



TEACHER PREPAREDNESS IN DEALING WITH LEARNERS' SOCIAL PROBLEMS

by

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DECLARATION

I, Faheema Abbas, declare that the contents of this dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed:

Date:

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate how teachers dealt with learners' social problems. Another concern of the study was to investigate the extent to which pre-service and in-service teacher-training prepared teachers to deal with learners' social problems. The research used qualitative methodology. The major advantage of using qualitative research was that it focused on researching teachers in their school setting, to determine how teachers dealt with learners' social problems. The main instrument used was interviews as it yielded rich in-depth knowledge and allowed me to probe responses and investigate the teachers' feelings and emotions. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The study population was confined to four public high schools in Cape Town. It was composed of three newly qualified teachers and one experienced teacher. The results reflected that teachers dealt with learners' social problems by trial and error and there was no evidence of deliberate planning in identifying learners with social problems. The pre-service teacher training programmes did not equip teachers with the skills to deal with learners' social problems. Although teachers received some form of training at schools, the training was not effective in assisting them.

The thesis argues that social problems cannot be dealt with solely by the school or the teacher. It is recommended that the Department of Education, the community and the parents, as well as other social service organisations, should jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to assist learners with social problems. Such a holistic approach, the study asserts, could assist schools and teachers to deal with learners' social problems more effectively. Teachers should receive pre-service training to deal with learners' social problems, for example, by adding a module such as Sociology of Education. The teacher-training programmes and continuous in-service training programmes should ensure that teachers are exposed to current Departmental policies and documents that can assist them in dealing with learners' social problems.

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DEDICATION

My mother, Mamma, for your unfailing love and support that have seen me achieve this far.

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GLOSSARY

Terms/Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition/Explanation
D.A.R.E.	Drug Abuse Resistance Education
Dagga	Cannabis
DoE	Department of Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
EMDC	Education Management and Development Centre
G.R.E.A.T.	Gang Resistance Education and Training
MEC	Minister of Education
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAPS	South African Police Services
SGB	School Governing Body
Tik	Methamphetamine
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Currently schools face unprecedented challenges to educate increasingly multicultural and multilingual learners in addition to addressing the increasing social problems. Some learners are academically successful, committed and participate in class while others struggle academically and are disenchanting. Dryfoos (1997) asserts that 30% of 14 to 17 year-olds engages in multiple high-risk behaviours which jeopardise their potential for success in life. This concurs with the 2001 Youth Risk Behaviour Survey carried out in the United States that indicates that large percentages of high school learners are involved in substance abuse, aberrant sexual behaviour and violence (Greenberg, et al., 2003: 467).

Reports of high levels of drug addiction, teen pregnancies, gang activities, violence, physical and sexual abuse appear daily in the South African local press. These incidents impact negatively on education in general and on what happen in the school in particular. Such reports were followed up by going to the Independent Newspaper House to examine copies of a local newspaper, Athlone News, which highlights news from the Athlone, Heideveld, Crawford, Hanover Park, Manenberg, Bonteheuwel and Lansdowne suburbs of the Cape Flats area of Cape Town. The Athlone News reported distressing information about incidents of social problems that appeared over the past three years such as:

- “High school learners in Hanover Park dodge bullets on their way to school.” These schools are epicentres of gang war and have become targets of vandals and rival gangs (Petersen, 2006: 1).
- Some of the key concerns facing the high school learners from the Cape Flats communities were intimidation by learners or gang members, robberies, alcohol, sexual and drug abuse (Fourie, 2006: 8).
- “Drug abuse on the rise on the Cape Flats” (Jacobs, 2006: 1).
- A high school in the Cape Flats made headlines two years ago when a fellow learner stabbed a boy to death (Petersen and Correspondent, 2008: 1).
- “Drugs are breaking up families and poisoning our youngsters,” said Abdusalaam Allie, a drug prevention specialist and graduate of Narcanon (Allies-Husselman, 2008: 1).

1.2 Background

My interest in this study began some years ago while working as a guidance teacher and counsellor where I was called upon to deal with some of the social problems at my school. It was during these years of interacting with the teachers and learners that questions and issues arose around learners’ social problems, coupled with media reports which profoundly

influenced my interest in conducting this research study. I was concerned about these social problems and how I could assist learners. Social problems are quite rife in high schools and although these problems do exist the schools do not publicise them for fear of getting a 'bad reputation'.

The *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE) places the demands of pastoral care on all teachers (Department of Education, 2000: 18). Their roles are to provide guidance to learners, to counsel and tutor them if they have any social problems, to support and care for them, to act as a mentor, and to be able to identify and assist them with any learning or social difficulties (Department of Education, 2000: 18; Jansen, 2001: 244). *The Signposts for Safe Schools* resource book, developed by the Department of Education (DoE) and South African Police Services (SAPS) (2002: 71), also specifies that all teachers have to assist learners who are encountering any social problems. Being able to implement these roles is important for teachers. Teacher education must therefore adequately prepare them to guide, mentor and counsel learners, especially when they encounter social problems in the classroom.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The study aims to investigate how teachers are dealing with learners' social problems. Another concern of the study is to investigate to what extent pre-service and in-service teacher-training prepares teachers in dealing with learners' social problems.

1.4 Research methodology

This study used qualitative methodology. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The study population was confined to four public high schools in Cape Town and was composed of three newly qualified teachers and one experienced teacher. Three of the respondents had taught Life Orientation, as the Department of Education stipulates that the new Life Orientation curriculum should address issues of social problems (Department of Education, 2005: 11). Another respondent, who did not have life orientation training or experience, was selected because the *Signposts for Safe Schools* resource book, developed by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Department of Education (2002: 71), also outlines that every teacher has to assist learners who are encountering any social problems. This experienced teacher was interviewed to compare with the newly qualified teachers' training and experiences. The experienced teacher was included as part of the sample as he is the Life Orientation coordinator and former school counsellor.

The main instrument of research was an unstructured interview schedule (Appendix A) which included aspects such as management of social problems, knowledge of procedures to follow with regard to social problems, as well as support given to learners when encountering these problems. Permission was sought from the Western Cape Education Department as well as from the principals and teachers of each school before interviewing respondents.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study is a mini-dissertation and thus the sample was small scale. It was therefore important to use purposive sampling in order to select quality-rich respondents who were knowledgeable and informative about learners' social problems. Only four teachers from four public high schools were approached to take part in the study. I am aware that various schools covering a range of public as well as independent schools could have yielded different results. This point is further emphasised by the fact that due to logistical constraints and the fact that it was a small qualitative study, parents, community leaders, learners and principals were not included in the study. The focus of the study had to be precise and linked to the research question, so teachers were selected from schools located in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town in South Africa, where social problems are rife.

The data were limited to four schools and thus could not be generalised to all South African schools. The study population was confined to the Cape Flats area in Cape Town and it is also unknown whether the results would be applicable to other South African cities or to other countries. This is acceptable as Zientek (2007: 962) indicates that, "such samples are not without limitations but can yield some insights when sample characteristics reasonably well match those of targeted populations".

1.6 Outline of the chapters

This first chapter provided the introduction and background to the problem, the purpose of the study and the actual research problem. It outlined the research design and method by which the research would be conducted as well as limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 defines the concept of social problems as well as focuses on three social problems that are most prevalent in South African schools. The chapter also outlines literature on the preparedness of teachers in dealing with each social problem that forms the focus of this study.

Chapter 3 provides the details of the research design, the methodology and empirical investigation as outlined in Chapter 1 for this study. The chapter describes in more detail the processes used to collect and analyse data for this research.

Chapter 4 presents findings of the empirical research undertaken and contains a detailed analysis as well as an outline of some emergent themes.

Chapter 5 discusses and interprets the findings, and provides recommendations that include implications for teacher-training. Suggestions for further research as well as a conclusion to the thesis are provided.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present and define the concept 'social problem' and discuss various perspectives on this issue. Furthermore I give a brief outline of some of the key social problems that exist in society in order to understand the extent of each problem. I focus on three main social problems: drug addiction, gangsterism and teenage pregnancy. Other social problems that emanate from the findings are discussed in Chapter 4. The chapter concludes with an outline of what the literature portrays about the preparedness of teachers in dealing with each of the social problems that form the focus of this study.

2.2 Definition of social problems

According to Zastrow (2000: 2-4) a social problem exists when an influential group (i.e. one that appears capable of having an important influence on social policy) emphasises that a certain social situation affecting a large number of people is a problem that may be solved by a collective action. Zastrow (2000: 4), Kitsuse and Spector (1973: 409), as well as Montero and McDowell (1986:26), all point out that social problems do not affect one person, but a group of people in society and are thus widespread. In Zastrow's (2000: 5) definition, social problems can be solved by collective action, collective meaning, and by a collection of people (such as politicians, educationists, public workers, etc) that exist in society and work together to solve the social problem. Similarly, MacDonald (in Rwomire, 2001: 29) refers to collective action as procedures taken by a group of people who act together, such as strikes, lobbying and national campaigns in order to resolve the social problems.

Rubington and Weinberg (2003: 4) explain that sociologists define a social problem as an "alleged situation that is incompatible with the values of a significant number of people who agree that action is needed to alter the situation". They further note that sociologists has seven different ways of analysing social problems, namely social pathology, social disorganisation, value conflict, deviant behaviour, labelling, critical and social constructionist perspectives. In this section, I draw heavily on Rubington and Weinberg's ideas in outlining the seven different perspectives around social problems as these authors synthesise the different perspectives in the most logical manner for my study. Each of these perspectives has its own questions of what should be studied, how it should be studied and how the study would contribute to improving society (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 8). The following section provides a brief outline of each perspective:

2.2.1 The social pathology perspective

This perspective was established before World War 1, i.e. between 1890 and 1910, and purports that a social problem is a violation of moral expectations. Social pathologists indicate that social problems are caused by those who are “defective, delinquent or dependent”, describing them as ‘sick’ (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 357). Groenemeyer (in Ritzer, 2007: 4498) agrees and also describes social problems as “indicators of a pathological society and/or caused by pathological individuals”. He suggests that social problems are seen as deviance from a normal and well-functioning society.

2.2.2 The social disorganization perspective

Sociologists who use the social disorganization perspective (which arose from the end of World War 1, 1918 until mid 1935) perceive society as a complex and dynamic whole with coordinated parts. This perspective suggests that social problems are caused by a lack of adjustment, or poor adjustment, between the social parts thus causing society to become disorganised. Social disorganization is caused by social change precipitated by technological, demographic and cultural conditions. The consequences of social disorganization are that it can produce personal disorganisation, such as stress, mental illness and alcoholism, as well as de-equilibration of the social system. Social disorganization can only be solved if parts of the system that are unequal are brought back into equilibrium (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 51). Groenemeyer (in Ritzer, 2007: 4498) as well as Schneider (in Turner, 2006: 581) concur with Rubington and Weinberg and use the social disorganization perspective to describe social problems. Groenemeyer indicates that social problems are caused by a lack of rules and social control in disadvantaged communities which occurs when there is a rapid change in society. He argues that this perspective has been criticised for failing to differentiate between deviance and social disorganization, as deviance does not always result in a disorganised society but can be caused by conflict (in Ritzer, 2007: 4498).

2.2.3 The value conflict perspective

This perspective existed from 1935 to 1954. It explains that social problems are caused when one group opposes another group’s values or interest, ultimately resulting in conflict (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 87). MacDonald (in Rwomire, 2001: 26) supports the conflict perspective and suggests that social problems are “created and perpetuated by the action of interest groups working for their own advantage, often at the expense of others”. MacDonald asserts that when power and wealth are unequally distributed it inevitably leads to social inequalities that manifest into social problems such as racism, unemployment, poverty, etc. This perspective shows three ways of solving social problems: by agreeing, bargaining and exerting power. Firstly, conflict can be resolved if the groups can come to a

common shared agreement and consensus can be achieved. Secondly, it can be resolved if the groups can bargain with one another and thirdly, if they cannot bargain or come to an agreement then the group with the most power gains control (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 87).

2.2.4 The deviant behaviour perspective

People who work within the deviant behaviour perspective (prevalent from 1950 to 1970) view social problems as an infringement of the normative expectations. This perspective states that social problems are caused when a deviant behaviour is socially learned within the context that is characterised by inappropriate socialisation. This perspective is derived from Sutherland's "differential association" theory (1937) in which he argues that deviant behaviour is learnt by interacting with others by means of communication in primary group settings. Akers (1998: 50) expanded Sutherland's differential association theory, which he called "social learning theory", and stated that the likelihood that people engage in deviant behaviour is increased when they associate with others who practice similar behaviour. This is similar to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) that posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. Rubington and Weinberg (2003: 124) note that when people are restricted from opportunities to achieve certain goals, it makes them feel very stressful and thus increases the risk to learn a deviant behaviour. In this situation the only way of reducing the deviant behaviour is to redistribute access to opportunities and increase meaningful group contact with role models that have positive patterns of behaviour (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 124).

2.2.5 The labelling perspective

This perspective was prevalent from 1954 to 1970, at more or less the same time as the deviant perspective, and explains that a social problem is one that occurs when society responds to a violation of rules or expectations. When a situation is presumed to be problematic or deviant, the labeller who is in the position of power (such as social control agents or reporters) assigns negative labels to the situation. After the situation is defined as socially problematic, it may result in "reordering of human relations in a way that promotes further deviance" (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 176). For example, once a person has been characterised as 'deviant' most people expect the person to continue the deviant behaviour. Similarly, Matsueda (1992: 1577) proposes that labelling can lead to a deviant self-concept and this in turn can lead to deviant behaviour such as delinquency, truancy and poor school performance. Link, Streuning, Dohrenwend, Cullen and Shrout (1989: 400) argue that the labelling perspective is not useful as it devalues and discriminates against certain groups, and propose that labelling can lead to negative consequences such as

people withdrawing from society altogether. Nooe (1980: 368) also notes that a person who is labelled may become insecure in terms of how others react to and view them.

2.2.6 The critical perspective

This perspective was developed between 1970 and 1985 and arose after a sense of crisis within the sociology discipline. It defines a social problem as a situation that is created out of the exploitation of the working class. This results in class conflicts between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' as the rich get richer and the poor remain in poverty. Class conflicts are seen as the main reason for many problems. A capitalist society creates extensive social problems; for example, capitalists sustain poverty and make and enforce rules for their own interests. It presents a broad historical perspective on how social problems are created. The only solution to this social problem would be for the working class to actively reform or cause a revolution, by winning the class struggle (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 226).

Wagner (1997: 3) concurs and claims that social problems derive from the interests and values of capitalism. He contends that certain social problems are more concentrated among those in the lower income sector where gender (for example, men commit more serious crimes, domestic violence and engage more in substance abuse than women), age (for example, aggression and substance abuse are usually associated with adolescents), as well as race and ethnicity are more likely to be issues.

2.2.7 The social constructionism perspective

This perspective arose after 1985 and stems largely from Kitsuse and Spector (1973: 407). Instead of concentrating on how to resolve social problems, Kitsuse and Spector (1973) concentrated on how social problems are defined by people. Rubington and Weinberg (2003: 284) agree with Kitsuse and Spector's social constructionist perspective and define social problems as a situation that is culturally recognised as prevalently "widespread, changeable and in need of change". A social problem is based on the discovery of how people arrived at defining a social problem, how they shaped their complaints, claims and demands into a process of defining activities, and who responded to these activities. Social constructionism promotes more research in showing how problems are defined and less in solving the social problems.

All the above perspectives offer a useful way of thinking and theorising about the problems that teachers deal with in South African schools. These many perspectives help in locating the theoretical framework within the historical discourses around social problems.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is guided by ideas borrowed mainly from the critical perspective as it appears to relate to the South African modern context of social problems. The critical perspective offers a broad historical view on how social problems came into being as well as what situation was created out of the exploitation of the working class. The South African apartheid past, where groups were labelled as Black/African, Coloured, White, Asian/Indian or other such differentiations, was developed from the 1950 Population Registration Act, which racially labelled people and formed the basis of apartheid. In addition the Group Areas Act (1950) resulted in people being forcefully relocated. The capitalists, who were the White/ European/ Boer groups in power at that time, sustained poverty and made and enforced rules for their own interests. Standing (2003: 1) contends that Cape Town is “the most vivid example of urban crisis attributed to late modern capitalism” and suggests this is a city with “stark contrasts and social fragmentation built first on the policies of apartheid and now seemingly exacerbated by the dynamics of a marketised economy.”

The labelling perspective is also linked to the social constructionist perspective as White people in positions of power socially constructed the racially classified labels. This constitutional racial segregation and exploitation of non-White people thus resulted in class conflicts as well as race conflicts between the ‘haves’, who were the White people, and the ‘have nots’, who were the non-White people, as the White people became richer, and the poor non-White people remained in poverty (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 225).

The critical perspective incorporates elements of all the earlier perspectives by analysing the legacy of apartheid critically. Most of the current social problems can be linked to apartheid and one cannot critique apartheid and what apartheid did in society without analysing how it placed people into different groups (caused by the 1950 Population Registration Act) and labelled them; socially disorganised families and groups of people when non-White people were forcibly removed from their homes (Pinnock and Schärf, 1984: 56); and caused deviant behaviour such as gangsterism, drug addiction, teenage pregnancies, alcoholism, crime and many other social problems (Standing, 2006: 11; Herrendorfer, 2004: 3).

The context of social problems has been changing over the years as the above perspectives reflect. Each perspective relates specifically to the society within which it was developed. For example, prior to World War 1, when society was stable, a simple definition to explain social problems was adequate. Each perspective related to the identity of that society because it was developed to satisfy the needs within that society and within that period. As society

progressed, the needs of society changed and this then was the determining factor for the development of a new perspective (Rubington and Weinberg, 2003). Specifically in South Africa, since 1950 with the promotion of inequality and race, this resulted in poverty from which other social problems emanated and with the strong influence of urbanisation and technology the needs of this society changed. Therefore the perspectives that were developed for the historical eras could not meet the needs and the demands of South Africa.

The apartheid legacy had a fundamental impact on the South African society. South Africa is still struggling with this legacy as more than 18 million out of 45 million people live below the poverty line and conditions of unemployment were rising at 26.5% in March 2005 (Kraak and Press, 2008: 556). Other social problems, such as drug addiction, gangsterism, divorce, teenage pregnancy and many others emanate from the apartheid legacy. Below, I examine three of these social problems namely, drug addiction, teenage pregnancy and gangsterism, which the study focuses on.

2.4 Three social problems:

2.4.1 Drug addiction

Weinberg (1971: 67) states “drug addiction is symptomatic of a much greater range of social ills than the fact of addiction itself”. He points out that a social problem such as poverty may be the source of drug addiction. This correlates with Montero and McDowell (1986: 63) who indicate that drug addiction has been linked to a number of other social problems, such as crime, family problems, unemployment and poverty. They suggest that drug addiction can be perceived as a social problem as drugs have a harmful effect on those who use them and because society reacts to the misuse of the drugs. Similarly, Bezuidenhout (2006: 119) states that drug addiction has become a social problem in South Africa and other countries in the world. South Africa, specifically, is used as a transit route to illegally distribute and trade drugs for other countries as well as for the South African market (Department of Social Development, 2006: 5). This means that a huge amount of drugs enter our country through airports, harbours and national borders and, even though the South African government has implemented measures to ensure that the supply of illicit drugs do not enter the country, it seems that drugs are still entering our communities, homes, churches and, ultimately, our schools.

The scourge of drug addiction is increasing year after year. Richter, *et al.* (2006) report that drug use often begins in the early teenage years. This correlates with the findings from the Department of Social Development (2006: 4) as it reports that the drug users are becoming younger; whereas in the past the starting age was fifteen, now findings show that children from as young as ten years old are using drugs.

In the Western Cape the main choice of drug is methamphetamine (known as 'tik'), followed by prescription medications, heroin, cannabis and mandrax. This is revealed in reports from the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (Department of Social Development, 2006: 8). According to the Department of Social Development (DSD) drug addiction affects everybody directly or indirectly (2006: 8).

There seems to be a general consensus in the literature as to the factors that contribute to drug addiction, such as poverty, unemployment, family problems, crime, community, school and/or peer pressure (Flisher, Parry, Evans, Muller and Lombard, 2003, 60; DSD, 2006: 4). Bezuidenhout (2006: 111) also explains that there are five factors that cause teenagers to become addicted to drugs. These are: peer group influence, the school environment, the home environment, events of life and personality. Newcomb and Bentler (1986: 71) indicate that stressful life events such as divorce, conflict of parents and menstruation can also cause many teenagers to use drugs. They found that teenagers that are introverted, lack self confidence and have a great need to be recognised by others may experiment with drugs to acquire self worth and self confidence (Newcomb and Bentler, 1986: 71). Van Hout and Connor (2008: 81) indicate that drug addiction and other social problems have a negative impact on learners' academic performance.

Sociologists working with this social problem perceive drug addiction as a form of deviant behaviour, i.e. behaviour that goes against society's social norms and standards (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 68). Sociologists who favour this perspective believe that drug addiction can be resolved by unlearning the deviant behaviour or by behaviour modification therapy (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 90). These sociologists would argue that teenagers who have friends that use drugs are far more likely to use drugs themselves (Miller, Jennings, Alvarez-Rivera and Miller, 2008: 262). Bezuidenhout (2006: 111) as well as Richman's (1985: 255) arguments also point toward the deviant behaviour perspective as Bezuidenhout (2006: 111) reports that their peer groups that also use or sell drugs initially introduce drugs to teenagers. This argument is further substantiated by Richman (1985: 255) who proposes that teenagers' illicit drug use has been seen to arise primarily from interacting with their peers.

Bezuidenhout (2006: 122) argues that in the South African context when there is a greater family influence, teenagers with drug addicted parents and family-members tend to experiment more with drugs as parents reinforce drug-taking behaviour in their children. This finding correlates with Richman (1985: 255) as she argues that parents who are heavy users of drugs are more likely to have children who use drugs.

However, those working within the social disorganization perspective propose that social disorganization is the root cause of drug addiction (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 68). These sociologists point out that when society undergoes rapid social change, old rules of behaviour may no longer be relevant. Some people start to use drugs as the social institutions, such as family, church and school, can no longer control their behaviour. For example, during the 1960s many social changes occurred in United States when Blacks and women struggled for equality and during the Vietnam War when many Americans demanded social changes. It was during this time of social changes that many youth began to experiment with drugs (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 69).

Bezuidenhout's (2006: 66) argument is closely linked to the social disorganization perspective; he proposes that the home environment of South African adolescents has changed over the years, and inclined them toward potential risks of drugs or other risk taking behaviour. The rise in single parent households and the high rate of unemployment has forced many people to seek employment away from their homes and away from their families. This has meant that many teenagers are left unsupervised which leaves them to experiment with drugs or other risk taking behaviours. In an effort to cope with their frustrations, anger and pressure, teenagers would turn to drugs or other substances, engage in sexual intercourse or drop out of school (Bezuidenhout, 2006: 66). Montero and McDowell (1986: 90) state that sociologists working with the social disorganization perspective would recommend education and preventive programmes as a way of reducing the use of drugs.

The conflict perspective, however, regards drug abuse as a social problem as it reflects the conflicting values and interests between those that are more privileged and those who are less privileged (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 70). Leon-Guerrero (2005: 193) agrees with Montero and McDowell and states, "intentional decisions have been made over which drugs are illegal and which ones are not". She argues that interest groups (such as politicians and businesses) are able to manipulate the images of drugs for their own interest. She explains that in the 18th and early 19th century, certain drugs such as heroin, opium and marijuana were legally distributed; only when these drugs were linked to ethnic minorities and crime did public opinion and law change them to illegal drugs (Leon-Guerrero, 2005: 191).

According to Montero and McDowell (1986: 70), members in society seek to maintain their position by labelling the addict as 'deviant' and 'junkies'. These conflict theorists encourage a more enlightened approach to solving drug addiction, such as giving a report on the effects of various drugs. The labelling perspective may explain why there is an existence of subcultures of drug abusers as certain groups who are categorised as 'junkies' by society

turn to those subcultures or groups that approve their behaviour (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 89, Leon-Guerrero, 2005: 193).

2.4.2 Teenage pregnancy

According to Bezuidenhout (2006: 43), teenage pregnancy is viewed as a social problem in many developed and developing countries. It is no longer perceived as a personal problem as it is very prevalent in South Africa and society seeks to lower the high incidence of teen pregnancy. Cunningham and Boulton (1996: 692) point out that the social consequences of teenage pregnancy are school drop-out or interrupted schooling, falling prey to criminal activity, abortion, ostracism, child neglect, school adjustment difficulties for their children, adoption, lack of social security, poverty, repeated pregnancy and negative effects on domestic life.

In South Africa teen pregnancy is rising each year. In 2007 the *Sunday Times* reported that one secondary school in the country had 144 cases of pregnancy among its learners (2007: 6). The Reproductive Health Research Unit (2004) indicates that pregnancy among 15 to 16 year olds accounts for 7% of all teen pregnancy, while 17 to 19 year olds account for 93% of teen pregnancies (Harrison, 2008: 2). Lehohla, a statistician and head of Statistics South Africa, reports that teenage pregnancy is a determining factor of the situation of teenage girls, especially with regard to its effects on schooling (2007: 1). In 2002 there were 66 000 adolescent girls that reported pregnancy as the main reason for not attending school. This increased to 86 000 in 2004, but dropped to 71 000 in 2006 (ibid.).

Statistics in the United States reveal that one in three pregnant teenage mothers drop out of school due to pregnancy (Novick, 2001). The United States has the highest birth rates recorded amongst teenagers with 48% of teenagers giving birth between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years of age (Jean-Jacques and Loeber, 2007: 300). Only 50% of teenage mothers (younger than eighteen years old) complete their schooling (Novick, 2001).

According to Theron and Dunn (2006: 463), when teenagers become pregnant it disrupts their schooling career as they have to leave school in the early stages of their pregnancy. Phoenix (1991: 218) agrees and indicates that many teenage mothers never return to school and this has a negative impact on their future as they become unemployable after giving birth. In South Africa, 30% of teenagers have given birth once by the age of nineteen (Kaufman, De Wet and Stadler, 2001). They do, however, have the right to return to school after giving birth, as they have the right to quality education as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Section 29. This also means that they cannot be expelled or suspended. Many of these teenage mothers return to school as they perceive education as

the key factor in gaining access to good employment (Kaufman, De Wet and Stadler, 2001: 155). This, however, is in contrast to many other developing countries where teenage mothers cannot return to school after giving birth (Kaufman, De Wet and Stadler, 2001: 147 and 155). This marks the end of education for them; for example, in Mozambique girls who fall pregnant are automatically expelled from school and in countries such as Togo and Zanzibar, by law, these girls have to drop out of school (Chilisa, 2002: 23).

The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) policy on managing learner pregnancy in South Africa stipulates that the school principal has to make every effort and follow special procedures to ensure that pregnant girls return to school after giving birth, as they have the same rights and privileges as any other learner to quality education (WCED, 2003b: 1). However, Chigona (2007: 209), in her study on teen mothers, found that this policy has certain shortcomings as schools partially comply with it. She indicates that some of the reasons are:

- Schools have problems implementing the policy as it has little consideration on how schools respond to the special needs of teenage mothers;
- Schools and teachers do not make special provisions to address the learning difficulties that hinder the teen mothers' education process;
- Some principals are not sympathetic to the needs of teen mothers and therefore do not make special arrangements to accommodate them; and
- Teachers do not have the necessary skills to deal with the teen mothers situation (2007: 180)

Chigona (2007: 159) asserts that teenage mothers need support and encouragement to aid their academic performance. Failure to obtain support from their school and home environment results in poor academic performance and may even cause many of them to drop out of school.

Pursuing a similar line of argument, Jean-Jacques and Loeber (2007: 299) state that the consequences of teenage pregnancy include failure at school, dependency on welfare systems, and educational problems affecting the child due to intellectual and emotional inadequacy of the very young mother. Teenage mothers have a higher risk of poor health for themselves and their children as well as "social, cultural and economic regression" (Jean-Jacques and Loeber, 2007: 299).

The educational consequences of teenage pregnancy are that these teenage mothers run a risk of not obtaining the educational skills needed to become self-supporting, economically

productive citizens, something which often results in their children entering the educational system with economic and developmental disadvantages (WCED, 2003b: 3).

2.4.3 Gangsterism

Sociologists tend to concentrate on deviant behaviour as the cause of crime. When prescribed goals are sought by all members of society, certain means to achieve those goals become institutionalised as right and proper. However, when certain groups are constantly denied access to those means, these groups may reject the goals or turn to deviant behaviour to achieve those goals, by causing crime as well as joining gangs (Montero and McDowell, 1986: 381). Dixon (2002) agrees with Montero and McDowell (1986) and suggests that crime in general is “typical of societies going through transition”. Dixon (2002) explains that after World War 2 every city in the United States, Europe and Asia was characterised by the spontaneous development of gangs.

This perspective could also explain the reason for gangsterism in the Western Cape as many subcultures arose during the apartheid years. According to Kinnes (1995: 2), when the Group Areas Act was implemented in 1950, non-White people were forcibly removed from their homes and relocated throughout the Cape Flats area of Cape Town in the Western Cape, as was explained above. This also correlates with MacMaster (2007: 278), as she indicates that gangsterism has been a part of the communities of the Cape Flats since the establishment of townships under apartheid laws, such as the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Population Registration Act (1950). The result of this forced removal helped disperse gangsterism throughout the Cape Flats (Standing, 2006: 11; Herrendorfer, 2004: 3) as some of these disadvantaged groups, who were constantly denied access to the many privileges that were afforded to White people, turned to deviant behaviours, such as crime and forming gangs, in order to achieve those means that were only accessible to White people. This is confirmed by Pinnock and Schärf (1984: 99) who indicate that the main reason for the formation of gangs is the fact that there was “stark poverty in an equally impoverished environment”. MacMaster (2007: 279) states that one of the first gangs in Cape Town, *Globe*, can be traced back to 1937, in the old District Six, and over the years gangs like the *Americans*, the *Hard Living Kids*, *Sexy Boys*, *Dixie Boys*, *Yuru Cats*, *Laughing Boys*, the *Born Free Kids*, *Scorpions*, *Cisco Yakkies*, *Sicilians*, *Cape Town Scorpions*, *Naughty Boys*, *Nice Time Kids*, *Junky Funky Kids* and *Corner Boys* became household names on the Cape Flats. The American gangster-rap-influenced spin-offs such as the *Westsiders*, *Eastsiders* or *No Fears* became prevalent in schools.

Standing (2006: 12) indicates that Pinnock and Schärf's theory of the reason for the formation of gangs on the Cape Flats can be linked to the social disorganization perspective. He points out that the formation of gangs were caused as a result of 'social disorganization' that was created by forced removal and the fact that non-white people were uprooted from their homes (Standing, 2006: 12). Pinnock and Schärf (1984: 56) state that people complained, "Individual people were moved to the Cape Flats and not whole neighbourhoods". He explains that when these people were moved all over the Cape Flats area there was a breakdown of family control and extended family ties. There was also an escalated divorce rate, increase of single parent households, and tension within the households (Pinnock and Schärf, 1984: 56). It was during this period that many children formed gangs in order to cope with their frustrations as well as act defiantly in order to survive (Pinnock and Schärf, 1984: 54).

However, even today gangsterism in South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape, remains an insidious problem. Marais (2001) suggests that South Africa remains one of the most violent countries in the world. It is estimated that between 40 to 60% of crime is related to gang activity in the Western Cape (Nott, Shapiro and Theron, 1990:1; Kinnes, 1995). Kagee and Frank (2005: 5) note that gang activity has been identified as one of the main causes of serious violent crimes in the Western Cape. This is also confirmed by Standing (2006: 256) who reports that gangs cause up to 70% of all crime on the Cape Flats. The Department of Community Safety (2005: 12) reveals that the gang members are becoming younger and start from around ages twelve and thirteen. This correlates with the findings from the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2006: 3), which indicates that gang activity has filtered into schools with the result that there is now an increase of gang membership among learners and gang-related incidents on school grounds.

Many of the social problems such as drug addiction are also linked to gangsterism in the community (Reckson and Becker, 2005: 114). The Western Cape has been estimated to have about 100, 000 gang members (Reckson and Becker, 2005: 107) and every year there are more murders in Cape Town alone than in the whole of Britain (Nott *et al.*, 1990: 1). Merton (2002: 196) states that gang members are responsible for most of the crime such as house breaking, car break-ins and thefts. They terrorise communities with drive-by shootings, rape (which could lead to teenage pregnancy) and intimidation (Merton, 2002: 196). In an interview conducted by Nott *et al.*'s study on gangsterism, one Grade Six learner recounts: "They (gang members) sell drugs in front of children and tell innocent teenagers to sell it for them. They influence teenagers to try it and then the children feel high and then they tell them to break into houses then they steal video machines, jewellery and other things" (Nott *et al.*, 1990: 5).

According to Reckson and Becker (2005: 109), gangsterism results from wider social, political and historical contexts. This problem is exacerbated by factors such as unemployment, poverty, lack of community concern, poor school policies and inadequate social services (Reckson and Becker, 2005: 109; WCED, 2005: 5). These factors can cause learners to drop out of school, which can further lead them to a life of crime. MacMaster (2007: 278) believes that gangsterism is rooted in multiple socio-economic and political causes, and it affects the lives of individuals, families and whole communities. However, Bezuidenhout's (2006: 74) argument is closely linked to both the social disorganization perspective and the deviant behaviour perspective as he points out that teenagers join gangs because of poor parenting, peer pressure and poverty. As such these teenagers may engage in other risky behaviours such as taking and selling drugs which are characteristics of the gang culture (Bezuidenhout, 2006: 74).

2.5 Preparedness of teachers in dealing with the three social problems:

Insights from the literature

Before discussing the preparedness of teachers in dealing with the three social problems, I will briefly review the Department of Education's Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE). Teachers are expected to fulfil the various seven roles as outlined in the NSE (Department of Education, 2000, 13-14). One of these roles that deal with learners' social problems is lodged within the community, citizenship and pastoral care role. Teachers need to meet criteria such as demonstrating the ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for all learners; responding to the educational and others needs of learners and their colleagues; developing supportive relationships with parents and other key people; and developing supportive relationships with organisations which understand community and environmental development issues (Department of Education, 2000: 14). The role of community, citizenship and pastoral care entails that the teacher has practical, foundational as well as reflexive applied competences.

Practical competence with reference to this particular role requires a teacher to guide, counsel and tutor learners in need of assistance with social or learning problems and to demonstrate the ability to respond to current social and educational problems with particular emphasis on the issues of violence, drug abuse, poverty, child and women abuse, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation. DoE (2000: 18) points out that teachers should access and work in conjunction with professional services to deal with these issues; demonstrate caring, committed and ethical professional behaviour which includes an understanding of education in dealing with the protection of children and the development of the whole person; as well as play a role as a mentor and support student-teachers and colleagues.

Foundational competence requires the teacher to have an extensive knowledge about community problems; be knowledgeable of learning barriers and how to overcome these barriers; be knowledgeable about child, adolescent and formative development in order to contribute to the holistic development of the learners as well as work in partnership with support services (DoE, 2000: 19). The NSE stipulates that the foundational competence needs to be developed in the initial teacher qualification (DoE, 2000: 11).

Reflexive competence requires a teacher to recognise and judge appropriate intervention strategies to cope with learning and other difficulties; reflect on systems of continued professional development and critically analyse the degree to which the curriculum addresses barriers to learning, environmental and human rights issues (DoE, 2000: 20).

2.5.1 Literature on Drug addiction

Drugs affect learners psychologically, physiologically and emotionally (Department of Education, 2002: 3). Because learners spend a great deal of their time in the school setting, the teacher has become the key element in helping learners combat drug addiction and, in so doing, learn more effectively (Pillay, 2000: 75; Bezuidenhout, 2004: 94). It is for this reason that the teacher has to become more aware and able to deal with this crisis. Most of the drug prevention literature also indicates that when schools and teachers implement drug prevention programmes, it can moderately reduce drug usage (Dusenbury and Falco, 1995; Pillay, 2000).

The Department of Education (DoE) in conjunction with the South African Police Services (SAPS) identifies the importance of training of teachers with regard to drug abuse (SAPS and DoE, 2002). According to them, part of the solution depends on the teachers' ability to identify the signs of drug use and to implement interventions successfully in order to assist learners (SAPS and DoE, 2002: 74). They indicate that warning signs - a drop in academic performance; sudden mood swings; unusual aggression or apathy; change of friends; loss of interest in hobbies, school or sport; becoming secretive; tiredness and bouts of drowsiness; unexplained loss of possessions; unusual smell of stains on the body and clothes; change in appearance such as less interest in personal hygiene; gain or loss of weight - can indicate that a learner is using drugs or alcohol. However, they also state that these signs can be confused with those of normal adolescence and suggest it is important that teachers look for patterns of behaviour changes (SAPS and DoE, 2002: 72). This is substantiated by Fisher and Harrison (2000: 90) who state that "deterioration in academic performance, increased absenteeism and truancy, fighting, verbal abuse, defiance, or withdrawal, is indicators of substance abuse." The Drug Abuse Policy Framework also stipulates that all teachers, pre-

service and in-service, should be provided with training on drug use, misuse and coping mechanisms for learners (DoE, 2002: 6).

Globally, research also indicates that there is a need for the training of teachers in dealing with drug addiction. In 1971, Weinberg noted that teachers did not have adequate training to handle drug addiction in the classroom. He stated: "They [teachers] are not trained, they are not knowledgeable, and most important, they will not be convincing to many students in slum schools where drug traffic is heavy" (Weinberg, 1971: 95). Even today, more than three decades later, schools and teachers are still struggling to handle this social problem (Zastrow, 2000: 328). Many teachers are confronted with the question of what kind of training is necessary to handle various social problems related to drug addiction. Weinberg (1971: 102) is of the opinion that the solution may lie in exposing teachers to the social workers and other personnel who specialise in working with drug addiction. These social workers and personnel can provide teachers with information and literature on drug education. Another solution may be to place teachers in drug clinics so that they are directly exposed to this social problem and how it is handled in these clinics (Weinberg, 1971: 102). According to Weinberg (1971: 103), it is important that drug education be incorporated into the curricula of many colleges and universities that train teachers so that they are able to handle these social problems before they go into the classroom.

A study conducted by Finn and Willert (2006: 39) revealed that a very limited number of teachers had received training in dealing with drug abuse or had the necessary knowledge to deal with learners addicted to drugs. Teachers play important roles in identifying and responding to learners using drugs. In their study, most teachers revealed that they had knowledge about the school's drug policies, although teachers with more than five years of teaching experience were more knowledgeable. Teachers did not feel that the drug policies in their schools were effective (Finn and Willert, 2006: 40). Harris (1998: 274) in her study points out that drug education does not form part of the curriculum for pre-service training in the United Kingdom. This results in qualified teachers shying away from the subject, as they feel anxious when dealing with this aspect. Many of them feel it is a sensitive issue and they do not have the expertise to deal with drug abuse (Harris, 1998: 278). In the same study, even though they do acknowledge the importance of this issue, these teachers still feel it is not their responsibility to deal with it (Harris, 1998: 280).

While drug abuse experienced by learners are seen by many teachers as the parents' responsibility, schools and teachers have become, according to Pillay (2000: 75), the "surrogate home and parent to children" today. Teachers are forced to assume this responsibility as parents lack the skills and knowledge to deal with it appropriately (Pillay,

2000: 75). Since teachers spend long hours of contact time with learners, they are able to contribute positively and promote holistic learning. This correlates with Rosebrock's study as he indicates that society expects the schools and teachers to deal with substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, gang involvement and violence (1996: 147). Van Hout and Connor (2008: 81) also assert that teachers felt that dealing with social problems such as drug addiction was incompatible with their role as a teacher. Pillay (2000: 75) states that if teachers are trained to identify learners with drug abuse problems, it can serve as an early preventative measure. Dwyer, Nicholson, Battistutta and Oldenburg (2005: 24) agree with Pillay (2000) and provide a Family Risk Factor checklist for teachers to identify at-risk learners for preventative and intervention programmes.

Meers, Werch, Hedrick and Leppers (1995: 47) agree that there is a need for teachers to be trained to deal with alcohol and drug use in schools. This resulted in the state of Florida devising a training model where sample teachers were given the necessary training. This course equipped these teachers to develop prevention strategies and enabled them to recognise learners who were at high risk and learners who experimented with drugs and alcohol. The training model was effective as it equipped these teachers to recognise and provide interventions for learners with these problems. Another advantage of this training model was that it increased their eagerness to participate in preventative and intervention programmes. However, the short-term teacher-training programme was subject to limitations as it was felt that a more long-term programme was needed (Meers *et al.*, 1995: 50).

Zastrow (2000: 327) suggests that in the United States, 50% of teachers in surveys regret choosing teaching as a profession. Statistics reveal that less than one in five new teachers stay in the profession after ten years; many leave due to distressing working conditions (Zastrow, 2000: 328). The working conditions of the teachers in the United States has become intolerable as many teachers spend more of their time keeping the peace in the classroom than actually teaching their learners. There is a high incidence of drug and alcohol addiction among adolescents. The high student-teacher ratio also has a significant impact on the teachers as they find it more and more difficult to give individualised instruction (Zastrow, 2000: 328). Finn and Willert state that teachers working in large classes might overlook learners who may be using drugs as these learners might remain quiet and non-disruptive in the class. The fact that a learner is unresponsive during a class discussion does not necessarily indicate that a learner is using drugs; it might indicate that this learner is merely shy or bored or has a learning problem (Finn and Willert, 2006: 41).

A study conducted in Ireland by Van Hout and Connor (2008: 87) notes that teachers were not trained to recognise the signs of drug and alcohol use. They also agree with Pillay (2000) that teachers need information and specific training in order to identify the signs of drug and

alcohol use among their learners since teachers indicated that this social problem impacted on their classes and on some of their learners' academic performance. Van Hout and Connor (2008: 81), concur with Zastrow (2000: 328), Meers *et al.* (1995), Finn and Willert (2006: 39) and Weinberg (1971) and explain that many teachers do not feel adequately prepared to deal with these social problems, lacking appropriate training and having insufficient time in their curriculum to deal with these issues.

In the past educational programmes tried scare tactics, such as showing pictures and videos of fatal car accidents after drug use, in order to stop learners from the use of drugs and alcohol in school. However, this tactic appeared ineffective, as adolescents would see their parents and friends using drugs without tragic consequences (Zastrow, 2000: 118). In the past two decades, there were more preventative measures made in the United States in order to curb drug and alcohol addiction in schools. This is due to the fact that the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act implemented in 1987 required every school in the United States to educate learners about the risks associated with the use of drugs and other substances. Schools therefore had a number of options for complying with the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act, and different schools used a combination of approaches (deKoven, 2007: 28). Extensive drug prevention programmes are tailored to the age level of the learners. Examples of such prevention programmes in the United States are:

- The All Stars Plus school-based drug abuse prevention programme for 11 to 14 year olds which focuses on protecting learners from drug use and developing three competencies: goal setting, decision making, and skills to resist peer pressure. This programme was effective in preventing drug use (Hansen and Dusenbury, 2004: 371);
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E), a police sponsored programme, at primary school level and various clubs, retreats and lock-ins at high school levels, using a variety of approaches, including pointing out the risks of drug use, providing accurate information on drugs and its effects, providing instructions on how to be assertive and withstand peer pressure to using drugs, providing drug-free activities, and enhancing self-esteem (Zastrow, 2000: 118).

However, Zastrow (2000: 118) indicates that although preventative programmes have assisted in deterring the drug and alcohol abuse in the United States, this social problem still exists. According to Zastrow (2000: 118), Americans believe that "There is a pill for everything". He proposes that one of the reasons why there is such a high incidence of drug addiction is a belief by the Americans that they can solve every problem by medically treating it. In such a society medication is the norm, and it is easier and faster to solve problems and stress by using drugs, alcohol and tobacco. It is important that

society is educated to convey the message that drugs do not solve life problems; they only increase problems (Zastrow, 2000: 118).

2.5.2 Literature on Teenage pregnancy

In South Africa, Jean-Jacques and Loeber (2007) suggest that parents, teachers and health care professionals should start accepting teenage sexuality as a reality and should formulate a strategy to decrease the number of teenage pregnancies. They state that it is important the schools should take an active role to raise the awareness of sex education and that schools should also include qualified professionals other than teachers to assist in this matter (Jean-Jacques and Loeber, 2007: 301).

However, Theron and Dunn's (2006: 496) study on coping strategies for adolescent mothers advocated that the Life Orientation teachers at schools should provide guidelines to support teenage mothers who return to school. They suggest the following:

- Assisting teenage mothers in decision making skills and guiding them before, during and after their decision about keeping their child or putting their child up for adoption;
- Providing them with information on their rights and the legal process surrounding teenage pregnancies and adoption;
- Counselling to empower them come to terms with their experience and grief;
- Reaching out to these learners who may feel isolated;
- Assertiveness training so that they are empowered to stand up for themselves and to ask for necessary support;
- Encouragement to become an active part of the school community, to find a new focus for living; and
- Practical, curricular assistance to help them to catch up with all the work lost with sensitive peer mentoring recommended (Theron and Dunn, 2006: 496).

Learners who were supported by their teachers showed some improvement in their academic performance (Theron and Dunn, 2006: 496). However, the authors stated that even though teachers supported and motivated learners, some of their academic performance still declined. This could be due to various factors such as lack of support at home, decline of health due to gestational hypertension, anaemia, poor nutritional status, etc, (Jean-Jacques and Loeber, 2007: 299) and grief following adoption of their babies (Theron and Dunn, 2006: 496).

In 1999 the Hispanas Unidas, a local non-profit social justice organisation in San Antonio, also designed and implemented a culturally informed after-school programme, called Escuelitas (Spanish for 'little schools'), in order to address teen pregnancy among Mexican

American youth (Mendez-Negrete, Saldana and Vega, 2006: 96). Ninety-seven university and college students plus ninety Hispanic and Mexican role models and speakers volunteered to make presentations and assist girls to develop personal and leadership skills. The programme targeted girls from Grades Three to Eight and included those who were at risk personally and socially, those from low income families and those struggling with their academic performance, self-esteem and social integration. The programme focused on development of academic skills, social and cultural skills and personal skills development. It provided tutoring, leadership activities and support structures (Mendez-Negrete *et al.*, 2006: 96). The Escuelitas programme offered a positive preventative strategy for addressing teenage pregnancy as it focused on targeting factors affecting teenage pregnancy rates and in so doing improved the self-esteem of girls (Mendez-Negrete *et al.*, 2006: 103).

East (1998) offers another strategy in preventing teenage pregnancy. She suggests that young sisters of teen mothers are targeted in order to prevent them from repeating the same pattern as their sisters. Several studies confirm that young sisters of teen mothers have a higher rate of early pregnancy, i.e. two to six times more, than other young females (Cox, Emas and Bithoney, 1993; Friede *et al.*, 1986). East (1998: 169) suggests that this programme is more effective in a school setting as teachers and staff are able to identify these young sisters and can thus set out to create positive relationships with them. She also suggests that schools usually have staff that have the knowledge and experience to deal with teenagers and that they are more 'teen-sensitive' (East, 1998: 169).

However, Schultz's study on teenage pregnancy revealed that while some teenage girls said their academic success was due to the fact they avoided becoming pregnant, there were teen mothers in her study who revealed their academic successes were partly due to their persistence to continue studying because they wanted a better future for their children (2001: 582). She suggests teachers and policy makers should start to change their mindsets, stop thinking of teenage pregnancies as a problem, and start to "re-imagine and redefine the opportunities available for young women in high schools" (Schultz, 2001: 582). She explains that once teachers and policy makers change their perceptions of teenage pregnancies from being a problem to viewing it as a reality, they can begin to perceive it as a motivating factor and assist young mothers to plan their future accordingly. It is therefore important that teachers include difficult and controversial issues into their curriculum to encourage learners to speak openly and honestly, and those skills should be taught at teacher training institutions where new teachers are prepared.

2.5.3 Literature on Gangsterism

Teachers working in schools with a high incidence of gang activity have to deal with additional stressors such as fearing for their own lives (Morell, 2002: 37), truancy, drug use, ill-discipline and disrespect (Arendse, 2001), as well as receiving death threats from their own learners (Benjamin, 2001).

Learners fear for their lives as gang members enter their school grounds, intimidate them and vandalise their school environment. This can cause learners to become depressed and to lose interest in their schooling (Wilson, 2000). According to Mingo (1999), learners living under these circumstances have experienced feelings of distrust, hyperactivity, nightmares, violent outbursts, stress and irritability.

In the study conducted by Dos Reis (2007: 93) she found that teachers working in schools with high incidence of gangsterism have to deal with learners with the above-mentioned stressors and this infringes on the teaching and learning process. Teachers felt they had to fulfil multiple roles, such as counsellor, guardian, and/or medical professional. Dos Reis found that teachers are not trained to deal with gangsterism and related social problems (2007: 91). Reckson and Becker (2005: 113) indicate that while some teachers felt helpless in dealing with gangsterism other teachers made attempts to deal with it by finding imaginative ways of dealing with gang-violent confrontations. Reckson and Becker (2005: 114) suggest that teachers learned to contain learners' aggression and respond calmly to learners' anxiety. They also offered support by listening to the learners speak about gang violence.

According to Bailey and Collins (2004: 264), teachers in their study addressed learners' problems by letting learners talk about their weekend events on a Monday morning. Teachers found this strategy to be helpful as it gave the learners the opportunity to express their feelings openly. In Bailey and Collins' (2004: 266) study, it was revealed that teachers lack the capacity and feel untrained in managing the learners' problems. This frustration is exacerbated by the fact that they are already overloaded by educational responsibilities. These teachers feel they have to "juggle a lot of different tasks at the same time" (Bailey and Collins, 2004: 266). Reckson and Becker (2005) and Vigil (1999: 270) concur that teachers need support from other organisations in assisting learners as well as other staff members to deal with learners' family problems. They believe that a preventive or intervention programme presented by an outside organisation is far more advantageous because it "stimulates the class, motivates the teacher and inspires new ideas" (Bailey and Collins, 2004: 267).

Vigil (1999: 270) suggests that gangsterism cannot be dealt with solely by the school or the teacher. The education department, the community, the parents as well as other social service organisations should jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to curb learners from becoming gang members. In the United States, intervention programmes may be more effective if they are included as part of the school curricula (Winfree, Esbensen and Osgood, 1996: 181). However, Winfree *et al.* (1994: 147) point out that it is very important that the community be included to combat gangsterism and prevent the youth from becoming gang members. Van Wyk and Theron (2005: 58) reiterate this point and suggest that intervention or prevention programmes can be successful if they are developed and implemented by the youth in conjunction with adults' physical, emotional and financial support.

Nott *et al.* (1990: 3) agree with Van Wyk and Theron (2005: 58) and point out that if we want to eradicate or reduce gangsterism, it takes the whole community. They state that schools are not the only institutions involved in preventing youth from becoming gang members. However, they emphasise that teachers have to become alert and start to recognise the signs, such as a change in the learner's behaviour, his/her attitude towards school work, truancy, as well as poor academic performance. Teachers can usually assist these learners by offering them support or seeking advice from other support services, such as social workers, and community organisations (Nott *et al.* 1990: 13).

Vigil (1999: 284) asserts that it is important that teachers' education courses and workshops educate teachers about the dynamics and culture of gangs. Teachers who are well informed are "more likely to experience a change of attitude toward gang members and in turn, better understand and work with parents to help with the children's education" (Vigil, 1999: 281). He also suggests that parents, teachers and the community should jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to curb learners from becoming gang members, such as monitoring learners' time and recording or observing unusual or aggressive behaviour (Vigil, 1999: 281-282).

Nott *et al.* (1990: 13) also point out that schools need to consult with social workers that are trained in dealing with these social problems. This is confirmed by Sathiparasad and Taylor (2005: 271) who also observe that social workers are trained and have the necessary skills and knowledge to assist schools. Social workers can thus provide teachers, staff and parents with training, to assist them to recognise the signs learners show when they become involved in gangs (Nott *et al.*, 1990: 13). Social workers can also run workshops or draw up preventive and intervention strategies aimed at dealing with gangsterism and other social problems at schools (Nott *et al.*, 1990, 13; Sathiparasad and Taylor, 2005: 272).

However, both Nott *et al.* and Sathiparasad and Taylor indicate that one of the downfalls of the Department of Education in South Africa is that there are very few social workers and guidance counsellors at schools. It is imperative that more social workers be employed in order to assist schools in dealing with this and other social problems (Nott *et al.*, 1990: 14; Sathiparasad and Taylor, 2005: 272).

In the United States a gang prevention programme called the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) was implemented to reduce gangsterism at schools. This programme targeted all learners from primary schools, and not necessarily at-risk youths. The aims of the G.R.E.A.T programme were to firstly, reduce involvement with gangs, secondly, teach learners the consequences of becoming involved in a gang and lastly, assist them to develop positive attitudes towards the police. The programme is presented by law enforcement officials at schools where the learners are taught goal setting, assertiveness techniques to resist peer pressure, conflict management and knowledge about how gangs impact on their lives (Esbensen, 2004:1).

Esbensen (2004:1) found that the programme was effective as it helped learners to develop positive attitudes towards the police and taught them the consequences of becoming involved in gangs. However, it did not prevent youth from becoming gang members. This intervention programme is similar to the project called Circle Time, developed by Think Twice, a non-profit organisation in South Africa, which provides life skills training to learners at schools. This project uses teachers as co-presenters and thus empowers teachers struggling to teach life skills classes (Bailey and Collins, 2004: 260). Learners are also taught the immediate short term and long-term consequences of taking drugs or belonging to gangs (Bailey and Collins, 2004: 267).

Bailey and Collins (2004: 270) recommend that an intervention programme which includes peer counselling and support, life skills training, assertiveness training skills and conflict management skills can be very useful to assist teachers and learners.

2.6 South African school procedures on dealing with social issues/problems

During the Education Budget speech in April 2005, the Minister of Education (MEC of the Western Cape), Cameron Dugmore, announced that the Education Department was doing everything to ensure safety in schools by creating a Safe Schools programme and division to assist schools with problems such as drug addiction, crime and gangsterism. This point was again reiterated during his legislature debate on school safety in May 2006, where he stated

that the Western Cape Education Departments' Safe Schools programme had made a valuable contribution to the safety of schools. He reported that it was this division's responsibility to record incidents of social problems, create intervention and preventive programmes in conjunction with schools, communities as well as community organisations, create a safe environment for learners and assist parents and teachers seeking guidance and information (WCED, 2005).

An article about at-risk youths, from the South African Cape Gateway's (2006) website which provides information on local, provincial and national government, reports that at-risk learners are those who have problems such as drug and/or alcohol abuse or going against the law. It stipulates that at risk-learners' social, emotional and/or behavioural problems are barriers to their learning and development. The report indicates that the Western Cape has five levels of support to prevent and resolve social, emotional and/or behavioural problems.

Level 1: Prevention in all schools

An early-warning system is implemented in all schools, which aims at identifying learners and their families who are vulnerable. Every effort is made in the classroom to prevent social, emotional and/or behavioural problems from occurring or deteriorating.

Level 2: Early intervention in all schools

Emotional support and guidance are provided for learners who are struggling with social, emotional and/or behavioural barriers to learning in the classroom.

Level 3: School-based support programmes

School-based support programmes, youth development programmes and interventions are provided for all learners who are identified as being at-risk.

Level 4: Youth care and education centres

When learners do not benefit from the above support programme, referrals to a residential or developmental programme at a youth care and education centre are considered. The principle of using the least restrictive and most empowering (normative) environment applies throughout the system.

Learners are referred to these centres that provide accommodation and a structured programme. There are four Youth Care and Education Centres in the Western Cape.

The framework for good practice in these institutions is based on the standards laid down by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These standards aim at:

- Building capacity of teachers and principals to meet the challenges of dealing with learners experiencing or at-risk of experiencing, social, emotional and/or behavioural barriers to their development;
- Improving services to learners at-risk; and
- Ensuring the safety, education and development of these learners (Cape Gateway, 2006).

Level 5: Special youth care and education centres

Special care is provided to learners who are in conflict with the law or in severe emotional turmoil and who may need to be physically, emotionally and/or behaviourally contained. Learners are referred to these centres by the courts under the relevant legislation for compulsory residence. Each learner is provided with an individual development plan to help him or her to be rehabilitated. A psychologist, occupational therapist, professional nurse and social worker are available at the centre for consultation. Teachers are specially trained in child-care theory and practice. There are two such youth centres in the Western Cape:

- De Novo Special Youth Care Centre; and
- Eureka Special Youth Care Centre (Cape Gateway, 2006).

2.7 Conclusion

The literature review is conceptualised within the critical perspective. Borrowing from the earlier perspectives of labelling and social constructionism, the critical perspective gives a broad historical view of the foundations of social problems among high school learners in South Africa. Within this context the literature focused on the three social problems of drug addiction, teenage pregnancy and gangsterism as a way of providing some general insights into the nature and scope of some of the social problems in South African schools. I outlined what the literature portrays about the preparedness of teachers in dealing with each social problem. Teachers' ability to identify, recognise and find interventions to successfully assist learners with social problems were discussed.

Other social problems that emanate from the findings are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 explains the methodological process, research design and the process used to collect the data.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the methodological framework and research design used in the study. Sampling is outlined and the data collection and interview process is discussed. Trustworthiness is also addressed. The chapter concludes by highlighting the process of data analysis.

3.2 Main research question

The main research question for this study is: How do teachers deal with learners' social problems?

Sub-research question

In an attempt to answer the main research question the following question is pertinent: How are teachers prepared in their training to deal with learners' social problems?

3.3 Methodological framework

This study is located within an interpretive research framework. According to Henning (2004: 21):

Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand social members' definitions and understanding of situations. The interpretive paradigm does not concern itself with the search for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather seeks to produce descriptive analyses that emphasise deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena.

This study is in line with Henning's definition of the interpretive research framework as its aim is to gain a deeper understanding of how teachers deal with learners' social problems.

3.4 Research design

This study uses a qualitative research framework. This is a more suitable approach to select for this study as it focuses on researching teachers in their school setting (Winter, 2000: 7). Fraenkel and Wallen (2005: 15/16, 431) are of the opinion that a qualitative researcher generally attempts to:

- Become immersed in the research process;
- Concern herself with how teachers deal with learners' social problems from the teachers viewpoint as they can feel that they form part of the research process; and

- Collect data in the form of words and not numbers and use interviews, field notes, audio-recordings, or anything else in the search of how teachers deal with learners' social problems.

3.4.1 Method

Setting

The study population is confined to four public high schools in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town where social problems are rife. The Cape Flats is a large flat area situated in the Cape Town Metropole. The apartheid government legally (legislated by the 1950s Groups Areas Act) forced non-White people out of more central urban areas designated for White people and placed them into informal settlements in the Cape Flats. Even though people are no longer legally bound by racial restrictions, most of them, due to their financial restrictions, are still bound to the Cape Flats area (Standing, 2003: 1) and have thus become a home to many people who warily live outside the formal economy (Standing, 2003: 2). Some of the suburbs in the Cape Flats are: Athlone, Belhar, Bonteheuwel, Crawford, Epping, Grassy Park, Lansdowne and Manenberg. Schools from disadvantaged communities located in the Athlone, Crawford and Lansdowne suburbs where social problems are prevalent were selected for the study. The local community newspaper reported on incidents of social problems that occurred at some of the purposefully selected schools and this was partly how I identified my research sample. The other schools were identified through my personal knowledge of the Cape Flats area.

Piloting

I first piloted the interview schedule (Appendix A) with two teachers who did not form part of the sample. The purpose of the pilot was to get a feel of important issues and to use the information to construct the final semi-structured interview schedule. It gave me the opportunity to gain an overview of what the major social problems are at schools and how teachers deal with them. The pilot study was also used in an attempt to gain insight into problems that can be anticipated during the interview process. Piloting the interview schedule also contributed to ensuring reliability (Struwig and Stead, 2007: 135). The pilot study confirmed that there were no reasons to revise the questions.

Sampling

Once the pilot study was completed, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents. According to Wiersma (1995: 214), purposive sampling is a good technique as the respondents selected are relevant to the study. This type is also known as purposeful, judgment or judgmental sampling (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 175). It required me to search for quality-rich respondents who were knowledgeable and informative about the

learners' social problems and could thus contribute to the research study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 401). Only a few cases were studied at a time in order to gain as many insights about the research topic as possible (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 401).

There are many types of purposeful sampling; the one best suited for this study is criterion sampling. Criterion sampling was used to select a sample that is based on pre-determined criteria, as discussed below.

Three newly qualified teachers, those Zientek (2007: 963) defines as having obtained one to three years of teaching experience, were selected. In addition, one experienced teacher was selected in order to compare with the newly qualified teachers' preparedness. The experienced teacher was also a Life Orientation coordinator and former school counsellor.

All the four teachers worked in high schools where teenage learners' social problems are prevalent. Richter, *et al.* (2006), as well as Department of Social Development (2006: 4), report that a social problem such as drug addiction often begins in the early teenage years. The Reproductive Health Research Unit (2004) also indicates that pregnancy among 15 to 16 year-olds accounts for 7% of all teen pregnancy, while that among 17 to 19 year-olds accounts for 93% of all teen pregnancies (Harrison, 2008: 2). This is the reason why I chose teachers who are working with learners within these age groups.

Three of the respondents were teaching Life Orientation, as the Department of Education stipulates that the new Life Orientation curriculum should address issues of social problems (Department of Education, 2005: 11). Another respondent, who did not have Life Orientation training or experience, was selected because the *Signposts for Safe Schools* resource book, developed by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Department of Education (2002: 71), outlines that every teacher have to assist learners who are encountering social problems. I therefore intended to compare this teacher's handling of social problem issues to that of the trained teachers.

3.4.2 Data collection method

Interviews

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2005: 455), interviewing is the most important data collection method that a qualitative researcher uses. I used interviews as the method of collecting data. The aim of the interview is to discover what teachers think, feel and know (Henning, 2004: 9). This type of method is best suited for the study in order to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of how teachers deal with learners' social problems on a daily basis (Kvale, 1996: 105).

As with any research method, there are advantages and disadvantages attached. Bell (2005: 157) lists the following as advantages of interviewing:

- Interviews can yield more rich in-depth knowledge;
- Gestures, tone and facial expressions can be observed which contribute significantly to the interview process;
- Interviews are adaptable, allowing the interviewer to follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate feelings and emotions; and
- Responses can be developed and clarified during the interview process.

Wiersma (1980: 142) agrees and indicates that interviews are flexible and usually open ended ensuring that participants can respond freely. Where necessary, I probed the respondents and asked them for an elaboration or clarification of their responses.

The following points are regarded as disadvantages of interviewing, according to Bell (2005: 157):

- Only a relatively small number of respondents can be interviewed, limiting me to interview four teachers; and
- Interviews are time consuming and expensive.

I encountered the latter when I first visited the principals of each school. I decided to visit each school before the July vacation in order to explain my research study and ask if I could conduct my research at their school. Once they agreed, each principal had to identify a teacher at their school who fitted the sample criteria as discussed above. However, this was not a simple task as some principals, due to their busy schedules, referred the matter to another teacher and thus I had to re-explain my study. This matter was then referred back to the principal in order for him/her to give verbal permission. In such cases I had to wait even more than a week and also had to make follow-up phone calls to the principals to inquire whether permission was granted. Once the principals or teacher identified a respondent, I had to meet with each teacher in order to ask them if they would agree to participate in the study. All of these logistical arrangements were established before the July vacation, which was a month before the interviewing took place. This meant that I had to travel several times back and forth to the same school that was costly.

Due to the fact that the interviews were quite lengthy, as each interview lasted approximately thirty to sixty minutes, I employed someone to transcribe the interviews. This was an expensive process, as noted by Kvale (1996: 103). I made sure that the transcriptions were reliable by listening to the audio-recordings again to confirm if the transcriptions were accurately transcribed. Another way for ensuring reliability was to ask another colleague to confirm accuracy of the transcriptions.

Semi-structured interviews

For the purpose of the study, semi-structured (semi-standardised) interviews were used. Using this type of data-gathering technique ensured that I gained an in-depth understanding of how teachers deal with learners' social problems. A semi-structured interview is a more appropriate form of data-gathering technique as I was able to "respond to the situation at hand, to emerging worldviews of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1998: 74). It consisted of a mixture of more or less structured questions (Merriam, 1998: 74). The semi-structured interview schedule included a list of pre-determined questions concerned with aspects such as management of social problems, knowledge of procedures that are followed, as well as support given to learners when they encounter social problems (See attached Appendix A).

The interviews were conducted from July to August 2008. Teachers were interviewed individually. The interviews were scheduled at a time that were convenient for the teachers to avoid disruption of their daily activities. I found that interviewing respondents early in the morning rather than later in the school day elicited a greater depth of information as some teachers who were interviewed during the end of the school day were tired and less likely to respond in greater depth, requiring me to probe more deeply. The length of the interview was dependant on each respondent. At the start of the interview, I gave some introductory remarks and explanations of the procedure to be followed. I also provided the teachers with a copy of the interview schedule in order to indicate the areas to be explored during the course of the interview.

The interviews were also audio-recorded. The advantages of audio recording are that it keeps an accurate account of what was said and I was able to listen several times to the conversation when transcribing the data. However, there are some disadvantages when using audio recorders, such as the possibility of a malfunction. It was therefore useful to have two audio-recorders in case this occurred.

In addition, I made notes about teachers' feelings, body language and other observations during the interview that contributed to the credibility, richness and accuracy of the interview when transcribing and analysing the data (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2005: 431).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Struwig and Stead (2007: 66) propose that research ethics "provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally accepted way." Written permission was thus obtained from the Western Cape Education Department (Appendix B)

and thereafter written and verbal permission were sought from principals (Appendix C) and teachers before conducting the study. I respected the rights and dignity of the respondents by explaining that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could refuse or withdraw from taking part at any time. All participants were assured of complete confidentiality and that their names and institutions would remain anonymous. Permission was also obtained from teachers before recording them.

3.6 Trustworthiness

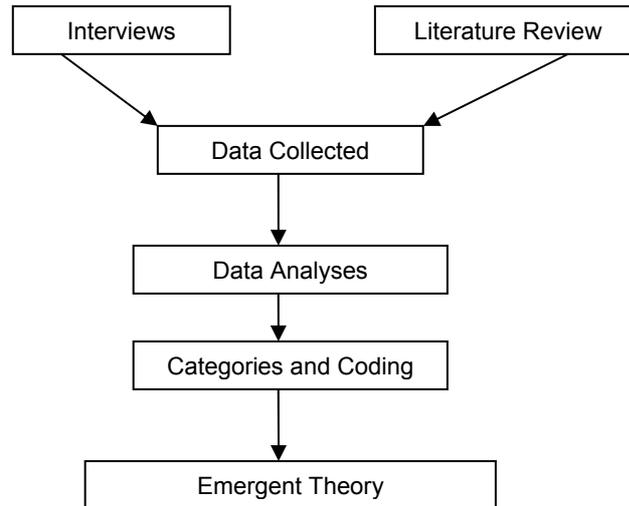
Terms such as trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability, consistency or dependability are key areas within qualitative research; dependability in qualitative research closely matches the notion of reliability in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003: 601). As my study is qualitative in nature I emphasise trustworthiness and dependability.

I enhanced trustworthiness (validity) of the research by recording each session which provided an accurate account of the interviews (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 410). Respondents were allowed to obtain a copy of their own transcribed interview for perusal in order to establish and confirm accuracy of information. They were also allowed to comment on the interpretations. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 277) refer to this as 'member checking' which allows the researcher to go back to the respondents in order to verify authenticity of information. This strategy made the data dependable as participating teachers were in a position to confirm or disapprove of the interpretations made. In an attempt to minimise bias I used the same questions, and the same wording; the venue was at their school premises and teachers were interviewed in their classrooms. I made every attempt to remain objective and neutral, not letting my experience as a teacher influence the interpretations of the responses, which enhanced dependability of the interpretations.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

The data were transcribed and kept in a computer file. The transcriptions were then given to a colleague who checked for any inaccuracies. The transcription was analysed using the grounded theory method. According to Glaser and Strauss (in Van Rensburg, 2001: 16) grounded theory is used by interpretivist researchers who want to "let the theory emerge from the data". The figure below explains grounded theory formulation.

Figure 3.1: Grounded Theory Process



Adapted from Chetty (2007:7)

I aimed at studying the data and letting themes emerge in order to reveal how the teachers deal with learners' social problems. The data were grouped and developed into categories and themes (Struwig and Stead, 2007: 169). For example, categories such as the social problems that schools and teachers are experiencing and indicators of social problems were identified. From these categories, drug addiction, single-parent households, poverty, disciplinary problems, inattention and lack of concentration were some of the themes that emerged.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I explained the research design and the process used to collect the data. The method of data collection employed was described in detail. The advantages and disadvantages of the data gathering technique were discussed in relation to the aims of the research problem and the procedures used for the collection of data. Concepts such as ethics and trustworthiness were explained in the context of this research study.

Chapter 4 will concentrate on the results of the collected data. The findings of the research will be presented. The data explain the knowledge and understanding of how teachers deal with learners' social problems.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings in response to the research question: How do teachers deal with learners' social problems?

In Chapter 3, I motivated the reason for a qualitative research framework. The semi-structured interview schedule was discussed in relation to the aims of the research problem and the procedures used for the collection of data.

The study focuses specifically on teachers teaching in high schools. The sample consists of four high school teachers in four different public schools in the Western Cape. For the purpose of the research and to ensure confidentiality the four respondents are identified as Respondent 1, 2, 3 and 4. Schools are identified as School A – D.

4.2 Respondents profile

The table below provides a background to the respondents.

Table 4.1 *Respondents profile*

Name	Gender	School	Started Teaching	Subject Taught	Qualifications
Respondent 1	Female	A	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Orientation (LO) • English 	B. A. and PGCE
Respondent 2	Female	B	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography 	B. Ed
Respondent 3	Male	C	1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LO • Geography 	B.SocSci. and B. Ed (Management)
Respondent 4	Male	D	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LO • Afrikaans 	B.A. (Human Movement Studies) and B.Ed (Physical Exercise Science)

Three newly qualified teachers and one experienced teacher were interviewed. The experienced teacher (Respondent 3) was interviewed to compare with the newly qualified teachers' preparedness. The experienced teacher was also included as he is the Life Orientation coordinator and a former school counsellor.

4.3 Social problems experienced at schools

The following table provides a summary of the kinds of social problems experienced. The teachers interviewed identified:

Table 4.2 Social problems that are experienced at the school

Social Problems	Respondent 1 (School A)	Respondent 2 (School B)	Respondent 3 (School C)	Respondent 4 (School D)
Drug addiction	√	√	√	√
Teenage Pregnancy	√			√
Sexually active	√			√
Single parent due to: • Divorce • Death	√	√ √	√	√
Child living with another relative		√	√	√
Gangsterism				√
Violence				√
Poverty	√		√	√
Alcoholism		√		√
Smoking		√		
Sexual Abuse				√

There are several observations that can be made from this table, and I discuss these below.

4.3.1 Drug addiction

When asked about the kinds of social problems that are experienced at their school, all four respondents indicated that drug addiction was a social problem.

Respondent 1 observed that:

The problem I have dealt with now is the drug use of a lot of the learners, a lot. They will come to school in a state. They have either smoked this morning, they've used Tik or they didn't sleep for a couple of days but they will still come to school. They will sit in the class but you see when you talk they don't listen. I'll notice that about a lot of kids.

Respondent 2 stated that she experienced learners smoking dagga in her class earlier that same day, Respondent 3 recounted two events.

*This boy (who was on the same train as the learner who was travelling to school) had a joint and they just smoked and he came to school and he was inebriated and then we had to deal with the consequences.
I had huge fight last year with a Grade 8 parent whose child was smoking dagga every single day and this parent just said, "But we are Rastafarians so that's part of our practice," and I responded quite officiously because we couldn't tolerate that kind of behaviour.*

Respondent 3 also suggested that those children that were experiencing family problems at home and where there was a lack of family support were the same children who abused drugs. He stated:

Kids are not communicating with their parents and there's some lack, you know, something in the family structure or support the child's not getting. That is why they turn to drugs.

4.3.2 Single-parent households

All four respondents indicated that divorce was a social problem at their schools. They also pointed out that some of their learners came from single-parent households. However, only Respondent 2 said this is a result of the death of the other parent.

Lots of them come from single-parent households because the mom or the dad has died. That I found surprising. You would assume it's because they got divorced but most of them, it's because one of the parents has died.

Three of the respondents reported that some learners did not stay with their parents but with another relative.

I found an incident where the mom got divorced from the father and the child is now living with the granny. The mother got remarried and now the child is pushed to the side and doesn't get the attention he needs. (Respondent 2)

Because single parents are alone, they often have great difficulty. It is often women who are alone and there's a thing in our community where many children don't actually stay with their parents. They often stay with granny or aunty because they come to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape or one of the rural areas and that presents peculiar problems because often these are the children who do give us problems er... (short pause) behavioural problems. (Respondent 3)

4.3.3 Poverty

The final significant observation with regard to social problems was evident in table 4.2 where the majority of the respondents revealed that their learners experienced poverty as a social problem. The following two extracts corroborated this finding:

Many of our problems are related to poverty. I think most of our parents are poor...Half of our parents don't even pay the school fees that is R600 and it is because they're unemployed or have very low paying jobs so they get exempted from school fees so to ask them to commit to drug rehabilitation programmes which maybe cost a few hundred or a few thousand rand sometimes is quite a problem. (Respondent 3)

Respondent 4 mentioned that some learners came from poor households. He stated that a learner would come to school without having anything to eat and even though the school had a soup kitchen, these learners would refuse to go to it. Respondent 4 explained:

That learner has built so much pride in himself that he won't go to receive a slice of bread at interval. He will think what his friends will say.

4.4 Indicators of social problems

Participating teachers were asked how they would identify and detect that their learners had a social problem. The findings were categorised into the following themes.

Table 4.3 *Indicators of social problems*

	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4
Discipline	Behaviour towards teachers Aggressive	Withdrawn Sitting alone Quiet Smoking dagga in class Talking in class Using insulting words	Lack of discipline/ Giving discipline problems Change in behaviour - aggressive	Don't adhere to authority No respect Discipline problems (out of hand) Head is down (despondent) Manipulate situation sexually. Display anger Verbal abuse Change in attitude
School work	Not doing class work or doing class work untidily	Refusal to do work		
Attention	Looks sleepy Passive (due to drugs)		Falling asleep Coming to school inebriated (due to drugs)	Not paying attention Drowsy (due to alcohol)
Physical Appearance	Not well- groomed Hair is uncut Eyes are yellow and dilated	Dress code is sloppy Hair is not brushed		Loss of weight
Hygiene	Reeked of dagga	Smells dirty		Smell on them
Attendance	Staying away from school for a month (if pregnant) Stay absent Coming late to class		Coming late to school	Not attending classes (truant)

The observations in Table 4.3 are discussed below.

4.4.1 Discipline

When asked how the respondents identified learners having social problems, the majority of them responded that the main indicators were when learners displayed disciplinary problems.

Respondent 4 found that learners, who came from single-parent households where there was no paternal role model, would not adhere to the teacher's authority. He stated:

There's no father figure for boys and girls in their household. It comes through in the classroom where they don't want to adhere to or submit to authority. At home there's no authority figure and they will display their anger in behaviour in the classroom. There's no one who loves me at home so the learner comes to school with that darkness inside of him, no support for me at home.

All four respondents pointed out that learners who have social problems displayed a change in their behaviour pattern and that they would become aggressive in the classroom. One of the interviewees' commented:

I take it from my Afrikaans class, some of the learners are so out of hand, loose, they have no respect for education because of what problems they are coming with... Their attitude, change in attitude. They become very aggressive sometimes. (Respondent 4)

Respondent 2 stated that she was able to identify if a learner was addicted to drugs due to her own personal background of having a brother addicted to drugs. She said that those learners who use methamphetamine (Tik) are aggressive in the classroom, which is not usually their pattern of behaviour.

The eyes. Usually if they're on dagga, the eyes will be yellow. If they're on Tik the pupil will be very big and they will just stare at you or they will usually er.....the ones that do dagga are very passive but the ones that do Tik are very aggressive. They'll stand up and say no miss, I didn't do that or they'll get up and start doing stuff in the class which is not usually their behaviour that you know. (Respondent 2)

Respondent 3 spoke about Tik usage also:

Tik sometimes makes them quite aggressive so suddenly you find quite placid children suddenly now starting to behave quite aggressively and that kind of thing and that's how we pick up and then we'll call other students in and investigate.

4.4.2 Attention

Three of the respondents indicated that learners did not pay attention in the classroom. A previous interview excerpt substantiated the above finding:

They will come to school in a state. They have either smoked this morning, they've used Tik or they didn't sleep for a couple of days but they will still come to school. They will sit in the class but you see when you talk they don't listen. (Respondent 1)

4.4.3 Physical appearance and hygiene

Three of the respondents identified learners with social problems by their physical appearance. The following excerpts pointed out the findings identified by the interviewees:

There are times you see physical changes in the learner, learners would lose weight. (Respondent 4)

Most of it comes from home where they don't get looked after the way that they should and then they're always trying to seek attention in class.... You can see it from the way they dress, they're sloppy sometimes. Um ... (brief pause) they don't have proper school uniforms, their hair isn't brushed. (Respondent 3)

Three of the respondents stated that they could detect learners who have social problems by their personal hygiene. For example one interviewee stated:

There was this boy, he reeked of dagga but he was here. He was sitting in class and saying like, "Miss I want to do the work." (Respondent 2)

Respondent 4 also supported the above interviewee's response:

Learners would then pick up drug abuse and you can smell and look at some learners and see that they're not here.

4.4.4 Attendance

Finally, all the respondents indicated that they were able to identify and detect social problems if the learner was constantly coming late to class (Respondents 1 and 3), was absent from school (Respondent 2) or did not attend classes (Respondent 4). For example one respondent commented:

For me, what I've noticed, if they have heavy social problems, they will stay absent on a Monday or they'll come late. (Respondent 1)

4.5 Academic performance

The teachers were asked how the social problems affected the learner's academic performance. All four teachers unanimously agreed that learners' academic performance decreased when they experienced social problems. Two of the respondents explained that the learners' poor academic performance was linked to absenteeism as well as truancy.

Most of the students who are the problem children with drugs are the ones whose work starts dropping and then most time they do very badly um...(slight pause) Often their attendance is not regular, they're late and so on or they just don't come to school and that obviously affects them. (Respondent 3)

However, Respondent 1 mentioned that teen mothers at her school, who returned after giving birth, would perform better academically, while learners who abused drugs would drop out of school.

If they want to improve their situation, it will increase and some problems, it will demote them. They will feel down. Usually I've noticed by the girls who has had a baby, it will make them work harder in class and if you find the drug problem, they will become depressed in class or they will become violent and they will drop out after a while. (Respondent 1)

4.6 Response and procedures followed

Participating teachers were asked how they responded to the learner that has a social problem and what procedures and actions they would follow. All respondents indicated that they would listen and play a supportive role to their learners when learners wanted to speak

about their problems. However, it is important to note that although all respondents were keen to listen to learners, two of the respondents felt quite hesitant to speak to learners alone in the class. Respondent 2 explained that she usually would have another teacher with her when she spoke to a learner.

You just want to cover yourself. That is why you always make sure there's another adult with you. Learners often turn around and say no, they didn't do it or um.....they turn a situation back on a teacher and make you out as a liar. Smoking the weed this morning, you just er... (slight pause) actually you have to cover yourself. You have to make sure there's someone to corroborate your story.

Respondent 4 also stated that he would not speak to any female learners alone:

I sensed that this learner had just needed someone to speak to and I actually put a barrier there and then afterwards I said to her, "Listen here, I can set you up with someone that will listen to you and that will advise you." With the boys I would say, "Ok, you want to speak to me, sit down."

The respondents had different reasons for not speaking alone to their learners. While Respondent 2 feared that her learners would misrepresent her, Respondent 4 felt that he would be accused of sexual harassment. Both of these respondents indicated that the reason for their fears was related to incidents in the media reports regarding learners accusing their teachers of sexual harassment. Upon probing, respondent 2 stated that she had been sexually harassed by one of the male learners. Even though she reported the incident to the principal, the principal informed the parents and only temporarily suspended the learner from her class for a week. The learner was thus free to roam around the school during that period which negatively reinforced the learner's behaviour.

The policy document, *Procedural manual for managing safety and security with Western Cape Education Department institutions* (WCED, 2003a: 12), stipulates procedures to be followed when a learner sexually harasses a teacher. However, it seems these procedures were not followed by the principal and were unknown to the teacher. Even though the teacher reported the incident to the principal, the principal did not arrange a disciplinary hearing. It is possible that the principal did not contact the circuit manager or with the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) responsible for making decisions on suspending a learner. It appears that the Education Management and Development Centre (EMDC) was not contacted which could have taken the responsibility to arrange programmes for this teacher in order to manage alternative corrective measures within a multi-functional team approach.

The majority of the respondents agreed on the procedures they would follow if they encountered learners having social problems. They explained that they would firstly phone the parents. They felt that if it was a serious case, they would inform the school heads (i.e.

the principal or vice-principal). Thereafter the school heads would contact the social worker, after permission had been granted from the parents.

4.7 Effects of social problems on other learners

When asked how other learners were affected in the class, three of the respondents revealed that other learners were negatively affected by learners that have social problems. They stated that learners found it hard to concentrate on their work (Respondents 1, 2 and 4). They mentioned that the learners would complain about not getting attention in the class as the teacher would only concentrate on those learners that have social problems (Respondents 1 and 4). One respondent mentioned that learners would either become withdrawn in the class, or start giving disciplinary problems in order to get attention from the teacher.

They fall into the same way, they'll start reacting like the others. Doing the same thing such as not handing in work, back chatting or disrupting the class, getting up, walking out, stuff like that. They're not using anything. Because they see the habits of the others (Respondent 1).

Although these respondents indicated a negative impact on other learners, Respondent 3 stated that the learners in his class were sympathetic and quite supportive to the learners that were experiencing a social problem.

They're quite supportive of each other. If somebody's going for formalised drug counselling they are actually very supportive which is quite nice. Um...(slight pause) and there's rarely like a very negative reaction because some of the drug abuse is widespread.

4.8 Effectiveness of school policy

To the question of the effectiveness of school policies as guides to learners' social problems, most of them found them ineffective.

Table 4.4 School policy

Code of Conduct	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4
Effective			√	
Ineffective	√	√		√

All four respondents agreed that a Code of Conduct was in place to deal with problems at school. However, when asked whether the school policy guided teachers in dealing with social problems, three of the respondents indicated that they found it to be ineffective.

There are two official levels, the school policies that we've got and the Code of Conduct and stuff like that. Usually at other schools if you're caught smoking or anything three times, then you are expelled. Here it doesn't happen. If you're caught smoking then your parents will be called in and later on you're back at school so they will start smoking again and nothing will happen to them. (Respondent 1)

Respondent 2 felt quite frustrated and pointed out that although her school had appointed grade controllers to deal with disciplinary and other problems, most of these teachers did not adhere to the school policy.

We have a Code of Conduct but there's no one there to make sure that the learners stick to it...It's actually pointless to have it because no one sticks to it, procedures are not followed...It feels like my hands are tied. I can't do anything and it's like I have no choice because no one listens to you. It's difficult to teach under circumstances like that.

Only one respondent judged the school policy to be effective. He made the following remark:

It helps teachers to know what to do when they suspect something, you know, to try and alleviate the problem. (Respondent 3)

4.9 Support structures

Teachers were also asked to comment on the support structures that were in place to support them when they encounter learners with social problems. Their responses are summarised below.

Table 4.5 Support structures

Support	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3	Respondent 4
Principal	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Vice-principal	No	Yes	No	No
Teacher	No	Yes	No	No
Grade leaders	No	No	Yes	Yes
Teachers as counsellors	No	No	Yes	Yes
Social Worker	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Psychologist	Yes	No	Yes	No

Two of the respondents indicated that they were well supported by their school principal or vice-principal (Respondents 1 and 4). While Respondent 2 felt there was very little support given to her, she also felt she would have to go to another teacher if she did not know how to deal with a problem. Respondent 3 mentioned that because he was the former school counsellor, other teachers would rely on him or the grade leaders for support.

They refer it to me or to other grade heads. A lot of our teachers feel that they are not qualified or don't have enough insight into the problems with those levels of problems.

Two of the respondents said they were well supported by social workers and psychologists, who were appointed by the Department of Education (DoE). Respondent 4 commented:

We also have a social worker who comes here every two weeks. I spoke yesterday to her and I mentioned the same thing, how it is for me, especially with the girls, difficult to go into things. I get very much emotional with the issues that they're going through.

Respondent 3, however, mentioned that although his school had a social worker who was appointed by the DoE, and that the school would refer some cases to her, the school would first attempt to deal with most of the issues themselves. They would refer parents to private social service agents as the social worker was very busy working with a large number of other schools and could therefore not come to the school on a weekly basis.

The social worker comes but she is also snowed under and she also recommends students to various initiatives and then she'll do a bit of counselling on her own but I think with severe cases, you need specialised people, you know, special institutions, and those tend to be fairly costly. (Respondent 3)

Respondent 3, in agreement with Respondent 2, asserts that their schools were not well supported by the DoE.

It appears that the DoE appointed social workers and psychologists to some of these schools because serious incidents were reported there. The following comment corroborated this finding:

A learner was stabbed to death a couple of metres outside the school, by another learner from our school. They had a quarrel and it ended up outside the school where the stabbing took place and the boy died. We had to er..... (brief pause) emotionally the loss of that particular child was very emotional for us as educators and the learners and we received counselling from outside agencies; there was conflict resolution from Western Cape Education Department (WCED). That's where the growth and development and healing actually took place and the spin off was all those other courses (Respondent 4).

4.10 Parent-teacher interaction

Respondents were asked whether they were able to work with parents or guardians of learners that had social problems. All four teachers responded that they would telephonically contact the parents or guardians to make them aware of the learners' social problem.

Respondent 1 felt positive about contacting parents of learners suspected of having a social problem. Although there was some initial hesitancy as she felt that she would be making trouble for the learner, she would nevertheless follow her intuition and contact the parent. She found most parents quite co-operative and supportive when contact was made. In cases where the parent was not co-operative, she would refer these cases to the principal.

Three of the respondents said that the parents were un-co-operative when the teachers contacted them to inform them that their child had a social problem. Respondent 2 noted that some of the parents had no interest in their child and did not want to become involved. This

made her feel quite discouraged and helpless to assist her learners. She also mentioned that the school administrative computer system did not have recent parents' contact numbers; when learners were asked to give teachers their parents' contact numbers, many learners would give incorrect contact details.

Respondents 3 and 4 mentioned that while some parents were co-operative and supportive when teachers contacted them and suggested that they should come to the school for further assistance (for example, teaching them parenting skills, as in the case of Respondent 3, the former guidance counsellor), other parents were not interested in their children's problems. He found that some parents, due to their financial circumstances, did not have the time to deal with their children's problems.

Many of my parents are leaving home at 6 a.m. and their kids haven't left for school yet and there's that gap where children can drift off.

He also mentioned that some parents would react either by confirming that they had knowledge about their child's social problem, or they would deny that their child had a social problem.

Respondent 4 indicated that he found it difficult to contact learners' parents due to the amount of administrative duties as well as the large number of learners in each of his classes. In such cases, he would refer the learner with the social problem to the vice-principal or teacher that played the role of counsellor.

4.11 Feelings regarding intervening

When asked how they felt about intervening when encountering learners with social problems, all four respondents mentioned, without any hesitation, that they wanted to help their learners.

When I had to phone her mother I actually felt good when the mother said she had been waiting for the call for a long time. I also took a risk by phoning because some parents will say, "It's none of your business, why are you phoning me?" (Respondent 1)

It does motivate you a lot and even if it's just a child who comes to you and says it's been nice just to talk to you. Sometimes that's all they need, someone to talk to. (Respondent 2)

However, three of the newly qualified teachers had a two-fold opinion; even though these teachers wanted to help, they also felt quite overwhelmed when dealing with learners' social problems. The following substantiates this finding:

I feel it's out of my hands to do anything about the learners. You see, because sometimes the kids come into the classroom. They've been here erlike in 9E;

there are a couple of kids in that class that have been there for three years. I tell myself, "I'm new, I've only come here, I don't know your backgrounds but I can follow up." Then I start phoning parents. (Respondent 1)

However, respondent 1 was also concerned about causing problems for her learners if she telephoned their parents as she felt it might worsen the problem.

I'm worried when I phone a house and ask myself if I'm making trouble for this child who has not been in school. For example, I had an encounter with one of the Grade 11 boys. He was giving me problems in the class where he would do no work. Then his father came to see me. Then I told the father that I was having a problem with the child, that he has an attitude, he doesn't do any work and he talks back at me. I think it worsened the situation because now he's ten times worse in class.

The experienced teacher (Respondent 3), however, felt more comfortable in dealing with these social problems as he was a former school counsellor and has dealt with a number of learners' social problems over the years. However, even though he was not 'intimidated' to deal with these social problems, he, like the other three respondents, felt very exhausted at the end of each working day.

I think it's tough to be an effective teacher today. It's very difficult. When I come home I'm exhausted. Literally every single day. Because it's not easy and I think that's probably why many teachers are leaving the profession.

Respondent 3 also felt that although he was comfortable dealing with most social problems, he did not feel comfortable dealing with drug addiction and would therefore refer these cases to the social worker. He made the following remarks:

We can't as an institution handle that level of problem. We don't have the facilities, the time or the skills probably to handle that depth of problem.

4.12 Preparedness of teachers:

4.12.1 Pre-service teacher-training

Respondents were asked whether they received training during their pre-service teaching programmes to deal with learners' social problems. Three of them indicated that the pre-service training they received did not prepare them to deal with learners' social problems. The following comments corroborate this finding:

We're not prepared for the social problems in learners that you actually get in your class...The university concentrates too much on the academics. (Respondent 1)

I don't find that what I learnt at varsity helped a lot...There's a whole course at varsity set out on how to deal with problems but it's not really done properly and it doesn't always apply to the problems you experience. (Respondent 2)

It's only here when you experience it, when you're in the classroom and you've been here a couple of months. Then you actually find out. At university it was basically theory on the modules that you're doing. (Respondent 4)

Only Respondent 3 felt that his pre-service training prepared him to deal with learners' social problems. This is because he completed a Guidance module as part of his teacher's diploma in which he received intensive counselling training.

There was no problem whatsoever. Let me tell you about our training in terms of counselling because I walked into a classroom with lessons prepped for a whole year for each grade, from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

Respondent 3 also asserted that when he started teaching during the 1980s, it was not really difficult to teach and stated:

At that time conditions were quite easier than what they are now.

Two of the respondents gave some suggestions on how to improve the pre-service teacher training programmes in the area of dealing with learners' social problems.

They should actually let the students experience the teaching profession earlier, not in their last year when they do their practical. You must have more hands-on experience. (Respondent 1)

I think student teachers should be in a school environment more often and not just come into school and just observe. (Respondent 4)

It is important to note that Respondent 1 only completed a one-year teacher's diploma after her undergraduate degree and therefore did not receive the four year pre-service teacher's training which could possibly have given her more experience in working in the teaching field and thus more experience in encountering learners with social problems. However, Respondent 2, who has a four-year teacher's degree, also expressed that she did not receive adequate preparation to deal with learners' social problems.

4.12.2 In-service teacher-training

Respondents were asked whether they received training at schools to deal with learners' social problems. Three of them responded that they received some form of training at their schools to deal with learners' social problems. Two of the respondents mentioned the same training organisation, i.e. Life Choices. This organisation came to their school to facilitate courses with their learners as well as the teachers.

They will talk to the students and then once a term we will have a workshop where they will teach you as teacher, how to deal with your own problems that you have at home. (Respondent 1)

They are here Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Life Choices team comes in and takes our Life Orientation periods...We have staff development and they come to us or we go to their premises. (Respondent 4)

Respondent 3 indicated that he received very generic training such as conflict management skills and discipline courses at his school. He noted that he had completed several

counselling courses himself over a number of years and had also developed skills on how to deal with social problems through reading.

Only one respondent felt that no training was provided at her school to deal with social problems.

No training was provided...We had one very extensive meeting on the fact that we need discipline measures and we need to sort it out and it was given to the School Governing Body but nothing came of it. The meeting we were supposed to have got cancelled and was never rescheduled. (Respondent 2)

4.13 Conclusion

In this chapter the findings has been presented and related to the research problem: How do teachers deal with learners' social problems? The main findings of the data can be summarised as follows:

Social problems that are experienced at the school

The research revealed that drug addiction, poverty and single-parent house-holds are prevalent social problems at these schools.

Indicators of social problems

Teachers identified learners with social problems as those who displayed change/s in their behaviour pattern such as giving discipline problems, being inattentive in class, staying absent and/or being truant.

Academic performance

Teachers indicated that learners' academic performance decreased when they experienced social problems. Some of them asserted that learners' poor academic performance could be attributed to absenteeism or truancy.

Response and procedures followed

Although all the teachers played a supportive listener role to their learners, they reflected uncertainty toward assisting learners with social problems. Teachers followed certain steps when they encountered learners' with social problems. They firstly telephoned parents. If it was a serious case, they informed the school heads (i.e. the principal or vice-principal) who contacted the social worker, after the parents granted permission.

Effects of social problems on other learners

Teachers revealed that learners with social problems negatively affected other learners in the class. Other learners found it hard to concentrate on their work, they complained about not getting attention from the teachers as more attention was demanded by learners with social problems. As a result they imitated misbehaviour from learners with social problems in order to attract attention from the teacher.

School policy

Teachers felt that even though a Code of Conduct existed at their schools, it was largely ineffective in dealing with problems as it was not implemented and not monitored by those appointed to control disciplinary and other problems.

Support structures

Some teachers indicated that they were well supported by their school principal or vice-principal while other teachers felt that no or little support was being given to them and as a result they would go to another teacher for support. The experienced teacher indicated that teachers would rely on him for support as he was the former school counsellor and had experience in dealing with learners' social problems. The experiences of support ranged from total support through partial support to no support at all being given by social workers and/or psychologists.

Parent-teacher interaction

Some parents were co-operative and supportive when teachers notified them of a learner's social problem; other parents were not supportive or did not have the time to deal with the learner's social problems.

Feelings regarding intervening

While teachers were willing to assist learners, the newly qualified teachers felt overwhelmed in dealing with learners' social problems. The experienced teacher felt more comfortable in dealing with most social problems. However, he would not deal with drug addiction because the school did not have the capacity to deal with the depth of that problem. In that case, he would refer these cases to the social worker.

Preparedness of teachers:

Pre-service teacher-training

Teachers felt that the training they received in their pre-service training did not adequately prepare them to deal with learners' social problems. Because of this lack of training, they felt overwhelmed.

In-service teacher-training

Teachers noted that they received some form of training at their schools.

Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of these findings and also makes some recommendations that include implications for the training of teachers. Some general conclusions will also be drawn from the whole study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the significant findings of this research were presented. In this chapter I interpret and discuss the findings as well as posit recommendations that include implications for teacher-training, and suggest the direction for further research in this area. A conclusion to the thesis is then provided.

5.2 Discussion and interpretations

5.2.1 Social problems that are experienced at schools:

From the findings it was evident that drug addiction, poverty and single-parent households (due to divorce or death) are prevalent social problems at the schools. The findings on poverty, drug addiction and single-parent households are supported by the following literature on the critical perspective. The critical perspective offers a broad historical view on how poverty, single-parent households and drug addiction came into being as well as what situation was created out of the exploitation of the working class. As I mentioned earlier, in Chapter 2, the White people in South Africa, who were in power during the apartheid era, sustained poverty, and marginalised non-White people as a result of the discriminatory racial policies that excluded them from certain jobs, trapping them in low paying unskilled work such as fishing or construction and other work (MacMaster, 2007: 272). According to Kinnes (1995: 2) and MacMaster (2007: 278), the constitutional racial segregation (i.e. the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Population Registration Act (1950)) and exploitation of non-White people thus resulted in class conflicts as well as race conflicts between the 'haves', who were generally the White people, and the 'have-nots', who were largely the non-White people, as the White people became richer, and the non-White people remained in poverty (adapted from Rubington and Weinberg, 2003: 225). The apartheid legacy made a fundamental impact on the South African society and South Africa is still struggling with this legacy, as more than 18 million out of 45 million people lived below the poverty line and conditions of unemployment were rising at 26.5% in March 2005 (Kraak and Press, 2008: 556).

Pinnock and Schärf's (1984: 56) argument on gangsterism seems to have a bearing on the finding on drug addiction and single-parent households in the sense that social disorganization was created by forced removal and the fact that non-White people were uprooted from their homes and placed in informal settlements, as I mentioned in an earlier chapter (Standing, 2006: 12). When families and communities were separated from one another and forced to move all over the Cape Flats area, it resulted in a breakdown of family control and the extended family which previously kept children under control, plus a tension

within the family that resulted in an increase in the divorce rate and in the number of single-parent households (Pinnock and Schärf, 1984: 56). During this period many teenagers formed gangs and started using and selling drugs in order to cope with their frustrations as well as act defiantly in order to survive (Pinnock and Schärf, 1984:54).

The rise in single-parent households and the high rate of unemployment forced many people to seek employment away from their homes and away from their families. This has meant that many teenagers were left unsupervised, which caused them to experiment with drugs or engage in other risk taking behaviours (Bezuidenhout, 2006: 66). This literature correlates with the responses of the teachers who stated that many parents, due to their financial circumstances, left their homes and children unattended for long periods of time. Under those circumstances teenagers were open to other influences, such as peers who would pressure them to engage in deviant behaviour such as using drugs. This observation agrees with Richman's (1985: 255) argument that teenagers' illicit drug use has been seen to arise primarily from interacting with their peers, which related to Akers (1998: 50) social learning theory (as explained in Chapter 2).

5.2.2 Indicators of social problems

From the findings it would appear that teachers identified learners with social problems as those who displayed change/s in their behaviour pattern resulting in disciplinary problems, inattention and inability to concentrate, absenteeism and truancy.

While teachers were not trained to identify such learners, they made important observations when they recognized learners who displayed change/s in their behaviour pattern as those that have social problems. For example, teachers commented that they could detect learners that were using drugs by the way their eyes were dilated, lack of interest in their personal appearance and hygiene such as smell of cannabis (dagga) on their clothes, unusual display of aggression, inattention and lack of concentration, irregular attendance and truancy. This links with Fisher and Harrison (2000: 90), the Department of Education (DoE) and the South African Police Services (SAPS) document, *Signs for Safe Schools* (DoE and SAPS, 2002: 72), which indicates the warning signs of drug and alcohol addiction that teachers should be aware of. These indicators are: sudden mood swings; unusual aggression, loss of interest in hobbies, school or sport; tiredness and bouts of drowsiness; unusual smell or stains on the body and clothes; change in appearance such as less interest in personal hygiene, gain or loss of weight and increased absenteeism and truancy. However, teachers could also have misinterpreted learners' social problems, as not all the above indicators suggest that learners

were using drugs, and they can be confused with those of normal adolescence, as confirmed by the DoE and SAPS (2002: 72).

From the teachers observation social problems, such as learners addicted to drugs, manifested themselves in disciplinary problems. However, teachers could also have misconstrued learners' disciplinary problems as social problems, as not all disciplinary problems are indicators of social problems. Many social problems are not overtly displayed and as a result some social problems can go undetected as learners could withdraw. This suggestion is substantiated by Finn and Willert (2006: 39) who state that a learner who is unresponsive during class discussions could be merely shy or bored, or has a learning problem.

It would appear that participating teachers relied on their own intuition and knowledge that results from forming close relationships with their learners, to recognise and detect learners with social problems. However, this detection could be fraught with anomalies because intuition is not based on scientific knowledge about human behaviour. It is important that teachers interview and observe to come up with scientific knowledge about their learners. Teachers need to look for general patterns of changes.

Teachers indicated that learners' academic performance decreased when they experienced social problems. Based on my research this is valid as Fisher and Harrison (2000: 90) and Van Hout and Connor (2008: 81) assert that drug addiction and other social problems have a negative impact on learners' academic performance.

5.2.3 Response and procedures followed

From the findings it would appear that teachers played a supportive listener role to their learners; however they also reflected uncertainty toward assisting learners with social problems. Teachers feared listening to learners of the opposite sex alone in their class when learners wanted to talk about their problems. In the findings, one incident of a teacher being sexually harassed by a learner was reported. Even though the incident was referred to the principal and the principal informed the parents and temporarily suspended the learner from that teacher's class, this only negatively reinforced the learner's behaviour.

Teachers followed certain steps when they encountered learners' with social problems. They firstly telephoned parents. If it was a serious case, they informed the school heads (i.e. the principal or vice-principal) who contacted the social worker, after permission was granted from the parents. There is a document, *Abuse no more* (WCED, 2003c), which presents the procedure to be followed when a teacher suspects that a learner is being abused. Another document, *Learner discipline and school management*, provides guidelines in understanding

and managing learner behaviour (WCED, 2007). It appears that no other policy documents on social problems are provided by the Department of Education.

It is not clear to the teachers that there is a policy on procedures to be followed when reporting incidents of social problems, even though the Western Cape Education Department's Safe Schools programme, a division that is responsible for recording incidents of social problems and creating intervention and preventive programmes, does exist. It appears that the Safe Schools programme is not adequately utilised by schools. Neither do the teachers have knowledge about the procedures, nor does the Department of Education clarify procedures to be followed when teachers encounter learners with social problems. An article about at-risk youths, retrieved from the Cape Gateway's (2006) website, suggests that the Western Cape have five levels of support to prevent and resolve social, emotional and/or behavioural problems. This article claims that the first level of support, which is an early-warning system, is implemented in all schools, which aim at identifying learners and their families who are vulnerable. It proposes that every effort be made in the classroom to prevent social, emotional and/or behavioural problems from occurring or deteriorating. However, it appears that this level of support is not implemented in all schools. It seems as if teachers do not have knowledge about this level and other levels of support.

5.2.4 Effects of social problems on other learners

Teachers revealed that other learners in the class were negatively affected by learners with social problems. Other learners found difficulty in concentrating on their schoolwork and complained about not receiving attention from teachers, as learners with social problems demanded more attention. As a result other learners would observe and emulate the misbehaviour of learners with social problems in order to gain the attention of their teacher. There is a danger of focusing too much attention on learners with social problems and thus failing to notice the other learners in the class. This is confirmed by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which explains that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modelling. In this way other learners can observe the behaviour of learners with social problems and thus imitate their misbehaviour in order to gain the teachers' attention.

One of teachers indicated that learners in class were sympathetic and quite supportive of their classmates with social problems. However, there is a need to be cautious about what the sympathy really indicates as it could mean that learners admire or are in support of the behaviour of the learner with the social problem.

5.2.5 School policy

Teachers were asked whether they knew their school's policy and the actions that are taken when learners violated the rules. Three of the newly qualified teachers reported that they knew their school's policy, although the teacher with greater experience (more than 20 years of teaching experience) was more knowledgeable. I found his response interesting as it was different from that of the newly qualified teachers because his experience made him more familiar with the school policy. This finding is substantiated by Finn and Willert's (2006: 40) study, conducted in the United States, which revealed that most teachers had knowledge about the school's drug policies, although teachers with more than five years of teaching experience were more knowledgeable.

In the findings the newly qualified teachers did not feel that the school policy was effective in dealing with social problems. Teachers pointed out their frustrations in dealing with learners' social problems and they did not think that the school policy was enforced effectively. This is in line with Finn and Willert's (2006: 40) study that revealed that teachers did not feel that the drug policies in their schools were effective.

5.2.6 Support structures

The findings indicated that some teachers were well supported by their school principal or vice-principal. Other teachers felt that no or little support was given to them and as a result they went to their colleagues for support. The experienced teacher indicated that teachers relied on him for support as he was the former school counsellor and had experience in dealing with learners' social problems.

The experiences of support ranged from total support to partial support to no support given from social workers and/or psychologists. It would appear that certain schools are well supported by social workers and psychologists that are appointed by the DoE, while other schools are not. It is important to note that all four schools are equally disadvantaged schools within the same area, despite the fact that some of these schools are well supported by social workers while other selected schools are not. It is possible that the DoE appointed social workers and psychologists to some of these schools because serious incidents were reported.

Based on my findings teachers are supported; however, there are too many formalities that could impede the process of dealing with learners' social problems. When teachers refer the learners' problems to the principal or social worker and/or psychologists, they are expecting a resolution to take place. However, much of the time is spent on referring the problems instead of focussing on the learners' social problem. If teachers are constantly referring the

learners' social problems to the principal it can exacerbate as teachers do not deal with it themselves. This can further lead to negative behaviours in learners. It is important that teachers are taught the necessary skills in order to deal with learners' social problems. Such skills can only be acquired by continuous training as well as long-term experience in the teaching field. A collaborative approach that includes the initial training institutions, the school and DoE can be more effective in addressing these social problems. This also has implications on teacher-training which should include social problems in its programmes in conjunction with schools.

It is important that social workers are incorporated within the school setting because they are trained to deal with social problems (Nott *et al.*, 1990: 13). This is reiterated by Sathiparasad and Taylor (2005: 271) who also observed that social workers are trained and have the necessary skills and knowledge to assist schools. Social workers can also provide teachers, staff and parents with training to assist learners with social problems. Social workers can run workshops or draw up preventive and intervention strategies aimed at dealing with social problems such as gangsterism (Nott *et al.*, 1990, 13; Sathiparasad and Taylor, 2005: 272).

5.2.7 Parent-teacher interaction

While some parents were co-operative and supportive when teachers contacted parents of learners suspected of having a social problem, teachers found that other parents were un-co-operative.

The findings revealed that parents did not have the time to deal with their children's problems as they left for work very early in the morning and came home late in the evening. This meant that learners were left to organise their day on their own. Most of these parents were single-parents who were the only breadwinner of the family. This has meant that many teenagers are left unsupervised which leaves them to experiment with drugs or other risk-taking behaviours. This is argued by Bezuidenhout (2006: 66) who proposes that the home environment of South African adolescents have changed over the years, and exposed them to potential risks of drugs or other risk-taking behaviour. Some learners stayed with another relative as they came from outside Cape Town and this presented peculiar problems to teachers as they indicated that these are the learners that have social problems. This is also confirmed by a study conducted by Mabetoa (1996; Bah and Rama, 1999: 16) in Bophuthatswana (situated northwest of Southern Africa) who found that 85% of children did not live with either of the parents and that grandparents, sisters, brothers or other relatives took care them. In my view it appears that the high rate of divorce that led to an increase of single-parent households during the apartheid era, as suggested by Pinnock and Schärf (1984: 56), still remains up to today.

Some parents denied that their child had a problem. This could be because parents lacked the skills and knowledge to deal with problems such as drug addiction as suggested by Pillay (2000: 75). Another reason for this denial could point to the fact that they did not want other people to know that they had problems at home so it was easier for them to deny the fact. Denial is a defence mechanism proposed by Sigmund Freud, in which a person faced with a fact that is too uncomfortable to accept rejects it, insisting that it is not true even though there might be overwhelming evidence (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith and Bem, 1993: 609). This could possibly explain the reason why parents who are faced with the fact that their child has a serious social problem deny it. Parents might possibly admit the fact but deny its seriousness, or admit both the fact and the seriousness but not want to take responsibility for their child's social problem.

5.2.8 Preparedness of teachers

Teachers are expected to display specific skills and knowledge about how to deal with learners' social problems. This is stipulated in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE) (DoE, 2000: 14) that outlines the roles and expectations that teachers need to fulfil. Dealing with learners with social problems is placed within the community, citizenship and pastoral care role, which state that teachers have to meet the criteria of practical, foundational as well as reflexive applied competences.

In my opinion these criteria can only be met if teachers are appropriately trained. The NSE (DoE, 2000: 13) also stipulates that all the roles, including the community, citizenship and pastoral care role, should form part of the pre-service training programme. They also point out that student teachers can then be assessed against these criteria before they qualify in order to ensure that they are competent in all the roles, including that of the community, citizenship and pastoral care (DoE, 2000: 13). Qualified and experienced teachers could then enhance these roles and the above criteria with continuous in-service training programmes.

It is my view that practical competence can only be achieved through extensive teaching in the field. Teachers who are confident in their knowledge content of the learning area would be able to develop life skills, a critical, ethical and committed political attitude, and a healthy lifestyle in learners. Teachers that are knowledgeable about current social and educational problems would be able to assist learners and respond to their problems appropriately. The findings revealed that most teachers were not trained to deal with the current social and educational problems of learners. Teachers were able to achieve this competence when they worked in conjunction with other organisations to deal with social and educational issues. Teachers with specialist skills in social work or counselling skills would know how to guide,

counsel, mentor and support learners in need of assistance with social or learning problems. This was evident in the findings. The experienced teacher felt more confident in dealing with learners' social problems and provided guidance and counselling to a number of learners with social problems. Specialist skills in social work or counselling skills would also ensure that teachers are confident in their dealings with learners having social problems, since my findings revealed a lack of confidence as well as reluctance on the part of the interviewed teachers in this respect.

Weinberg (1971: 95) also points out that if a specialist can be employed by the school to provide teachers with instructions to deal with social problems, they would be able to workshop these skills into the classroom. Teachers with specialist skills and knowledge in social science, social work and/or psychology will be able to achieve the foundational competence. It is important that teacher education providers include these skills, knowledge and understanding in the initial teacher-training programmes in order to develop the foundational competence, since this appeared to be lacking in the teachers studied here.

I also believe that reflexive competency is dependant on teachers receiving training in how to recognise and judge appropriate intervention strategies to cope with learning and other difficulties.

Morrow (2007: 4) argues that the teacher is expected to play different roles such as guidance counsellor, social worker, police agent and sport coach while fulfilling the other six teacher roles, stipulated by the NSE, and at the same time teaching large classes in multi-lingual schools. Morrow aptly states, "to expect schoolteachers to undertake these responsibilities, is to squander the essential resource [i.e. the teacher] of our education system" (Morrow 2007: 4). He suggests that it is unrealistic to expect the teacher to play the different roles, as the teacher is already overloaded by the content of the subject area and the added demands to fulfil the seven roles. Bailey and Collins' (2004: 266) study also revealed that the teachers who are overloaded by educational and administrative responsibilities can feel frustrated and overwhelmed when dealing with learners social problems such as drug addiction. This was evident in the findings as teachers felt that their lack of skills in dealing with learners' social problems is compounded by the immense amount of administrative duties added to the large number of learners in the class. Even the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005: 14) in South Africa contends that newly qualified teachers are unlikely to achieve the seven roles of the NSE as it "raises elaborate and utopian expectations" of the scope of pre-service teacher-training.

Both Morrow's (2007) and the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education's (2005) views are further substantiated by Jansen (2001: 245), who indicates that the teacher, in an effort to fulfil these classroom roles, and more specifically the community, citizenship and pastoral care role, can feel that the NSE places unreasonable expectations that can be perceived by teachers as being "...difficult, demanding,...and impractical". Morrow and Jansen highlight critical elements of the roles and responsibilities of the teachers. However, my proposition is that teachers ought to implement the community, citizenship and pastoral care role because the community is expecting the school and the teachers to provide advice and solutions to social problems. The teacher is expected to display these competencies and be qualified to fulfil the community, citizenship and pastoral care role. If the teacher is expected to display these competencies and fulfil this role, it is important that teacher-training and providers of teacher-training adequately prepare teachers to achieve these competencies and fulfil this role, especially when teachers face social problems within the classroom.

However, my study revealed that teachers are sometimes hindered from playing their community, citizenship and pastoral care role by some parents who do not offer them support. Some teachers felt that parents undermined their efforts when they displayed no interest when teachers contacted them to inform them of their child's problem. Other teachers were reluctant to play and follow up their pastoral care role as they were afraid that the learner's problem might worsen. Social problems cannot be dealt with solely by the school or the teacher. The Department of Education, the community and the parents as well as other social service organisations should jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to assist learners with social problems (Vigil, 1999: 270). Such a holistic approach can assist schools and teachers to deal with learners' social problems more effectively.

5.2.8.1 The role of pre-service training in enhancing teachers' preparedness

It is apparent that the newly qualified teachers did not receive training during the pre-service programmes to deal with social problems, which contributed to their feelings of inadequacy and of being overwhelmed when they encountered learners with these problems. This finding is supported by Zastrow (2000: 328), Meers *et al.* (1995), Finn and Willert (2006: 39) and Weinberg (1971). They point out that many teachers do not feel adequately prepared to deal with social problems as they lack appropriate training and have insufficient time in their curriculum to deal with social problems. It is important that teacher-training programmes incorporate modules that deal with learners' social problems. A model such as the one devised in the state of Florida (Meers *et al.*, 1995: 50) where teachers were given the necessary training in equipping them to recognise and provide interventions for learners' social problems can be adapted or revised for the teacher-training and staff development

programmes at South African schools. Such a training model can be effective, firstly to equip teachers to recognise and provide interventions for learners with social problems, and secondly, to increase the teachers' eagerness to participate in preventative and intervention programmes. Training programmes such as the one devised in the state of Florida can equip teachers with the necessary skills so that they can feel less inadequate and overwhelmed when dealing with learners' social problems.

The teacher with the one-year teacher's diploma did not receive the same pre-service experience as a teacher with a four-year teacher's degree. This could possibly have given her more teaching practical experience. In this way the teacher (with the one-year diploma) would have gained more exposure during her practical teacher-training in encountering learners with social problems. However, teachers with a four-year teacher's degree also expressed that they did not receive adequate preparation to deal with learners' social problems. It is important that all teachers receive pre-service training during their teacher-training programme to deal with learners' social problems. This could be done by adding a module such as Sociology of Education. Because learners spend a great deal of their time in the school setting, the teacher has become the key element in helping learners combat social problems and learn more effectively (Pillay, 2000: 75; Bezuidenhout, 2004: 94).

5.2.8.2 The role of in-service teacher-training in enhancing teachers' preparedness

Two teachers received some form of training at their schools, as they mentioned people from a training organisation called Life Choices who came to their school to facilitate courses with their learners as well as the teachers. Even with the training, teachers still expressed feelings of helplessness and inadequacy in dealing with learners' social problems. I am of the opinion that the training that was provided by an outside organisation to some of the selected schools was not effective in assisting teachers to deal with learners' social problems. Teachers were partly assisted by this organisation when they came and took over their lessons, which assisted the teachers by temporarily relieving them from their heavy workload. However, when this organisation left, teachers continued to feel inadequate to deal with learners' social problems. The DoE should provide specific training tailored to the needs of the school. The *Drug Abuse Policy Framework* stipulates that all teachers, pre-service and in-service, should be provided with training on drug use, misuse and coping mechanisms for learners (DoE, 2002: 6).

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings, I posit the following recommendations:

1. Teachers need to be trained to deal with social problems such as alcohol and drug use in schools. Specific training can equip teachers to develop prevention and intervention strategies and empower them to recognise learners with social problems and those who are at high risk; the training programme leaders should include social workers and other personnel who specialise in dealing with social problems. These social workers and personnel have specialist skills in providing teachers with training in dealing with learners' social problems.
2. Drug education should be incorporated into the curricula of teacher-training institutions so that newly qualified teachers are empowered to deal with social problems before they go into the classroom, as recommended by Weinberg (1971:103). During pre-service teacher-training programmes, student teachers should be exposed to clinical practice with specific reference to social problems so that they can observe how certain social problems are dealt with, for example, drug counselling clinics. Student teachers will be able to gain a broader view of how social problems are dealt with.
3. Schools and teachers need to network and collaborate with other organisations such as Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, which can provide learners and teachers with support and training around parenting issues and sexual health education.
4. Extensive and continuous preventative and intervention measures should be tailored to the needs of schools and programmed within the school setting and curriculum. For example, schools that have a high incidence of drug addiction should include preventative and intervention measures and programmes tailored for the needs of their learners, as most of the drug prevention literature indicates that when schools and teachers implement drug prevention programmes, it can moderately reduce drug usage (Dusenbury and Falco, 1995; Pillay, 2000). A programme such as the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), which was implemented in the United States in order to reduce gangsterism and other social problems at schools, as I explained in an earlier chapter, can be devised or adapted for the South African schools.
5. Teachers need to take the concept of continuous education seriously in developing their expertise, as teachers who take ownership of their professional development are better skilled and more likely to experience a change of attitude toward dealing with learners' social problems.
6. Teacher-training programmes and continuous in-service training programme should ensure that teachers are exposed to current policies and documents that can assist them in dealing with learners' social problems.

7. Schools and teachers should be made aware of structures that are in place, such as those from the Cape Gateway (2006), which proposes meaningful guidelines to prevent and resolve social, emotional and/or behavioural problems. Implementation of these guidelines within their school could ensure that teachers are equipped to resolve social problems. It is imperative that the implementation of these guidelines is monitored to ensure that schools and teachers are adequately supported. It is important that schools adequately utilise the Safe Schools programme.
8. There should be a deliberate policy from the DoE in place to guide teachers in dealing with learners' social problems. This policy should also be monitored to ensure that teachers are adequately supported.
9. Schools and teachers can introduce leadership programmes to learners which teaches them the importance of dealing with peer pressure, building meaningful relationships, learning to communicate effectively, instilling the importance of values and beliefs, and earning creative problem solving skills. These skills can teach learners to take responsibility for their own thoughts, attitude and actions and empower them to make responsible decisions in order to not be vulnerable to other harmful influences such as drugs. However, it is important that learners should be taught how to take responsibility for their own actions.

5.4 Limitations

I am aware of the caution needed in interpreting data that were limited in scope and methodology, since this study was conducted on a sample limited to four schools and thus could not be generalised to all South African schools. The study population was confined to one area of one city and it is unknown whether the results would be applicable to other South African cities or to other countries. This is acceptable as Winter (2000: 8) states, "qualitative findings are best generalisable to the development of theories and not wider population".

5.5 Recommendations for further study

Since the study was limited in scope, areas for further study might be to conduct research with a larger sample group, such as parents, learners and principals as well as WCED officials, using more research tools. A comparative study could be conducted between independent schools and public schools in order to see how the results compare.

A further study can investigate the WCED policy guidelines with specific reference to social problems or the Safe Schools programme in order to monitor and ensure that teachers are adequately trained and supported when dealing with learners' social problems. Since the

study was only focused on teachers and the school, it would be interesting to conduct research on the home and/or community where social problems emanate.

5.6 Conclusion

This research was conducted at four high schools with four teachers, with the major aim of answering the research question:

How do teachers deal with learners' social problems?

Having considered all the findings and interpretations the answers that appeared to emerge are:

- Teachers deal with learners' social problems by trial and error;
- There was no evidence of deliberate planning in identifying learners' with social problems;
- Teachers appealed to their colleagues with more experience in the teaching field to support and assist them when they encountered learners with social problems or they relied on their own personal experience to assist them when they dealt with learners' social problems; and
- There was no systematic way of dealing with learners' social problems as there was no evidence that teachers consulted documents to assist them in dealing with learners' social problems.

The following emerged from the findings and interpretations to answer the sub-question: How prepared are teachers to deal with learners' social problems?

- The pre-service teachers training programmes did not equip teachers with the skills to deal with learners' social problems;
- Teachers are not adequately prepared when they first enter schools; and
- Although teachers received some form of training at schools, the training was not effective in assisting teachers to deal with learners' social problems as they continue to feel inadequate.

As learners spend a great deal of their time in the school setting, the teacher has become the key element in helping learners combat social problems and, in so doing, learn more effectively (Pillay, 2000: 75; Bezuidenhout, 2004: 94) and they should be able to contribute positively and promote holistic learning. However, teachers' effectiveness in dealing with learners' social problems is compromised by the fact that teachers, in addition to being expected to be knowledgeable about the content of the subject, also have the added responsibility to deal with overloaded administrative duties, compounded by large classes. In addition to the demands of fulfilling the seven roles, as stipulated by the Norms and

Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000), teachers are also expected to deal with learners' social problems that interfere with the teaching and learning processes. There are a great number of demands and expectations placed on the teachers. This will obviously lead teachers to become frustrated which can lead many of them to leave the profession. It is important that teacher-training adequately equip teachers with skills to deal with learners' social problems.

Teachers and schools cannot deal with learners' social problems without support and assistance from the DoE, the community and parents as well as other social service organisations, who can jointly create preventive and intervention strategies to assist learners with social problems. There should be a deliberate policy in place to guide teachers in dealing with learners' social problems and this policy should consciously and continuously be monitored to ensure that teachers are adequately supported. Teacher-training programmes and continuous in-service training programmes should ensure that teachers are exposed to current policies and new skills that can assist them in dealing with learners' social problems.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Unstructured interview schedule

A

1. What are the kinds of social problems that you are experiencing at the school?
2. Do these problems manifest in the classroom? If yes, how?
3. How do you detect (suspect) these social problems amongst learners?
4. How do you identify learners with social problems?

B

5. How do you respond to these problems?
6. How do you know what procedures to follow when learners experience social problems? What is the evidence for this?
7. What role do you play to minimise these problems?
8. What actions do you take if you suspect, for example, a learner using drugs, or having other social problems?
9. How do you feel about intervening when encountering these problems?

C

10. How do these problems affect the learner's academic performance?
11. How do the social problems affect other learners in the classroom?
12. How does the school policy guide you in dealing with social problems?
13. What kinds of support structures are in place in the school to support you when encountering these problems?
14. How do you work with the parents of learners that have social problems?

D

15. What preparation was provided in your programmes during teacher training for dealing with social problems?
16. What in-service training is provided at the school for dealing with social problems?

Appendix B: Permission from WCED

Navrae
Enquiries
IMibuzo **Dr RS Cornelissen**

Telefoon
Telephone
IFoni **(021) 467-2286**

Faks
Fax
IFeksi **(021) 425-7445**

Verwysing
Reference
ISalathiso **20080529-0005**



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISEBE leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mrs Faheema Abbas
19 Duine Street
RYLANDS ESTATE
7764

Dear Mrs F. Abbas

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TEACHER PREPAREDNESS IN DEALING WITH LEARNERS' SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

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. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **14th July 2008 to 31st August 2008**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as submitted to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. 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: Ronald S. Cornelissen
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 30th May 2008

MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /
NCEDA UBHALE INOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

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GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>

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INDIENSNEMING- EN SALARISAVRAE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎0861 92 33 22
VEILIGE SKOLE/SAFE SCHOOLS ☎ 0800 45 46 47

Appendix C: Consent letter to the principals

The Principal

Dear Sir

Permission to conduct research

I am a registered Masters of Education student at the *Cape Peninsula University of Technology*, conducting research in connection with: Teacher preparation in dealing with learners' social problems. I request permission to conduct research at _____ High School. I am interested to interview one teacher at your school. This will be a once off one-hour session that will take place next term at a time and date that is convenient for the teacher.

I therefore extend an invitation to one of your teachers who will be willing to participate in this study. The teacher's identity and the name of the institution will remain anonymous.

Attached, please find a letter from the Western Cape Education Department granting permission to do research in a public high school.

You are welcome to contact my supervisor, Prof R. Chetty at (021) 6801532, if you need any further information.

Thank you very much in advance for your understanding.

Yours faithfully

Ms Faheema Abbas
Student number: 203040309