statement look into South Africa's performance in international, cross-national and national results (eg. TIMMS, SACMEQ I and II, MLA, PIRLS). Reports to look into are the ANA reports 2011, 2012 and 2013, WCED LITNUM results, NEEDU Report, amongst others. Research into the reasons for poor performance in South African schools will form part of the literature reviewed for this study.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The key research question which this study explored is: What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in South Africa? A study conducted in three selected public schools in the Western Cape.

The research question is unpacked in the following sub-questions:

1. What are the possible factors that contribute to learner achievement levels in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling?
2. In which ways are learner achievement levels informed by the curriculum?
3. What is the nature of pedagogic practices in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of schooling, and how do these account for learner achievement levels in those phases?
4. How does the role of the teacher, in the pedagogic relationship, influence learner achievement levels, and how are such influences experienced in practice by learners?
5. How does the learner's racial, class and gender identity relate to his/her achievement levels?

## CASE SELECTION

Three schools were purposefully selected, following the required ethical procedures. Schools were selected based on the following criteria: socio-economic differentials, resourced and under-resourced schools and schools comprising of different racial compositions. The unit of analysis is situated in three different phases of schooling; foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase. The cases are Grades 1, 4 and 7 learners in relation to their teachers and principals. My reasons for selecting different phases and grades is mainly because learner achievement demands differ per phase and grade, learners ages differ and, as noted previously, research in these particular areas are lacking.

## DATA COLLECTION PLAN

### Macro cases (multiple sites)

Telephonic appointments – Contact the secretary of each site. Make appointments- target dates for initial contact visits MAY 2012. *Obtain totals of teachers and learners in Grades 1, 4 and 7.*

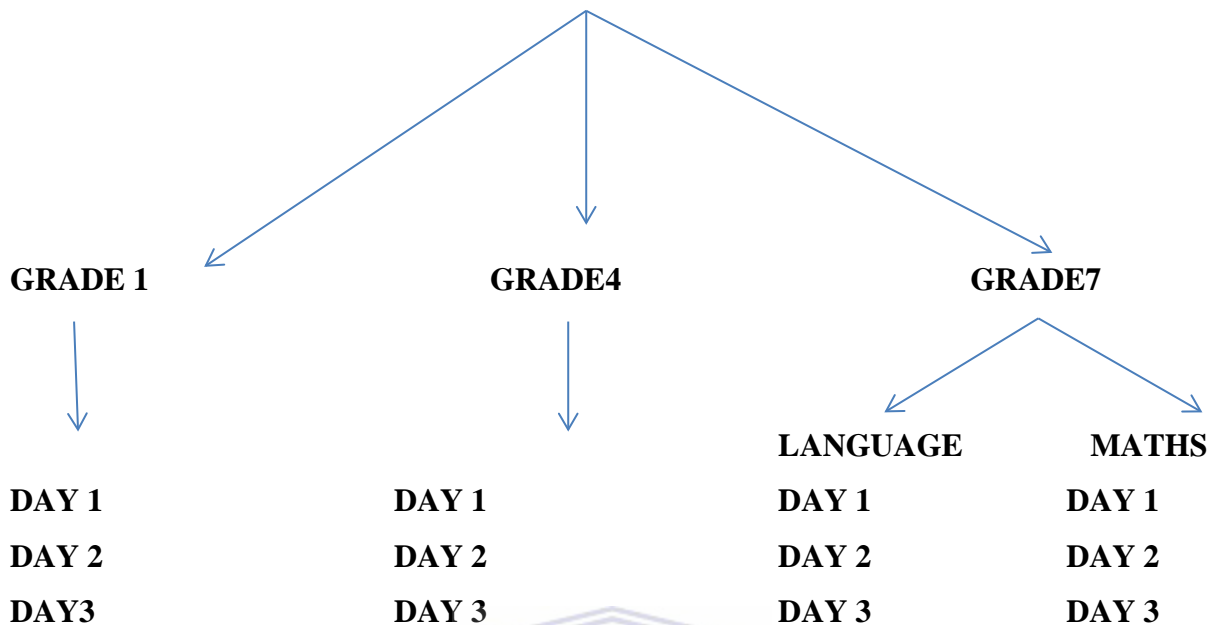
<b>Initial contact</b>	Negotiate Access	Refer to pilot study report – discussion on gaining access
<b>Requirements</b>	Arrange to meet principals of three selected schools	Permission letter from the WCED+ Information sheet Consent Forms (Principal/teacher/parents)
<b>Phase 1</b>	Interview with principals Questionnaires with Grade 1, 4 and 7 teachers Learner questionnaires	Attach learner consent forms to learner questionnaires

### TASKS:

- Complete consent forms
- Interview principal
- Conduct teacher and learner questionnaires

## PHASE 2: CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

### SITE 1/2/3



- ❖ 3 consecutive days per grade
- ❖ Negotiate days /times and insert dates

#### TARGET DATE:

- Site 1 – target date July/August 2012
- Site 2 – target date August/September 2012
- Site 3 - target date February/March 2013

*Any changes to dates must be communicated to the relevant participants beforehand.*

#### REQUIREMENTS:

- Send copy of Classroom Observation to each teacher
- Make copies of COBS summary sheet
- Check camera
- *Take along School reflection journal when visiting each site*
- *Share dates of Site 3 with translator*

#### PHASE 3 – INTERVIEWS

*Arrange interview dates with selected Grade 1, 4, 7 teachers. Check available results of learners and together with teachers identify (4) learner participants.*

#### TARGET DATE:

- Site 1 – target date July/August 2012

- Site 2 – target date August/September 2012
- Site 3 - target date February/March 2013

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- School Reflection Journal
- Check recording devices
- Arrange for available rooms in which to conduct interviews
- *Arrange for more than one possible interview date*
- *Share dates of Site 3 with translator*

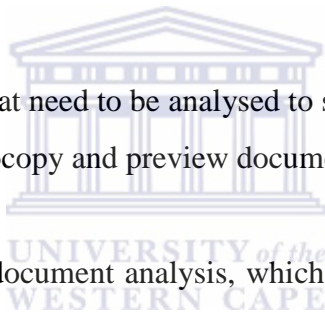
**PHASE 4 – Collecting Documents / Document Analysis**

**TARGET DATE:**

- Site 1 – target date April/ May 2013
- Site 2 – target date April/ May 2013
- Site 3 - target date June 2013

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- Email list of documents that need to be analysed to school before visiting
- Arrange two days to photocopy and preview documents.
- Photocopy paper
- This phase comprises of document analysis, which includes a study of the following documents:



**Content of Email (send to schools before two day visits)**

Teacher Portfolio's – The following teachers portfolio's will be studied: (Grade 1), (Grade 4),(Grade 7- Language) and (Grade 7- Mathematics).

Learner Books and Portfolio's - Only the books and learner profiles and/or portfolios of the selected learners (those learners that were interviewed) will be needed.

Teacher intervention reports

Class Register

Performance records – reports of the selected learners for the specific grade (baseline test results, March, June, September results) – schedules

Departmental reports – ANA results and Systemic Test Results for the periods 2010-2012 (where applicable) and WCED LITNUM results 2012 Grades 3 and 6

Please note:


- That I will peruse the documentation at the school over a two day period, and therefore no documents will be removed from the school building. (I will only copy those documents for which I have I received permission)
- This final process of data collection will help me write a narrative about learner performance.
- The name of the school, teachers and learners will not be used in the final thesis.

Please note that part of my ethical clearance from the WCED was to protect the identity of the participants in my research.

Thanking you in advance

Researcher: Lucinda Du Plooy

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data collection method	Data Analysis Strategy	Task
Questionnaires	SPSS 	Translate Site 3 questionnaires/employ translator Contact a statistical coach
Interviews	Transcribe recordings Check for authenticity Tabularise interview data	Employ translator for Site 3 audio transcriptions Meet with supervisor/ send-off recordings and transcriptions to check for authenticity. Do preliminary data collation using tables
Direct Observations	ATLAS.Ti	ATLAS. Ti training Translate targeted observed lessons/employ translator for lessons observed in Site 3 Preliminary analysis using COBS Summary sheet/ Analytic Memo/ transcribed lessons

Use ATLAS. Ti to organise and code and collate data

## PLAN FOR VALIDITY

*Adapted from Yin (2009:42)*

TESTS	Case Study Tactic	Phase of research
<b>Construct Validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use multiple sources of evidence</li> <li>• Establish chain of evidence</li> <li>• Have experts review draft protocol and reports</li> </ul>	Data collection  Data collection  Composition
<b>External Validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use multiple case studies to investigate outcomes in different context</li> </ul>	Research Design
<b>Reliability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use case study protocol + pilot study report</li> </ul>	Data collection+ Data Analysis

## REPORTING

- Use University Thesis Guide for writing up thesis.
- Consult work of Yin (2009) for writing up case study reports and Merriam (2009) for guide to write up qualitative case study reports.

**APPENDIX I: The representative lesson for each Grade 1 teacher with the reflective notes which was used for analytical purposes.**

**Lessons of Grade 1 teachers:**

**Zola Grade 1 Class teacher – Numeracy lesson**

**Segment 1: Introduction to the lesson**

*Teacher stands in front of the class addressing the whole class. She calls on a few learners out of each group to hand out the classwork books. The learners are instructed to collect 10 bottle tops from containers that are on the table in the corner of the classroom, take it to their desk. She writes  $8+2$  on the board turns to the learners*

Teacher: Do you have 10. Count it! So separate them, then how many do you have?

Learner X: 2 [*the learner was referring to 2 sets*]

Teacher: Work on this please, separate them. Be fast please! How many on each side?

No response

*I observed that not all learners understood what they must do. Some placed the bottle tops in a straight line and others separated it placing 8 on one side and 2 on the other. There were one or two learners who either had more or less than 10 tops which the teacher was not aware of.*

Teacher: Are you done?

Reflective notes: Teacher controls the selection, sequencing and pacing of the lesson. Instructions are implicit –unclear as to what learners are supposed to do. Some learners do not know that they must separate the bottle tops place eight on one side of the table and two on the other side. Learners placed the tops in a straight line on the table and count on. The application, the fact that they have to add is not clear. Teacher determines how long the learner needs to get to the answer.

**Segment 2: During the course of the lesson**

*Teacher writes  $4+2$  on the board and instructs learners to look on the board.*

Teacher: Which numbers do you add?

Learners in unison answer:  $4+2$

Teacher: Divide your lids and see when you add what will the answer be?

*Some learners do what the teacher instructed them to do whilst some are adding on*



Teacher: Do not add it, put it aside. How many do you have?

*Learners do not respond*

Teacher: What are we doing?

She does not wait for the learners to respond then says: We are adding, so now add them.

Teacher: Come one by one to me and tell me in my ear the answer

*After the fourth child approaches the teacher with an answer she then request the answer*

Learner X: 6

Teacher repeats:  $4+2=6$

Reflective notes: Teacher controls the pace at which learners work. Learners do not ask any questions or seldom respond to the teachers questions. It is not clear whether or not learners understood the application. I move amongst learners and notice them writing incorrectly from the board. Answers are not shared with the class “come one by one and tell me in my ear the answer”.

### **Segment 3: The evaluation activity**

*The teacher repeats the same process for three different examples. She then instructs learners to complete the task that she had previously written on the board. In her explanation she used numbers but the task on the board contained different shapes not numbers.*

Teacher: Do you see the board?

Learners answer in unison.: Yes Miss

Teacher: You have to use the lids that are in front of you and count what is on the board.

Teacher repeats: Add by looking at what is on the board and use your lids

*She then moves to the carpet with a group of students whilst the rest of the class are busy with the exercise on the board. The teacher occasionally moves amongst learners sign their books and some learners who have completed the task come to the teacher to check their work. She would on occasion tell them the sum is incorrect and send them back to their desk. Learners are not told whether or not their work is correct or not.*

### **Dumont Grade 1 Class teacher- Literacy lesson**

## Topic: Domestic animals

### Segment 1: Introduction of the lesson

*The teacher stands in front of the class and instructs the learners to come to the carpet. The learners have previously been compiling a project book on instruction of the teacher and now move to the carpet.*

Teacher: Come to the carpet and sit near the red chair please. Turn this way [*a group of boys were facing the opposite direction*]. 'M' you got a new project book Monday what colour was it?

M: Green

Teacher: 'V' your new project book that you got- Tell me what was on the cover? Tell me something about the cover? What did you see?

V: A cat

Teacher: and something else. There was something else on the cover? 'J' help her!

J: Grass

Teacher responds: No

[*'C,' one of the brighter learner's, according to the teacher, who I also observed the teacher calling on regularly to provide answers in other lessons observed, called out*]

C- Dogs, cats and birds!

Teacher: So what is this about?

C- Pets

Teacher: Yes, we going to talk about pets. We going to talk about domestic pets.

[*A boy seated close to the teacher shouts out*] What is that?

Teacher: It is not a word we often use it means pets that live in your home. I don't have a pet. Now if you live on a farm you can have farm animals as pets. Now remember our special book were we already spoke about the farm yard...and all the animals you can have as your friend or your pet on the farm. This week and next week we will be talking about domestic pets?

Reflective notes: Teacher selects the topic, determines both the sequence and the pacing of the lesson. She draws on learners previous experiences to get to an understanding of the topic. The teacher is working with the whole class no differentiation evident.

### Segment 2: During the course of the lesson

*Teacher remains seated on the red chair as she continues the lesson. The learners are seated on the carpet facing the teacher. Only those closest to her seem to be paying attention. The others seated furthest away- some are talking to each other and others are fidgeting and becoming restless. The teacher continues*

Teacher: 'Z' tell me one domestic pet you have in your home?

Z: A dog

Teacher responds: A dog correct. 'E' another one

'E' responds: A cow

Teacher: Do you have a cow in your home [*learners begin to laugh. Teacher turns to another learner for a response*]

F: A parrot

Teacher: You have a bird of some sort ok we have three: a dog, cat and parrot- What else?

[*Different children are called on by the teacher to respond. They, in turn mention: a rabbit, fish, guinea pig and hamster. In turn the teacher repeats what they say before calling out another name. The noise coming from the back row is becoming louder.*] The teacher shouts: I'm not going to speak when you speaking. [*She repeats herself and children quiet down. She waits till she has everyone's attention then continues*]

Reflection notes: Lesson is strongly framed- teacher determines sequencing and pacing of questions. Only single-word responses are accepted. Teacher allows for individual responses. When the learner gives a different response 'A cow' the teacher proceeds to ask a follow up question but does not wait for the learner's to respond – the 'incorrect response' is not explored further or elaborated on.

Teacher: Ok, I want to speak about cats and I want to speak about dogs. Cats and dogs belong to a very huge family called mammals...I taught you five things about mammals let see [*The teacher reminds the children about what they covered about mammals in a previous lesson on the topic. She then tries to extract 5 factors about mammals the learners should remember. She starts off each question with a clue. It appears from the answers learners were giving that they could recall 4 of the 5 factors on mammals. The teacher notes that they are struggling to find the fifth answer so she recaps by repeating what they said*]

Teacher: OK, What do we have: 1- born alive, 2- drink milk, 3- have a backbone, 4-have some hair and when you are sick your mother worries about what?

E- She feels your temperature

Teacher: You are on track. Your temperature goes up because you are warm [*teacher pauses and learners respond in unison*]

Learners [*in unison*] blooded

Teacher responds: Yes warm blooded

Reflection notes: Teacher draws on learners' previous engagement with the topic. She does not wait for learners to think, when there is a brief silence after her question she provides clues quickly that leads them to the answer - 'warm bl' forming the sound- leading them to answer. Learners answer in this section collectively. The framing of the interaction was strong teacher decides on the sequence and pacing of the lesson.

### **Segment 3: During the evaluation activity**

Teacher: I want you to go to your table in a moment, take out your new project books and I will show you which page to go to. Boys, go now [*boys get up from the mat, line up and move towards their tables followed by the girls who move only when the teacher instructs them to. Once all learners are seated and have their books open in front of them. The teacher briefly reprimands a boy talking and continues with her instructions*]

[*The teacher stands in the middle of the classroom facing the desk to her right. The children are grouped according to their abilities. The groups seated to the left of the teacher are the weaker learners. She stands with her back to them and it appears that she is only teaching the more academically strong groups to her right. When questions are asked normally the academically stronger learners are called upon to answer and those who are weaker and who want to answer are often ignored.*]

Teacher: Now we going to read a lot of words here. It says colour in the blocks that are the facts about cats. What colour are you going to use. [Some children respond 'pink' others have their pencils out. One boy to the left asked repeatedly if he can use his pencil but the teacher continued with her instructions]

Teacher: Put your pencil and crayons down we going to talk first. Are you ready? Lets do the questions on cats first. [*I do however observe some children closest to me colouring in blocks as the teacher is going through the questions. Others sit quietly and listen.*]

[*The teacher reads the questions and children respond.*]

Teacher: Cats hate milk

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: purrs

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Is playful

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Eats grass

[*There is a brief silence and a few children answer:*] No

Teacher: Yes. When they are sick it makes them throw up.

Teacher: Have whiskers

Learners [*in unison*] Yes

Teacher: Are their whiskers long or short [*children do not respond at first*]

Some learners answer: Long

Teacher: Yes ...it warns the cat whenever there is danger. See how many blocks you can colour in ...colour in all the true facts. Information that is true.

[*The teacher walks amongst the learners signing a few books as she passes. She makes no attempt to engage with learners who have incorrect answers. She stops at the desks of a group (weaker) boys and notices that they have completed the activity. They were amongst the group of learners that I observed early whilst the teacher was reading the questions colouring in the blocks. They did not realise then that they only had to colour in the block if the answer was 'yes'. She looks at them but addresses the whole class*]

Teacher: I'm very disappointed because some started before the time and did not follow instructions. [*Some children who have completed the task approach her she angrily shouts- "Go sit down! Go sit!" She then moves amongst the desk to mark books*]

Reflection notes: Some evaluation criteria is made explicit by the teacher but certain aspects remain implicit –she reads the task questions – learners sit in ability groups but receive the same activity (no differentiation). The teacher provides correct answers she does not wait for learners to explain why they say 'yes' or 'no'. Short responses without explanations are evident. Learners provide answers collectively no room for individual responses.

## **Flamingo Grade 1 Class teacher- Numeracy lesson- Data Handling/Graphs**

### **Segment 1- Introduction of the lesson**

*Teacher starts the lesson with mental maths activity. Learners are all seated in front of the teacher on the mat facing a number chart. Teacher instructs learners to count in 2's, 5's then 10' (verbal mimicking – some learners struggled but would form a number with their mouths) Then they are instructed to count backwards from 20. Together learners count backwards starting with 20.*

Teacher: What is half of 10

*She becomes angry with a boy who shouts out the answer.*

Teacher: Why you shouting now everyone heard the answer. Now make 10, 5 less

Learners in unison: 5

Teacher: Now make 10, 5 more

A few learners shout out whilst some are not sure: 10

Teacher: How can it be 10 if I'm making it more?

*A girl sitting closest to the teacher answers correctly (15). The teacher responds: Good clap hands for her.*

*After a few more instructions learners are given a number on the chart and asked to count on. If they got it correct learners will clap hands. Incorrect answers from learners are not attended to but the teacher would turn to a learner who knows the correct answer. The learners are then instructed to go to their tables and take out the workbooks. These books are kept in a bag behind their chairs. Learners do not handle their own books. All books are stored in chair bags.*

Reflective notes: The mental maths activity is done as a whole class. Selection, sequencing and pacing is controlled by the teacher. Teacher only responds positively to correct answers.

### **Segment 2 and 3- Course of the lesson and evaluation activity**

*Teacher instructs learners to open the workbooks to page 52. On this page is the heading 'Graphs' and below it is a bar chart (pictures of 4 different children and different lengths) followed by a number of questions. They start by reading the instructions together.*

Teacher: Read the names.

Learners in unison but slowly read: John, Jabu, Emma, Eva

Teacher: Lets read the first question. Who is the tallest? Wie is die langste? Who is the tallest?

Learner1: Emma

Teacher: No, who?

Learner2: John

Teacher: Write it down. Who is the shortest?

Learners answer in unison: Emma

Teacher: Of course Emma is the shortest. Look at the pictures- look at the pictures who is the shortest boy?

Learners answer in unison: Jabu

Teacher: Who is the tallest girl?

Learners answer in unison: Eva

Teacher: Must we go through it again?

Learners do not respond.

*The teacher continues by repeating the activity in the same way. She repeats each question and learners now answer collectively as a whole class. The children are then instructed to answer the questions in the workbooks. The teacher moves amongst the tables to check on certain learners work. She then returns to the mat to work with the 'cheetahs' (above average learners who are busy with bond of 11). Only some learners are busy answering the questions others are fidgeting and talking. The teacher would on occasion stop working in order to reprimand unruly learners.*

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Reflective notes: Whole class activity learners work collectively. The framing of the interaction is strong. Answering in unison and repetition is common strategies. Students are not given the opportunity to read on their own. Learners do not ask questions. The rhythm of the question-answer interaction was determined by the teacher. No attempt is made to explain why the answer is incorrect since the question is redirected to someone who knows the correct answer.

**J. The representative lesson for each Grade 4 teacher with the reflective notes which was used for analytical purposes.**

**Dumont Grade 4 Class teacher – Language**

Topic: Informal letters

**Segment 1- Introduction of the lesson**

*Teacher writes on the board 'Language – informal letters'. This lesson is part of two other lessons that went before that dealt with 'introduction to the letter', 'the body-the adventure' and now learners need to write the conclusion.*

Teacher: This is the fourth and final paragraph in your story. It is shorter than 3 to 4 excuse me 2 to 3 sentences. Who can tell me what does the word conclusion mean?

L1 – the ending

Teacher responds: It's the ending. How you going to end your story? How you going to wrap things up? Right turn to your planning stage with your keywords

*The learners open up their books which contains the planning. The teacher moves amongst the learners and notices some have not completed the previous paragraphs to the letter.*

Teacher: Why do I see so many gaps? Have you done your keywords for your fourth paragraph?

Learners answer in unison: No, Miss

Teacher: Well, you have to do that before you can write the paragraph. Now turn to the planning page

*The teacher waits till all learners are ready before continuing. She moves amongst the learners checking on their planning page.*

Reflective notes: Teacher determines the selection and sequencing of the lesson. She works with the whole class but allows for individual responses. Learners sit in pairs –weaker learner paired with a stronger learner. She does alter pace according to learners pace.

**Segment 2/ 3- During the course of the lesson (forms part of the activity)**

*Teacher returns to the board and writes 'ending off your letter'*



Teacher: You basically just going to end off your letter. You can in your conclusion thank Dr.Zues for taking time out to read your letter. You can just end off with your last thoughts or summarize your character. Summarise means just in one or two sentences wrap up or end off a description of your character to Dr. Zues before you thank him. Work with your keywords on the planning page. Once you got that down you going to turn to you letter and you going to take the information from your list of keywords and you going to write a very short fourth paragraph, probably 3-4 sentences approximately. When you going to end your letter off its going to be the fourth paragraph, you going to leave a line open underneath the last sentence of that paragraph and then who can tell me how do we end the letter off? What is the proper layout for ending off the letter?

*The teacher illustrates and verbally explains what needs to be done on the board for learners to see where the fourth paragraph ends, the open line and the ending off of the letter.*

L3- Yours sincerely

Teacher: OK, how else can you end off your letter?

*Teacher calls on different learners by name to give their version of how to end off the letter drawing on learners own knowledge-base.*

L4- Yours truly

*Answers of different learners are displayed by the teacher writing it on the board.*

L5- Kind regards

Teacher: Good, kind regards. Is there another way that I could end it off? Yes, L6

L6 answers: Best wishes

Teacher: Good, Best wishes. Underneath that you can leave a line open and write your full name to end off the letter. Get started.

*The learners work individually on the conclusion and ending off the letter. The teacher moves from desk to desk to check on their progress. She comments on individual learners work. She then moves to the desk in front of the class to work closer with the weaker students repeating parts of the instructions. This continues till the end of the period.*

Reflective notes: Teacher draws on learners' previous experience to answer a series of question-answers which are conducted with the whole class. She illustrates most of what requires a correct production on the board for learners to refer to. More than one way of what constitutes a good production is illustrated on the board- made clear and explicit. Teacher

draws on different learners to provide examples. The rhythm of the question-answer interaction was maintained by the teacher and directed at the whole class. Instructions are explicit; learners know step by step what is required to ensure a good production. Sequence or transition to this lesson is determined by the teacher. She decides what will happen next. The teacher moves amongst the learners to monitor their work. She also provides individual attention to the weaker learners.

### **Zola Primary Grade 4 Class mathematics teacher: Mathematics**

Topic: (as written on the board) The Calendar

#### **Segment 1& 2- Introduction of the lesson and the course of the lesson**

*The teacher stands in front of the learners who are seated in their desks. She instructs them to take out their mathematics textbook. It appears that each learner has a copy of the required textbook. On the black board the topic and date is written.* She instructs the class “Let’s open our textbook on page 32. What do you see in page 32?”

Learners respond by chorusing: a calendar

Teacher: Why do we have a calendar? Why is it important in our school (there is no evidence of this year’s calendar in the classroom) and in our homes?

A learner closer to the teacher responds: Because we are looking for the days

Teacher: What is the day today?

Learner 1: the 5<sup>th</sup>

Teacher: of which month?

Learner 1 responds: February

*The teacher points to another learner who responds differently*

Learner 2: 5 March 2013

Teacher repeats the question to the whole class: What is the date today?

Learners answer in unison: 5 March 2013

Teacher: What else do we get from the calendar?

Learners do not respond. The teacher responds by loudly: Your date of birth! What do we do on our birthdates?

Learner 3 responds: Buy nice things

Teacher: Yes our parents buy us cakes. What else the birthdays and what? There are so many things we get from it. Let us look at the calendar.

Learner 3 responds: Mother's Day

Teacher: When is Mother's Day?

Learner 3 unsure responds: March

Teacher: Let's go to March and look for it I don't see it?

*Mother's Day is not an official public holiday and the teacher not being aware of this spent some time looking for it.*

Teacher responds after some time: I do not see Mother's Day use your eyes and look in all the months.

*There is a brief pause followed by silence and the teacher realises her mistake.*

Teacher notes: We get woman's day but not father's and mother's day is not written in the calendar.

*They then are instructed to look for other public holidays. The teacher then directs questions to the whole class. The class respond to re-call questions on the number of months in a year, number of days in a month and which months have 30 days and which have 31 days. To which they answer correctly by chorusing it.*

Teacher: Why does February have 28 days in some years and 29 in others? What is happening?

*Learners do not respond and appear confused.*

The teacher becomes aware that learners are unable to respond and answers: ...When there is 366 days is called a leap year which happens every four years. Let's count its 2013 then in four years.

Learners' answer in unison: 2017

Teacher: Let's take out our classwork books for us to write. We do have rulers per group. We have to be quick. The questions are there on page 31.

Reflective notes: The selection of the topic and sequencing of the lesson is controlled by the teacher. The aims of the lesson in term of what they needed to know, is not made explicit to learners. The teacher controls the tempo at which learners work. She only asked re-call questions, incorrect answers are not dealt with. She does not explain the application or operation in more than one way. The calendar in the textbook is not the same as the 2013

calendar and there is no evidence in the classroom of the latest calendar, this causes some confusion for certain learners.

### **Segment 3: During the course of the activity**

*The activity on page 31 related to questions on the topic. The teacher stood in one spot at the back of the class while the children were doing the activity. A few boys sitting in one corner did not attempt the activity and started talking. A learner who was busy and did not understand a question asked the teacher for help which she did by merely restating it in isiXhosa. More and more learners then asked for questions to be explained. The teacher would then code-switched by restating questions in isiXhosa. It is not clear whether these learners did not understand what the question required of them or merely did not understand the English version of the question.*

Teacher: Turn to page 31 everybody, exercise 1 number A. Number A you will just write, you are not going to draw a line. You will write the first month that has 31 days that is, its name, semi colon, space with a figure, you write another one until you finish. Number B, give the months that have 30 days and you repeat the way we have already done in 31 days. So now let's do it let's go.

*The teacher moves to the front of the class and stops at one desk to address a learner who appears to have not followed her instructions.*

Teacher: What are you writing?

Learner replies: Writing classwork

Teacher: Next to A, write your number, skip the line. I do have rulers underline your work. We have to be quick!

Another learner asked a question.

Learner: Excuse me miss what is B?

Teacher answers by code-switching: List those that have 30 days

*This was followed by other learners requesting of the teacher to explain what is meant by C, D and E and F. She repeats these questions in isiXhosa. This is done without restating the question in a different way.*

The teacher after noticing the boys in the corner talking shouted: What you doing? Why you not writing hurry up we must still mark.

Teacher after a few minutes states: Now let's do the marking now. Take out your red pens, we going to mark". *She did this without ascertaining whether all learners have completed the*

*task. Not all learners had a red pen in fact only 4 learners had one which they had to share causing further disruptions. She then went through the activity requesting some answers from the learners and giving others. I observed some learners writing down the answers especially the boys that did not attempt the activity at all.*

*When children shouted out answers she would reprimand them.*

Teacher: Number A give me the list of the months that have 31 days

A learner wants to respond

Teacher [shouting]: Don't answer unless I point at you.

*They then move through the activity. The teacher asked the question by requesting certain learners to answer. This continues until they reach F in the activity, namely why February has 28 days in some years and 29 in others.*

Teacher: Why is this? What is happening?

A learner attempts to answer: When February has 28 days then we have 365 days a year

The learner stops and remains quiet

Teacher responds: Good, carry on. [after no response the teacher ask] Who can help her?

The teacher gets no response then states: When February has 29 days then that year we have 366 days. What changed?

Learner responds: we add

Teacher: How, which number do we add?

Learner: we add 1

Teacher: You can say that February has 29 days every leap year. Just write 29.

*The teacher turns to me to speak. The learners wait on the teacher to continue but the bell rings. Learners pack up noisily and leave the class without the teacher dismissing them and other learners enter.*

Reflective notes: Emphasis on the regulative – children are not given time to respond or elaborate on answers. Teacher seldom works individually with learners. Teacher often code-switches by restating the questions in isiXhosa but not elaborating what the question requires learners to do. Answers are dealt with quickly teacher does not monitor whether all learners have completed the task before marking. Learners mark their own work. I observed learners writing in answers after they are given by the teacher. Difficult to say whether they understood the answer given or whether they were merely writing things down. Explanations are brief.

## **Flamingo Primary Grade 4 Class teacher: Language**

Topic: (as written on the board) Adjectives

### **Segment 1- Introduction of the lesson and the course of the lesson**

The teacher stands in front of the class and addresses learners. Learners sit in rows at their desks.

Teacher: I'm going to give you a new page to do your summary. Number it 1 to 12.

A learner enters the class with a message for the teacher. She responds to the learner then returns to the class.

Teacher: Right, Grade 4 we going to do an activity now. We going to [a boy starts talking.

The teacher shouts: I'm not going to explain again. Sit up sit up and look at the board.]

Teacher continues: we are going to do exercise 3, exercise 4 and 5 is something else. We doing this section today about describing animals. If you don't know what a word means you need to look it up the meaning in the dictionary.

Reflective notes: The teacher determines the topic and the sequence in which things are to be done. The learners require a dictionary to look up the meaning of words but only a few have access to one. A whole class teaching approach is used. Learners do not get different worksheets.

### **Segment 2: During the course of the lesson**

The teacher reads the activity to the learners.

Teacher says: one monkey, two donkeys, three fowls, four owls, five dogs, six hogs and seven snails leaving trails. What is a fowl? Who can tell me hey? What is a fowl?

A boy sitting in front of the class answers: It is a black bird

Teacher responds: Black birds, what black birds. No man you talking about vulture.

A boy who has a dictionary responds by reading: A bird that is kept for his eggs and meat only

Teacher: Yes, which birds are kept for their eggs or meat?

A girl responds: A chicken

Teacher: Yes, the most popular one but there are more.

Some answer in unison: Ostrich

Teacher: Ostrich yes and the one the French like to eat.

She does not wait on learners to respond but answers “Duck”

Teacher: and what other meat do we eat on Christmas?

Learners respond in unison: Turkey

An ‘at risk’ learner shouts out: and tongue

The learners start laughing out loud

Teacher notes: No laughing! Not tongue. I’m going to cut out your tongue if you don’t listen

Teacher continues: Fowls are birds we eat for their eggs and for their meat.

Learners respond in unison: Fowls are birds we eat for their eggs and their meat.

Teacher: What are hogs? [she directs the question to a boy in the second row]

Boy responds: Pigs

Teacher: Who said so? You sitting with a dictionary look up what it says?

Boy responds reading from the dictionary: a male pig that is kept for meat, a person who eats too much.

Teacher: So you were right but we talking about animals and yes sometimes we act like hogs when our eyes are too big for our tummies and when it’s a party and we jump in there and want to eat everything. When we stuff our mouths then they say we are behaving like hogs.

Reflective notes: Close type questions requiring one word answer responses. The teacher seldom engages with incorrect answers. Not all learners have dictionaries to look up the meaning of words. The teacher does not display correct answers on the board. Everyday knowledge is dealt with at length and often incorporated into the lesson.

### **Segment 3: In the course of doing the activity**

*The teacher instructs learners to complete the task.*

Teacher: So you must find the best adjective to describe the animals and this is a poem that we going to learn. So open your English books Grade 4 lets make it a double clean page. You need to put a border around the activity. Keep exercise 4 and 5 in your flipfile. We going to paste this [*pointing to Activity 3*] and then write the answers. So when we study we can have the answers with the questions. The heading is adjectives and then the date. Make a pattern in colour then start. [*the class becomes noisy to which the teacher shouts*] I cannot handle this talking. You people are not listening. Lord have mercy on my soul. Adjectives write in colour pencil.

*The teacher approaches the 'at risk' learner who did not follow the instructions. He pasted the entire worksheet and not just the activity 3. She becomes angry and reprimands the learner.*

Teacher: How many times did I say we are cutting and pasting in our books. Whenever I give instructions your ears are closed. 'X' [the learner sitting behind the boy] also told you what to do. You fooling around playing with other things.

*The teacher then repeats what she said earlier to the whole class.*

Teacher: The top part you throw away, exercise 2, exercise 4 and 5 put in your flip files and fasten your laces [once again to the boy].

*The teacher sits at her table. Some children are cutting, others walking to the recycle bin and others talking and out of their seats. The noise level starts increasing again.*

Teacher: What is the magic word?

Learners chorus: Whisper

Teacher: Then why do I hear you. It's the third term we need to stick to our time. You have 10 minutes. We need to work faster and write quicker.

The teachers reprimands a learner writing with a pen: No pen allowed

She turns to me and says: Miss I'm coming now. Then she turns to the children: Miss is here you have to work I will be back now.

*The teacher leaves the classroom and only returns after the bell rings for break. When she leaves the only a few learners continue working the majority are either talking, out of their desks. Learners were therefore left to work on the activity without direct teacher interaction.*

Reflective notes: A lot of emphasis on the regulative- what to cut and paste and what to write with. Less time is spent on the instructional; on content and what constitutes a good production. Learners seldom ask questions or seek clarification if they do not understand or do not know how to proceed. Not all learners work consistently all the time. The teacher often reprimands learners.



**K. The representative lesson for each Grade 7 teacher with the reflective notes which was used for analytical purposes.**

### **Flamingo Primary Grade 7 Mathematics lesson**

#### **Segment 1- introduction of the lesson**

*Teacher stands at the board. Greet learners who are settling into their seats.*

Teacher: Look at the board quickly. Will you settle down. X [*addressing a learner-name omitted*] I'm not going to speak again. We did speak this morning come come.

*Learners quiet down and the teacher continues.*

Teacher: I was a bit disturbed Grade 7's the sum we did yesterday. It says write the shaded area in the diagram as a percentage, and then as a decimal fraction and lastly as a common fraction. [*Teacher was referring to a test /activity learners did the previous day which they appear to have done incorrectly*].

*On the board the teacher had drawn the diagram then she asked addressing the whole class*

Teacher: How many blocks are across?

Learners answer in unison: 4

Teacher pointing to the diagram: how many blocks down?

Learners respond in unison: 4

Teacher: So when I multiple the two to get the area, how many blocks do I end up with?

Learners answer: 16 blocks

Teacher: Yes 16. How many are shaded?

Learners answer: 4

Teacher: 4 out of the 16 – 16 blocks so the whole thing is 100%

*There is a knock at the door. The teacher ignored the interruption even though learners turned their attention to it she still continued the lesson.*

Teacher: Isn't it so? 16 will give me 100% what do you think 8 blocks will give me, which is exactly half?

A boy sitting in front of the class responds: 50%

Teacher: Right so what do 4 blocks give me?

Same learner responds: 25%

Teacher responds: Excellent! And you could not determine that and when I look at the decimal fraction of 25%.

A few learners shout out the answer which the teacher angrily responds to: Don't shout out put up your hands. She then points to one learner and says "yes X"

Boy answers: 0,25

Teacher: Excellent and you did very well in that test yesterday.

Teacher continues as learners sit quietly: and as a common fraction

No response

Teacher answers 4 over 16 (she writes the fraction on the board) I can use it like that but it is best to what? She addresses the question to the 'above average' learner

Learner answers: To simplify it

Teacher: Yes to simplify it 4 goes into 4

Learners in unison: once

Teacher: 4 goes into 16

Learners in unison: 4 times

Teacher: So what is the common fraction there? Was this so difficult? No! Some people must take note what we do in class really. We cannot afford not to be successful in maths. We need to pass maths. I talk everyday...

Reflective notes: The teacher starts by revising a question the children got incorrect on a test they wrote the previous day. Learners answer mainly in unison (collective/whole class approach) and at times questions are directed at particular learners. Teacher exercises positional control. Learners are hurried along/ pace determined by teacher.

### **Segment 2: During the course of the lesson/ based on the activity**

Teacher instructs learners to take out the worksheet and to go to 6.2. Some learners are noisy and looking for the worksheet and others are ready.

Teacher: So let's look at the worksheet page. We going to do some equations. Go to 6.2 right at the bottom of the page. Let's solve some equations.

The teacher reads the question: Find the value of the letter in the equations below then put in a number to see if the equation works out?

She writes  $x+5=9$  on the board.

Teacher: What number added to 5 will give you 9

Learners answer in unison: 4

Teacher writing on the board as she is speaking: So we going to say  $x = 4$

She writes below this

$$X+5=9 \text{ and } 9-5=4$$

Teacher: How do we prove x is equal to 4

Learners sit in silence and no one responds

Teacher: If you want to find out what x or a or y or k is that you do the substitution to check if your answer is correct. I just wrote now  $4+5=9$  so I know the answer is 9

The teacher then does another example and asked one of the boys to do the sum.

Boy writes on the board:  $8+b=13$                        $13-5=8$

$$b=5$$

Teacher: Now do the substitution

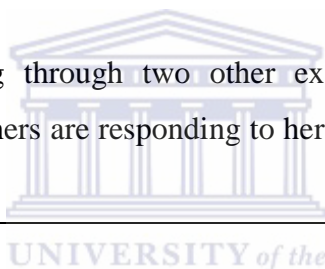
Boy writes:  $8+5=13$

Teacher then addresses the 'at risk' learner: X did you understand?

'at risk' learner responds: Yes but looks down as if confused.

Teacher says: Not sure hey?

She then continues by working through two other examples using multiplication and subtraction. Now only a few learners are responding to her questions which she directs at the whole class.



Reflective notes: Sequence of lesson determine by the teacher. Teacher works through a few items of the activity with learners.

### Segment 3: Concluding the activity

Teacher: Children look at your pages (worksheet referred to earlier) you are going to now do exercise 6.2. You going to paste this (learners are already fidgeting and becoming noisy) No! listen first! You going to paste this on the left hand side of your maths book and then you going to do the answers on the right hand side. You going to do a to g and leave a space after each one. What is the heading going to be?

A few learners answer: Using equations

Teacher: Excellent todays date and using equations

*The teacher returns to the table and learners are busy some cutting and pasting, others have already started working and a few are talking or just sitting.*

Reflective notes: Not all learners work consistently. Instructions as to how to proceed are given –procedure is spelt out. Teacher does not monitor learners work not all learners are busy.

## **Zola Primary Grade 7 Mathematics lesson**

### **Segment 1/2- Introduction of the lesson and the course of the lesson**

*Teacher greets learners who have entered the class. Learners enter the class there is not enough desk for every learners so the desks are pushed together to accommodate more learners. The teacher waits for learners to be quiet. The following is displayed on the board- 'addition and subtraction of negative and positive numbers'*

Teacher starts by saying: Yesterday we did addition and subtraction of positive and negative numbers. Today we going to multiply.

The teacher writes the sum on the board  $-14 + +9 =$  addressing the whole class

Teacher: reads the sum on the board and says: What are we going to do 7a if the signs are not the same.

A girl sitting to the right of the teacher answers: We going to subtract because the signs are not the same

Teacher responds: the signs will be

Learner answers: negative

Teacher asked: Why?

Learner responds: because it takes the sign of the bigger number.

Teacher: what is the bigger number?

Learners answer in unison: 14

Teacher: sign

A few learners respond: negative

Teacher: together

Learners chorus: Negative

Teacher: Today we going to multiple if the signs are the same and you multiple then the answer will always be positive for example  $-2 \times -9 =$  is

*It appears that the learners have been introduced to the application before.*

A learner shouts out: 18

Teacher says: a negative times a negative is a

Learners answer in unison: positive

Teacher writes on the board and reads out:  $+2 \times +9$

The same girl as before answers: +18

Teacher responds: Yes, a negative times a negative equals a positive and a positive times a positive equals a positive. First multiply the number then write the sign.

Teacher says: Any questions

*No one responds. Learners are sitting at their desk some have their books open no one wrote down what the teacher was explaining.*

Teacher: Let us pray mathematics prayer close your eyes

Learners with eyes close recite: a negative times a negative equals a positive; a positive times a positive equals a positive.

Teacher: OK a negative times a positive equals a negative

Teacher: Any questions

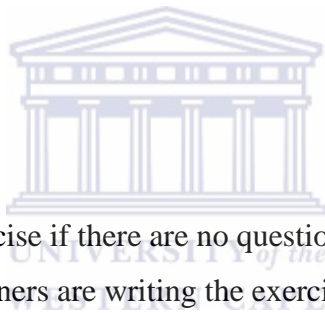
Learners chorusing: No Miss

Teacher: You understand

Learners chorusing: Yes

Teacher: We going to do the exercise if there are no questions

Teacher writes on the board. Learners are writing the exercise.



Reflective notes: Whole class teaching- teacher determines selection, sequencing and pacing of lesson. Children answer mainly by chorusing as is evident by the mathematics 'prayer'

### Segment 3- During the course of the activity

The teacher leaves the classroom to attend to something outside. Learners appear busy and are reasonable quiet. She returns shortly then writes on the board 'multiplying integers'

$$+9 \times -4 =$$

$$+17 \times -2 =$$

$$+10 \times -13 =$$

$$-2 \times -4 =$$

After writing the exercise the teacher instructs learners.

Teacher: Any questions?

No response from learners

Teacher: Let's do our mathematics

After a few minutes when the learners become noisy the teacher stands up from her table and addresses the whole class.

Teacher: Are you finished

Learners answer: No Miss

*When the noise level increase, the teacher instructs learners to take out what she calls the 'government book'; the learner workbook. The learners who completed the activity now have to continue with an unrelated activity.*

Teacher says: Let's go to page 4 starting from number 1 arrange numbers from smallest, start from the smallest number.

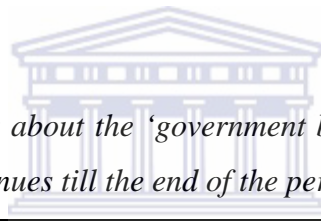
*The teacher comes to me and explains what the blue books are. She turns to the learners*

Teacher: if there are any questions raise your hands.

Not everyone in the class is working. When the noise level increases the teacher becomes angry and shouts: Finished!

Learners answer: No

*She sits at the table and explains about the 'government book'. She does not monitor what the learners are doing. This continues till the end of the period.*



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Reflective notes: Teacher leaves but does not inform learners. Two different activities are dealt with. The second activity does not relate to the topic at hand. Teacher determines pace-tempo of acquisition. Not all learners work consistently. Teacher seldom checks on individual learners to monitor progress. Teacher did not explain what happens when you multiple two different 'signs' as in the last sum. The learners do not tell her that they do not understand. The following day they did "patterns" the answers to the previous day's work was not dealt with.

## Dumont Primary Grade 7 Mathematics lesson

### Segment 1: Start of the lesson

*The teacher meets the learners at the classroom do gets them to quiet down before entering the class. Learners greet and sit in their desk teacher moving amongst learners. Learners are grouped in pairs but each has its own space.*

Teacher: We will start with some mental maths working with fractions and percentages.

*The mental maths session last about 10min – here learners are given a fraction by the teacher which they have to simplify or give the percentage. Learners answer in unison. Not all learners participate in this session.*

Teacher: Yesterday's work quick! Open your books and do cover the corrections.

*Learners retrieve their homework from their bags and wait on the teacher. It comprises of worksheet containing questions on percentages and data. The teacher works through the homework with them. Individual learners who raised their hands are called on to answer.*

Teacher: What is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of R20,00

Learner 1 answers: R5, 00

Teacher: What is your understanding if you say a quarter of something?

Learner 1 answers: you divide it by 4

Teacher repeats: Yes good you divide it by 4

*The teacher works through the rest of the homework with learners whilst learners are marking and doing corrections. The teacher walks amongst learners but does not monitor to see whether they have transcribed correctly. After they have worked through the homework the teacher then selects the activity for the day. Learners mark their own books.*

Reflection: Selection, sequencing determined by the teacher; first mental maths, followed by homework and corrections and a new activity. Pace at which learners work – teacher controls.

Whole class teaching evident

### **Segment 2/3 During the course of the activity / the conclusion**

*He writes on the board: 'Financial Maths'*

*Learners are given a new worksheet. Teacher works through the activities with learners.*

Teacher: Look at the first scenario. A painter is painting which costs will he cover? First we get different types of painting one can paint a house or do an actual painting.

Teacher continues: What will you need if you were painting a painting?

Learners call out: brushes, canvas, paint

Teacher: You need to know these these are costs incurred.

A boy ask: Human resources will that count?

Teacher: No, that will be labour costs. We just looking at the cost of the raw material the frame, brushes and canvas. You must know these things- financial maths since you would apply it in EMS.

Teacher continues by writing on the board: The raw materials cost R125, 00 for one painting. This we write as Cost Price = 125 per painting. The Selling Price – you going to sell each painting for R500. Do you think his making more than 100% profit?

Learners answer in unison: Yes Sir

Teacher: What will 100% profit be? Remember what we said in certain instances we go beyond 100% . If he sells it at 100% profit what will it be?

A boy answers: 250

Teacher: How much profit is he actually making?

Some learners respond: 300%

Teacher: Good Artists need to make reasonable profit because it will take some time to sell one painting.

*Learners are expected to write down the application while the teacher is working through the calculations with them. Teacher does not check whether they have written it down or whether they have written it correctly from the board. Extra time is not given.*

Teacher: Now let's do some calculations. His going to sell 25 paintings so what will the cost price be.

Teacher writes on the board: 1 is R125;  $25 \times 125 = R3125,00$

Teacher: What will the selling price be?

Teacher working on the board says:  $25 \times 500 = R12\ 500$ . Who has these totals? How many should he sell to cover his costs?

*Teacher gives learners time to write down the operation. A girl who completes the calculation shouts 6 paintings. Another teacher enters the class speaks to the teacher and leaves.*

The teacher continues: So he will start making a profit by the 7<sup>th</sup> one.

*Teacher starts the next calculation working with learners.*



Teacher: You buy a couch for R2500 pay 15% deposit and R190 instalments for 12 months how much interest did she pay on the couch?

*He then allows the learners to complete the calculation. Moves amongst learners to monitor what they doing but does not show them individually if they are on the right track. After some time he returns to the board writes while explain*

Teacher: how many calculated the deposit first? You must do that if you want to know the full HP price.

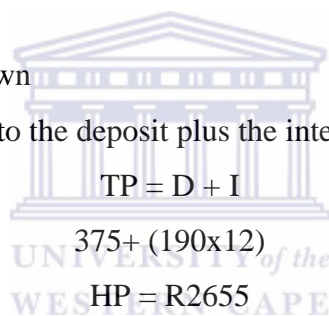
The 'above average' learner participant responds: Sir I did the deposit plus the instalments to get to the interest.

*A boy starts to cough loudly but is ignored by the teacher. Some boys laugh because of the one coughing. Some are fidgeting and not paying attention. This I observed throughout the lesson but the teacher will give them a stern look and continue teaching.*

Teacher responds to 'above average' learner: Yes you can as long as you set it up correctly and show all the calculations.

Teacher explains and writes it down

Teacher says Total price is equal to the deposit plus the interest. He writes on the board


$$\begin{aligned} TP &= D + I \\ 375 &+ (190 \times 12) \\ HP &= R2655 \end{aligned}$$

Teacher notes: You have to subtract the two to get the interest.

He shows on the board:  $HP - CP = 2655 - 2500 = R155$  interest

Teacher: You have to show what you did, all calculations. If you haven't got it do it for corrections write it down.

The bell rings the teacher says: Quick pack up.

Reflective notes: Teacher works through activity step by step – emphasis on what constitutes a correct production is clear. Learners answer questions collectively and individually. Teacher who enters is not greeted. Teacher displays answers and operations on the board for learners to write down. Extra time to write or do corrections is not given. Teacher seldom checks learners who are not paying attention. Positional Control- physical distance between teacher and learners- teacher is strict does not allow interruptions during teaching time.



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