

**EMERGENT LITERACY AND AGENCY AMONG
DISADVANTAGED PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

by

JENNIFER STEAD

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Supervisors: Prof Rajendra Chetty; Anne Hill

Mowbray

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I, Jennifer Stead, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the 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.

Jenny Stead

16 March 2018

Signed

Date

ABSTRACT

A qualitative investigation into the emergence of literacy among five adult socio-economically disadvantaged subjects in a semi-rural setting complements concerns that a lack of specific forms of cognitive input during pre-school years has a negative impact on later progress in formal schooling. The subjects achieved levels of literacy that enabled them to play leadership roles in their communities although they had experienced limited or no formal education during their formative years.

Using a GTM process the researcher identifies seven common themes that emerge from analysis of data from interviews and focus groups that explore the subjects' perceptions of conditions that had promoted their literacy. These themes suggest that the subjects' competence in literacy was facilitated by non-cognitive conditions including personal aspirations; resilience; disciplinary regimes in the home; voice; a nurturing mentor; community resources and ability to exercise agency.

The researcher concludes that these themes could be important in contributing towards an understanding that developing children's agency during early childhood may be more significant to achieving effective levels of literacy than the current focus on attaining academic skills at standards that disadvantaged children have difficulty in achieving.

Keywords: Grounded theory; emergent literacy; non-cognitive conditions; aspirations; resilience; discipline; voice; nurture; community resources; agency.

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I continued studying at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology because of these four world-class mentors.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my most precious family (especially my husband Alf) who puts up with my being away so often and to James & Marion, Stephen & Lisa and Heather, Jethro, Kerin, Luke, Tahlia and Alahke who inspire, love and keep me firmly on track. Thank you to my Cape Town family - Paul & Di, Kathleen & Leon, Raf and Matt for all the wonderful support with my studies and for your love that provides a home from home when I am in Cape Town.

GLOSSARY

Terms	Definition
Bricolage and bricoleur	<p>The French terms bricolage and bricoleur were given their key academic sense by the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and were subsequently taken up by others, including some recent writers on qualitative research in the United States. In contemporary French usage, bricolage means, broadly speaking, do it yourself, and a bricoleur is an amateur who can turn her or his hand to practical repairs of various kinds.</p> <p><u>The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods</u></p> <p>The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines bricolage as: construction (as of a sculpture or a structure of ideas) achieved by using whatever comes to hand; also: something constructed in this way.</p> <p>Editor's note from Merriam-Webster dictionary: According to French social anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, the artist "shapes the beautiful and useful out of the dump heap of human life." Lévi-Strauss compared this artistic process to the work of a handyman who solves technical or mechanical problems with whatever materials are available. He referred to that process of making do as <i>bricolage</i>, a term derived from the French verb <i>bricoler</i> (meaning "to putter about") and related to <i>bricoleur</i>, the French name for a jack-of-all-trades.</p> <p>https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bricolage</p>
Siyafundisa Centre	Pseudonym used for an Early Learning Centre in Franschoek in the Western Cape of South Africa.
Omgee Centre	Pseudonym used for an Afternoon Care Centre in Blanco, a small suburb in George, in the Western Cape of South Africa

Table 1.1 The Corbin & Strauss (2008) version of GTM used to analyse the data in this study

CODING
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
CONSTANT COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DATA AND THE EMERGING CONCEPTS
FORMULATION OF A THEME OR THEORETICAL MODEL

Creswell, 2013:117

Table 2.1 Names and ages of respondents when first interviewed

Mpume Zwane	42 years
Deanne September	30 years
Rubin Buys	20 years
Karin Wilson	34 years
Jasmine Jefthas	22 years

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ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Training and Education
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology.
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Education.
GTM	Grounded Theory Method.
nDoE	National Department of Education
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IERB	The Institutional Ethics Review Board
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPO	Non-profit organisation
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SDU	Schools Development Unit
REP	Rural Education Project
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNISA	University of South Africa
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
NCE	National Curriculum Statement
ANA	Annual National Assessment
DBE	Department of Basic Education

(South Africa) "is a society in transition from an apartheid world to a post-apartheid world. It is a place of contradiction and complexity where old worlds and new worlds, colonial and postcolonial discourses, local, African and global forces, jostle with each other. It is a place where a violent history has left an indelible mark shaping how we move forward. In this moment it asks questions like how does order get restored when violence has been the norm for many South Africans? How do institutions like education, that have been at the heart of conflict and inequality, re-establish themselves? ... These questions ... are essentially questions about power which are important for all educators in all contexts. The questions remain the same, what changes from context to context are the answers. Dixon 2011:ix

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Enso, an eleven-year old school dropout, sat expressionless and silent during the holiday programme. When the programme ended, I found he had written on the stationery box he had used:

Bad boy. Ons lag nie. Ons lag nie vandag. How many voices cry.¹

Why did he drop out of school? My subjective response is that his writing is literate; has a poetic quality and expresses his confusion and feelings of hopelessness. He is one of the 52% of children who drop out of school between Grade 1 and Grade 12 in South Africa (Chetty, 2012:1). According to the National Planning Commission (NPC), “*The overall gross enrolment is 92%*” (NPC, 2011:13) but half of these children drop out without matriculating. The retention rate in the recent 2013 Grade 12 results was again seen by analysts as a major issue in our present schooling system (Spaull, N. 2014a: Jan10: np). Why is this happening? There are many reasons for this critical situation but, because of my background in Early Childhood Development (ECD), I decided to focus on one of the possible causes – the status of emergent literacy in the home.

1.2. Background

I became aware while facilitating parenting workshops with socio-economically disadvantaged parents with young children in Gauteng and the Western Cape in South Africa, that many of the parents appeared to be uninvolved in their children’s emergent literacy. They engaged in few or no emergent literacy activities like sharing books, using drawing materials, playing with cognitively stimulating toys and discussions that involved thinking, talking and listening. These children will have gone on to schools where the curriculum assumes prior emergent literacy input from the home and/or crèche and does not take cognizance of the lack of or different emergent literacy activities and the diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of less advantaged children. Many of these children are at risk for schooling, according to Dennessen (2007:239), not because their homes are inadequate but because of “*a mismatch between home and school practices*”. Neuman (2009: ix) concurs: it is not that they are unable to learn.

¹ Bad boy. *We do not laugh. We do not laugh today.* How many voices cry.

It is because they miss out on the “*knowledge, experiences, language and opportunities for learning*” that set a standard that children are expected to have attained before entering a formal Grade R or Grade 1 class.

This standard is based on the levels reached by more advantaged peers whose parents have shared a wide variety of emergent literacy activities with them. Neuman (2009: ix & x) believes these children fail “*before they even reach the school house doors*” because of this. The “*seminal ethnographic study of three communities in South Carolina*” undertaken by Heath (1983) reported by Janks (2010:3) established that

Children who grew up in communities with different oral and literate practices develop different facilities with language which although equally powerful resources for making meaning, are not equally valued by the school system in which children from these communities enter (Heath 1983 in Janks, 2010:3).

Heckman (2013:3) believes “*children born into disadvantaged environments are at much greater risk of being unskilled, having low lifetime earnings, and facing a range of personal and social troubles, including poor health, teen pregnancy and crime*”. He argues, though, that it is not just the lack of financial resources that causes disadvantage. There is “*a large body of evidence (that) suggests a major determinant of child disadvantage is the quality of the nurturing environment*” (Heckman, 2013:22). It became important then to look at these issues from a South African perspective. This study began with a focus on emergent literacy from the socio-economically disadvantaged parent’s point of view.

1.3. Research goal

The focusing question in this study was: What emergent literacy activities does a pre-selected socio-economically disadvantaged sample of parents engage in with their children? This involved trying to understand some of the issues around emergent literacy through interviewing five parents from an Early Learning Centre, an Afternoon Care Centre, a Non-profit organisation (NPO) and someone working in the theatre. They all live in the Western Cape of Southern Africa. There were two initial sub-questions:

- What do you remember about your parents and your home before you went to school?
- What is different or the same about how your children learnt to read and write compared with your own experiences?

I believed that the data from these questions could possibly lead to information on whether the parents reflecting on their experiences with emergent literacy as children, or as parents with their own children, engaged in emergent literacy activities; some other pre-literate activities; or no activities that help the child become ready for the standards expected by the schools at entry to formal learning. There are many reasons Enso could have dropped out of school. It would be helpful, however, to ascertain whether a lack of emergent literacy in the home could have contributed to this because he may have failed before he even entered school, as suggested by Dennessen (2007); Neuman, (2009), and Heckman, (2013).

Creswell (2009:131) reminds novice researchers using the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) *“the research questions will evolve during the study in a manner consistent with the assumptions of an emerging design”*. This did indeed happen. The questions changed, and the data did not answer the initial question as expected. The parents interviewed in this study had all become literate with little or no parental involvement in emergent literacy activities before entering formal schooling. The theme that eventually evolved from the data focused on the emergent literacy experiences of the parents and how they had achieved literacy against great odds. The question about their own children’s emergent literacy was not used as the emergent categories and the core category led the study in a different direction and there was no time left to explore the parents’ experiences of their own children’s emergent literacy. This is a question that can still be explored in a further study. The findings in this study suggest that it was possible, in some cases, to have little conventional emergent literacy support from the home environment and become literate. Other elements emerged that appeared to be as important or more important than emergent literacy support. In Enso’s case lack of parental involvement in early literacy activities as suggested by the research reported in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Howie et al, 2008:9), into successful reading at Grade 4 level could still have been one of the many factors that led to his short schooling career. The lack of other elements that emerged during the study as necessary conditions for effective emergent literacy; his “voice” within the home; the quality of the nurturing environment and discipline issues may have exacerbated his plight. These issues are discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

1.4. Overview of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the emergent literacy engagement of a sample of socio-economically disadvantaged parents and caregivers with their children.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 introduces and provides a background to the study; presents the research goal then gives a brief overview of the structure of the study.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides details of the literature examined around the emerging themes as the study progressed.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 describes the positionality of the researcher followed by the grounded theory methods used in this study. The collection and analysis of data follows, and validity and ethical issues ends this chapter.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 presents the themes that emerged from the data, and the categories that were derived from them to inform the data analysis.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 begins with definitions used in this study (Appendix D). It continues with the conclusions reached that led to the finding of a theoretical concept that gives coherence to the themes discovered in the data.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief literature review of grounded theory methodology. It is followed by a review of recent assessments of South African literacy. Finally, there is a discussion of the literature that was used in response to analysis of the data that took place throughout the search for a theme or a possible theory - as is necessary in a GTM approach.

2.2. Literature review in grounded theory methodology

The originators of GTM, (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) recommended that a review of literature in the substantive area should not take place prior to the “*data being collected and analysed*” (Wiener, 2007 in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:298). The analysis of the data is therefore not predetermined by a theoretical framework. Theoretical categories emerge from the data and the researcher looks for insights and validation from literature in response to these emerging themes (Creswell, 2009:26). Conversely, the literature review evolves throughout the study as an essential element of the recursive, comparative, analytical process, which is a hallmark of grounded theory method approaches. GTM was particularly suited to this study because it focused on listening to the informants so that their real thoughts and feelings were more likely to emerge. This makes the analysis more valid as in more positivist approaches it is easier to lose the participant voice and impose the researcher’s voice on the data by using the literature to frame the participants’ responses. There is also in GTM an acknowledgement that the researcher’s own “*personal, historical & cultural experiences*” influence the interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2009:8).

The use of literature in a grounded theory study nevertheless, has since its inception been a much-debated issue among researchers. Glaser & Strauss (1967) in Bryant & Charmaz (2007:1) described a new method that they had created of analyzing data. They posited that the collected data from interviews, observations and documents should guide the study until a pattern surfaces that helps build a theory rather than try to fit the data into an existing theory (Urquhart, 2013:7). This has led to an ongoing debate about when and how to use the literature in a grounded theory approach (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:19). Lempert (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:254) states that she uses literature comprehensively “*as I collect, code, memo and write*”. Holton (2007) on the other hand believes, like Strauss, that “*no preconceived problem statement, interview protocols or extensive reviews of literature*” should

take place until the “*post-conceptual stages of the research*” (Bryant & Charmaz 2007:19-20). Birks & Mills (2011:22) suggest using the literature review initially to find examples of how other researchers have used the grounded theory method. After a review of the opposing views of prominent contenders in the field, Bryant & Charmaz (2007:20), posit a balance between reliance on the literature as a framework for a novice researcher that brings the researcher “*into the conversation*” (Lempert 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:254), and compliance with “*Glaser and particularly Strauss’s stance*” against using literature as a framework for the research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:20). They also argue for regarding “*GTM as a family of methods*” where there are differences and similarities as well as disagreements as happens in a real family (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:13).

All this makes it challenging for a student who must provide a problem statement, interview protocols and a critical review of the literature for submission to a Higher Degrees Committee. I chose to provide the necessary problem statement and protocols, and to review some literature as it relates to grounded theory. Viewing literacy from a broader perspective – that is emergent literacy – I explored a few recent national, transnational and provincial assessments of literacy in South Africa as I wished to understand some of the challenges facing us in our country.

2.3. Recent assessments of South African literacy

2.3.1. Report from the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the development of the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy

The Diagnostic Review prepared by the National Planning Commission (NPC) and released in June 2011 cited progress made since 1994 and the challenges facing the country. The NPC suggests that:

The quality of education for poor black South Africans (in schools) is sub-standard and ... efforts to raise the quality of education for poor children have largely failed (South Africa. Department of the Presidency. NPC 2011:13 & 14).

The situation for young children in the country was also of concern:

The quality of early childhood education and care for poor black communities is inadequate and generally very poor (South Africa. Department of the Presidency. NPC 2011:14) ... *only 68% of children aged five are in Grade R and only 24% of children aged naught to five are in ECD centres - and many of the centres are inadequate and generally poor* (South Africa. NPC, 2011 in Atmore, 2011:4).

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A baseline study conducted in five provinces on “*the early literacy development of Grade R learners*” reported that “... *only 35.9% of the children attending Grade R met the minimum criteria for early literacy development*” (De Witt et al, in O’Carroll 2008:1). Although there has been an increase in children attending Grade R the quality of the instruction remains poor as there is insufficient funding of ECD by government “*despite the policy commitment to early childhood development*” (South Africa. Department of the Presidency. NPC 2011:14). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment reports (Howie et al 2008 and 2012) give a similar somber picture of literacy in South Africa.

Yet progress in changing this situation has been very slow.

There were three National activities which impacted on ECD services in South Africa since 2011/2012:

- Review of the National Integrated Plan for ECD;
- The ECD Diagnostic Review; and
- The Buffalo City Declaration on ECD that was adopted at the National ECD Conference held in March 2012.

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Ignore – this is a list, not a table.

The above processes were merged into a draft “An Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development – Moving Ahead 2013 – 2016” (South Africa. Department of Social Development, 2014).

In August 2013, the Department of Social Development announced that they would begin an “audit of ECD centres to obtain ... information to inform and support on-going policy and planning initiatives” citing the above NPC’s Diagnostic Overview as motivation for the audit. (South Africa. Department of Social Development, 2013).

The findings of the audit were released in August 2015 (John, 2015). This confirmed the NPC’s Diagnostic Overview and brought to light the fact that “*Virtually none of the ECD practitioners have a tertiary qualification and over 43% of practitioners have below Grade 12 Education and ... only ... “40% have completed Matric*”. This means that at least three quarters of the practitioners do not meet the minimum requirements of the National Qualifications Framework levels (John, 2015). The draft National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy was finally gazetted for public comment from 13 March to 24 April 2015. (South Africa. Department of Social Development, 2015:1-168). During this period ECD practitioners and other members of the public mooted, in written documentation, an ECD agency to guide and expedite the

implementation. The policy was finally approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2015 (South Africa. Department of Social Development, 2015:1-116).

Everything seemed set for the implementation of this policy but in a written question and answer statement (South Africa. Department of Social Development. February 2016) the answer to a question on when the policy would be implemented was “... a *national implementation plan will be developed to guide the implementation and to assist provinces and municipalities to develop their own plans. This will happen against the time lines set in the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy*”. Unfortunately, public suggestions that an ECD agency be formed was not accepted. The decision being for ECD to remain under “*the leadership and coordination ... of government*” as it “*strengthens the role of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on ECD, supported by the National Interdepartmental Committee on ECD; a government led inter-sectoral forum to ensure participation of the nongovernmental sector; and inter-governmental forums at the national, provincial and local level in terms of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act [No.13 of 2005]*” (South Africa. Department of Social Development, 2016:2).

It appears that progress will continue to be slow, despite the need in the country, as Interdepartmental Committees require cooperation and they continue to focus on discussion and forums and are now developing a National implementation plan instead of “actioning” the policy.

2.3.2. The PIRLS assessment

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) is a:

... cooperative of national research institutions and international governmental research agencies that conduct large-scale comparative studies of educational achievement and other aspects of education (IEA database, July 2013).

One of their ongoing comparative studies is the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in primary schools. This assessment takes place every five years. South Africa participated in 2006 and 2011. In 2006 Grade 4 and 5 learners were assessed and South Africa's score was the lowest of all the 45 participating countries in the PIRLS (Howie et al, 2008:18). In 2011, the Grade 4 the PIRLS was changed to an easier assessment called prePIRLS and administered in all 11 languages (Howie et al, 2012:111). Despite this “*they were still performing at a low level overall*” compared with countries internationally (Howie et al, 2012:112). At the Grade 5 level learners were assessed in English and Afrikaans and not

in the African languages because of the inadequate performance in 2006 and difficulties experienced in “*measuring trends accurately in those languages*” (Howie et al, 2012:111). “*There (was) no significant difference in the overall achievement*” of Grade 5 learners assessed in English and Afrikaans compared with the 2006 results. 43% of these learners were unable to read at a basic level – the PIRLS Low International Benchmark (Howie et al, 2011:113) - although there was a trend towards more learners achieving this basic level in 2011 than in 2006 PIRLS (Howie et al, 2012:51).

One of the significant findings of the PIRLS reports in 2008 and 2012 was evidence of a link between successful reading at Grade 4 level and parental involvement in early literacy activities for almost every country involved in the PIRLS (Howie et al, 2008:9). This confirms the possibility that there is a link between parental involvement and later dropout rates because disadvantaged parents are not involved in early literacy activities or the school is unable to provide the support disadvantaged children need. The summary of the 2011 study (Howie et al,2012) also reports, amongst other significant factors, lack of a viable classroom library or reading corner. The paucity of books together with the lack of public libraries in both township and rural areas “*could widen the gap of reading achievement if not addressed*” (Howie et al, 2012:116). Poor performing schools and the many under-resourced schools in the poorer areas was also cited as preventing children from learning to read (Howie et al, 2012: xvii). The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006 – 2016) and a 2010 report on the Rural Education Project (REP) added insight to the South African attrition picture.

2.3.3. WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006 -2016) and Report on the Rural Education Project (2010)

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) formulated a Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006 – 2016) that “*strengthened their earlier strategic plans of 2002 / 2003*”. “*The situational analysis within WCED Human Capital Strategy explains clearly the various limitations and challenges the province faces in preparing our people for the globalized world*”. They believed that the low levels of literacy and numeracy in the schools contributed to the “*high levels of attrition and failure in most South African schools*”. They also found that the “*vast majority of learners in Grade 3 were performing two to three years below expectation*” (South Africa. WCED Literacy and & Numeracy Strategy, 2006:2;12). Research by this Department and the National Department of Education (nDoE) confirmed international findings that children entering Grade 1 are generally not ready for formal learning and that there was a high correlation between the poor results and poverty. Issues contributing to this situation

were identified as “poverty, TV, lack of movement/motor development, lack of opportunities to play, poor language use by role-models, substance abuse by pregnant women, malnutrition, single-parent families, illiterate parents, lack of parental involvement in children’s lives, lack of engagement with books before school entrance”, etc. (South Africa. WCED Literacy & Numeracy Strategy, 2006:6). Much of this falls into the ambit of emergent literacy within the home. Here was more evidence of the lack of parental involvement because of so many challenging circumstances that make it difficult to parent and possibly leads to the high attrition rates typified by Enso’s drop-out situation. Among other strategies to improve this situation were plans to develop “a manual and ... associated supportive training programmes for parents to prepare their children for formal education” (South Africa. WCED Literacy & Numeracy Strategy, 2006:6). This plan has been set in motion by the Departments of Social Development and Health in partnership with WCED.

Progress in changing the literacy and numeracy skills especially of remote rural (in ascending order of need), “rural, farm and township schools” (South Africa. WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, 2006:3) has been slow despite so many efforts to change the situation. Issues impacting the attainment of these literacy and numeracy goals were highlighted in a report on a four-year Rural Education Project (REP) facilitated by the Schools Development Unit (SDU) of the University of Cape Town (UCT) (Gamble & Kuhne, 2010). The report concluded that there were three factors that were contributing to the continuing low levels of literacy and numeracy and impacting attrition rates “despite concerted efforts by district officials, the Rural Education Project (REP) education specialists and schools themselves”. These were: assessment, teacher knowledge and language in the classroom. All three aspects were affected by “systemic challenges and shortcomings in teacher expertise that will take time to be corrected” (Gamble & Kuhne, 2010:55).

2.3.4. The Annual National Assessment of Schools (ANAs) in South Africa

Since 2011 assessments of literacy and numeracy skills in Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9 have been administered annually by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The Annual National Assessments (ANAs) are written by pupils in all schools to evaluate progress in the curriculum. In the 2014 report from the Department of Basic Education on the ANA’s the department continues to believe that the ANA’s indicate successful progress.

Provincial trends in the ANA over the last two years have indicated that as a sector we are making significant strides in the foundation and intermediate phases in both Languages and Mathematics. In terms of the Presidential targets we have exceeded this target in both Languages and Mathematics at the Grade 3 level and in Home

Language for Grade 6. While there have been noteworthy improvements, in these phases, the senior phase remains challenged by not delivering the expected progress against targets we have set ourselves in 2010 (DBE Report on the Annual Assessment of 2014:5).

Yet researchers continue to voice concern about the ANAs:

There is not a single educational statistician in the country or internationally who would go on record and say that the ANA results can be used to identify 'improvements' or 'deteriorations' over time or across grades... The overall decline in ANA achievement between grade one and grade nine for instance is extremely misleading because it suggests that the problem lies in the senior phase ... but all research shows that children are not acquiring foundational skills in grades one to three and that this is the root cause of underperformance in higher grades (Spaull, N. 2014b. Mail & Guardian: Dec 12:np).

The ANAs should also not "... detract from the quality or breadth of education ..." and we need to remember that:

A single assessment is at most a one-to-two-hour dipstick into the current educational practices, not a comprehensive review. Professor David Andrich, the world-renowned education and assessment specialist, writes that systemic assessments should not alone, nor even primarily, guide policy decisions in education (Long, C. 2015. Mail & Guardian: April 24:np).

Furthermore, Caroline Long believes that the results should not be used:

...to name and shame schools where the conditions are already very difficult" as this "is fundamentally unjust and counterproductive (Long, C. 2015. Mail & Guardian: April 24:np).

Other educationalists and the teacher unions have also expressed many concerns around the ANAs, chief among them being that the "results are not comparable year on year"; the administrative burden of the ANA in schools is too great; the frequency of assessments leave insufficient time to "implement diagnostic remedies" (Nsele, S. 2015 *News 24*. Sept. 11:np) and the enormous cost of the ANAs as well as anxiety around "results ... used to name and shame schools and teachers" (Nkosi, B. 2015. *Mail & Guardian*. Sept. 21:np).

The pressure from teacher unions has eventually led to a postponement of the ANAs for 2015.

Of interest to this thesis is a recent study of learner's performance in the 2012 and 2013 ANAs by Professor van der Berg (2016:1, 6) from Stellenbosch University. He found that the learning gap between children from rich and poor schools:

is already very wide by grade 4 ... and most disturbingly, grade 4 results across the school system look similar to those for the bachelor's pass in Grade 12...

and in addition

...these children are unlikely to make up for early loss of ground in school or backlogs that may have built up even before they started school.

He posits:

efforts to repair the damage at higher grades are important and must continue for the sake of those who may still benefit from them ... but ... whether the case is weak early instruction or a disadvantaged home background, early remedial action is imperative.

Taylor of Jet Education Services agrees that:

...a learners' life chances have largely been determined by the end of Grade 4 in the first instance, through the circumstances into which they were born and second, through the poor schooling they receive (Taylor, in Govender, P. 2016. 20 May:np).

So much international and national research points to the early years as vital in terms of resources and funding that researchers like Spaul (2016) are understandably frustrated because the Education Department appears not to take cognizance of it:

I deliberately do not want to write about the research now (RESEP "Laying firm foundations" and "Binding constraints") since I am currently a little jaded and frustrated about the education research, funding and policy space ... when there are clear, unambiguous and actionable steps that could be taken to improve the education system and they are not taken, this is frustrating ... (Spaul, N. 14 May, 2016).

Although the Department of Education (DoE) recognizes the importance of the early years they have not yet backed their words with action. Hopefully, given time, they will action more funding and resources for ECD and the Foundation phases.

2.4. Iterative review of the literature

I had thought I might be able to use the literature comprehensively during the collecting of data and coding as suggested by Lempert (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:254) but it was not until the coding of the third interview as categories become properties, adding dimension to a possible theme, that I began to consult the substantive literature. Once the reading of

literature began it became an iterative process as is necessary in GTM. Questions around issues like power and race, that emerged from data analysis, led to the reading of literature and then led back to the methodology. Because of this I implemented methodological actions to try to minimize some of these effects. As new categories surfaced like “Aspirations” and “Voice”, for instance, they led again to the literature then back to the literature with possible answers to questions or further questions for interviewees. It was a fascinating process: a bit like rock climbing where finding a foothold with one foot leads you on to a foothold for the other foot – the path becoming a little clearer as you climb higher up the rock face. Emergent literacy was my first category.

2.4.1. Emergent literacy

As the data began to show that respondents had in common a perception that their parents had left them to do things on their own and had been uninvolved in their emergent literacy and schooling I realized I needed to understand common experiences that influence emergent literacy to assess whether my sample had been exposed to these experiences. I found that *“In the last decade, early childhood education has become ‘more central in the public policy debate worldwide”* (Denessen, 2007:237) and *“across all research disciplines there is now widespread agreement that investment in ECD brings high returns and can help close the gap between children from rich and poor households”* (Kotzé, 2015:2).

With this recognition of Early Childhood Development has come more research on early literacy. The role of the parent in emergent literacy and subsequent success in Western schooling (Howie et al in PIRLS, 2008:9) has led to many different early intervention programmes as well as research into the factors in early parenting and literacy practices that lead to successful integration into formal schooling and competence in literacy and numeracy.

Denessen, (2007:238) summarizes early literacy ‘key components’ for formal

...reading and school success as: 1) Oral language (listening, comprehension, oral language vocabulary). 2) Alphabetic code (alphabet knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness, invented spelling, and 3) Print knowledge (environmental print, concepts about print) (Strickland and Riley-Ayers, 2006, in Denessen, 2007:238).

Abadzi, (2008:585) posits working memory & the speed of visual recognition as a misunderstood but vital component for learning to read:

The most important implication of working memory capacity is that we are constantly performing in a very narrow timeframe of about 12 seconds. We must recognize letters

and other items within a few milliseconds, otherwise we cannot hold the messages they convey in our minds long enough to interpret them or make decisions; by the end of a sentence we forget the beginning (Abadzi, 2008:585).

Browne (1996:12) posits the *“learning potential of talk ... that allows them to negotiate meanings and extend their understanding as a key to developing children’s learning”*.

Aronstam (2005:35) points out that *“Most of the literacy research in South Africa has focused on the development of literacy practice in disadvantaged communities”*. This has had a common worldwide theme – a deficit view of poor and minority groups.

The list of supposed deficits is long and inclusive: deficit cognitive abilities, deficient language, poor motivation, devaluation of education, poor parenting skills. Internationally, however, there has been a change towards the recognition of the importance of socio-cultural factors. This is the result of growing evidence ‘that all communities have appropriate cognitive abilities, albeit different ones to fit varied life situations. ... Judgements about the abilities and - or disabilities of peoples from socio-cultural groups different from our own ... is seen by an ever-growing segment of the research field as invalid, unhelpful, and destructive (Purcell-Gates, 1995:3-4).

Exploring the literature, I found that *“literacy develops through living in a family and as a member of a cultural community and later through becoming a part of the formal schooling system”* or of an informal life system like farming where many never attend school or attend for a few years. *“Literacy development is ‘situated’: It occurs in and through children’s interactions in their local home, community and school settings”* (Reid et al., 2004:128) and is a complex process that is influenced by culture, language and socio-economic factors. Makin’s (2002) notion *“of a pedagogy of early literacy suggests that it is ‘play based, community oriented, family friendly and responsive to children’s interests and experiences’* (Makin, 2002 in Morgan & Chodkiewicz, 2009:264).

“Children’s gradual awakening to the meanings of signs and messages embedded in the social practices of their families and wider community” (Marsh & Millard, 2000:68) is seen as emergent literacy. This perspective on how children learn to read acknowledges the child’s involvement *“in their own learning (some of the literacy learning emerges from a maturing understanding about language which originates within the child) and the fact that literacy learning emerges with increasing experience over time”* (Hall, 1987 in Weinberger 1996:3). This view of learning to read has evolved over the last thirty years as previously it was understood to be taught primarily by teachers to children in schools. The deficit interpretation of children from disadvantaged communities emerged from this approach as there was no recognition of the importance of differing cultural experiences and an incorporation of these

divergent literacy practices into the school curriculum. The adults were seen to “pass on illiteracy (like disease) to their children” (Taylor, 1999 in Marsh & Millard 2000:69). Goodman (1987) argues that “there is no single road to becoming literate” (Goodman et al., 1987 in Marsh & Millard, 2000:69). Marsh et al (2005) introduce another aspect that helps pave these diverse roads to learning to read – the influence of popular culture, media and new technologies in the home and community. Popular culture is defined as:

... those cultural texts, artefacts and practices which are attractive to large numbers of children and which are often mass produced on a global scale (Marsh et al., 2005a:2).

And more specifically in the above study as:

toys, games, media; and artefacts related to popular narratives, characters and icons” ... such as the “Disney” movies (Marsh et al., 2005:9).

An interesting study of literacy development by Riley (1996:11) also showed that the child’s prior knowledge of the alphabet was a “powerful predictor of later success in reading acquired incidentally and informally at preschool”. Two researchers “Gibson and Levin (1975) and later Ehri (1983) ... set out to teach children the letters of the alphabet directly, prior to school entry”. They were unsuccessful “because it appears that this skill is acquired incidentally and informally in the emergent literacy stage” (Riley 1996:12) and “knowledge of letters is of little value unless the child knows and is interested in their use” (Adams 1993:207 in Riley 1996:14).

The evidence in this study shows that all five respondents had a strong interest in learning to read when they began formal schooling. They were probably ready to learn to read and that was perhaps one of the factors that led to their literacy achievements.

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Research by Weinberger (1996) found that “when children see people at home reading and writing they unconsciously internalize about what it is to be a reader or writer, and this has significance for literacy” (Weinberger, J. 1996:55). All the respondents had some exposure to the Bible in their homes or in neighboring homes and Rubin (the youngest respondent) had an aunt who did her homework every afternoon in their home.

Rubin also had family members who encouraged him to do well because he carried the family name. Mason & Allen (1986) find this kind of encouragement significant in helping children learn to read and propose that a society’s expectations and the value a culture places on literacy influence its acquisition. The context in which the development of their emergent literacy took place played a role in all the informants experiences. Mpume, Deanne, Karin and Jasmine were born into cultures where literacy was not valued. Children could go to school or not and there was seldom pressure to learn. It is thus even more surprising that they achieved

literacy. Rubin however was born into a culture that valued literacy (See Chapter 4.2. for detailed analysis and discussion).

It is also interesting to note that research indicates that parents reading stories to their children may be a major factor in emergent literacy and later literacy acquisition (Mason and Allen (1986); Howie et al, 2008:9; Weinberger, 1996:6). None of the five respondents had stories read to them at home. Buys was the only one who had stories read to him at the crèche.

I found that there are myriad definitions of emergent literacy and its key experiences. Gunn et al (2004) did a synthesis of the research around emergent literacy that was helpful, and I choose their definition below:

Our review of research revealed numerous but complementary definitions of emergent literacy. Researchers agreed that emergent literacy (a) begins during the period before children receive formal reading instruction, (Stahl & Miller, 1989; Teale & Sulzby, 1987; van Kleeck, 1990), (b) encompasses learning about reading, writing and print prior to schooling (Sulzby & Teale, 1991), (c) is acquired through informal as well as adult-directed home and school activities, and (d) facilitates acquisition of specific knowledge of reading. Emergent literacy differs from conventional literacy as it examines the range of settings and experiences that support literacy, the role of the child's contributions (i.e., individual construction), and the relation between individual literacy outcomes and the diverse experiences that precede those outcomes (Gunn et al, 2004:2-3)

Definitions of common emergent literacy terms from Gunn et al (2004) and a definition of emergent literacy from The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of 2012 can be found in Chapter 5.1. Appendix D.

Gunn et al (2004:6-19) suggest two core fields: Areas of literacy knowledge and Areas of literacy expression. Areas of literacy knowledge are:

- Awareness of print;
- Relationship of print to speech;
- Comprehension of text structure;
- Phonological awareness; and
- Letter knowledge

Areas of literacy expression are:

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- Communication patterns and practices in culture and society
- Community and home literacy experiences and
- Storybook reading.

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As I was still exploring “emergent literacy” it became clear from continued analysis that all the respondents had achieved literacy despite little conventional emergent literacy support from parents. I had also discovered another strong theme running through all the data. This was “Coping alone”.

2.4.2 Coping alone

I accessed several articles on the subject and found some interesting statistics. The term “self-care” is used in America to describe elementary and middle school children who are without adult supervision during the after-school hours whether they are at home, at friends’ houses, or in public places. Most of these studies were small with “non-representative samples” (State university.com education encyclopedia).

Of relevance to the sample in the study was the following:

- Age appeared to be a factor in a study of a low-income urban community as children who had to care for themselves in Grades 1 & 3 (Grade 2 was not studied) were “associated with negative academic and social development in Grade 6” (Posner & Vandell, 1999:868-879).
- The age of the child in self-care was a consideration as “children who experienced more self-care during the primary grades received lower grades, lower achievement test scores and lower teacher ratings of social competence in Grade 6” (Pettit et al, 1997).
- “The amount of unsupervised time” urban Grade 7 pupils “spent with peers predicated behaviour problems at home and school as well as lower academic functioning” (Steinberg, 1986:433-439).

The data showed that the five respondents believed they had had to care for themselves from a young age and that they had, all except Rubin, spent unsupervised time every afternoon during Primary and High School. Rubin spent unsupervised time every afternoon during High School. The research showed that in disadvantaged communities this led to lower academic achievement, poorer social competence and behavioural problems at home and school. All

respondents (except Deanne who did not attend school at all) chose to go to school; behaved in class; never failed a year; did their homework unsupervised by adults and exhibited no behaviour problems. Their experiences were the same as that detailed in the research, but the outcomes were different.

I had by then found new questions in the data and suddenly 'Aspirations' appeared as a possible core category as all the respondents yearned to live lives that were different from their parents.

2.4.3. Aspirations

An aspiration is defined by the Oxford dictionary as "*a hope or ambition of achieving something*" (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>) It adds that there is often a gulf between an aspiration and reality. This was not the case for these five persons. They appeared to have a strong longing ... dream ... ambition ... desire to improve their circumstances that helped them push through all the properties and dimensions that I had found in the data. Some of these elements were semi-literate parents, inadequate schooling, psychological trauma and socio-economic and political circumstances. A study on the influence of aspirations and expectations (Khattab, 2015) on educational behaviour found that students with either high aspirations or high expectations have higher school achievement than those with both low aspirations and low expectations. Aspiration in this paper was defined as reflecting hopes and dreams but are "*likely to be disengaged from the socio-economic and school reality*" whereas expectations "*are more likely to be within the socio-economic circumstances*" (Khattab, N, 2015:731-748). It was difficult to decide whether the respondents were motivated by aspirations or expectations. It appeared however from the data that it was aspirations.

What was it in their environmental circumstances or personality that had helped them achieve their goals through so many challenges? Reading the literature, it is clear this is an age-old question - "*the theme of countless novels, biographies and memoirs; the subject of several centuries' worth of philosophical and psychological treatises ... and more recent research*" (Tough, 2012:19). It made me wonder how I could ever hope to find something significant in this small study. Then I remembered this is a process of learning and that the process is really the objective and that it is possible to explore a few of the elements in these respondents lives that could have contributed to their stories of success and might have influenced Enso's decision to drop out of school.

Tough (2012), presents a compelling case for more of an emphasis on non-cognitive skills for academic success rather than the cognitive skills that presently underpins most schooling world-wide. Perhaps these respondent's personalities or traits had helped them hold on to their aspirations? He explored a growing trend in education led by "economists, educators, psychologists and neuroscientists" (Tough 2012:6) and reports many discussions around traits, skills and success "(W)ith young people whose lives embodied and illustrated, in one way or another, the complex question of which children succeed and how" (Tough 2012:12).

Tough (2012:157) proposes that noncognitive skills, like "persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence" are more important than intellect in successful living. He also suggests from his investigations into two schools – one for disadvantaged students and the other for advantaged children - that there is a difference in their approach to adversity. (Other differences between children from the two schools are discussed later in 2.4.4. Discipline). He suggests adversity breeds character traits like those mentioned above and that children from advantaged homes are often protected from adversity well into young adulthood whereas those from disadvantaged homes are seldom given enough support to change adversity into strong character traits. He believes from his research that children can be helped through adversity to "*foster resilience ... that protects them from many of the worst effects of a harsh early environment*" - by attentive, caring parents or a school that promotes character building as does the Kipp Academy for disadvantaged children that features prominently in this study.

It appeared as if all five respondents had developed resilience as they had survived adversity and gone on to achieve above expectations. Both advantaged and disadvantaged children are affected by poor parenting (Tough, 2012:27). He also discovered in his investigation that "*The effects of good parenting is not just emotional or psychological, the neuroscientists say; it is biochemical*" (Tough, 2012:28).

He reports Heckman (2013) as one of the pivotal researchers in this investigation into personality traits (Tough, 2012:7).

Heckman (2013), a Nobel laureate in Economics, points to the Perry and Abecedarian programmes that have been "*rigorously evaluated and subjected to long-term follow-up scrutiny, and have shown high economic return*" (Heckman, 2013:128) as evidence for the importance of non-cognitive skills/personality traits and the quality of family life. He postulates that:

“Life success depends on more than cognitive skills. Non-cognitive characteristics - including physical and mental health, as well as perseverance, attentiveness, motivation, self-confidence, and other social-emotional qualities – are all essential (Heckman, 2013:4).

Gladwell (2008) also makes several interesting suggestions about extraordinarily successful people. Amongst many propositions and a final summing up he finds that the “Outlier” (the apparently self-made highly successful person)

“Is not an outlier at all ... they are products of history and community, of opportunity and legacy. Their success is not exceptional or mysterious. It is grounded in a web of advantages and inheritances, some deserved, some not, some earned, some just plain lucky – but all critical to making them who they are” (Gladwell, 2008:285).

The hard work ethic that he sees as one of the necessary elements for success resonated with the data in the study. He found in his research that highly successful achievers all worked very hard at what they wanted to achieve. *“It (their success) required hard work, effort, structure and a decision to do something” (Gladwell, 2008:114).*

All the respondents worked hard to achieve what they wanted, and their homes gave them some structure and taught them the importance of effort and hard work. They had all aspired passionately to finding something more for their lives than took the opportunities - small as they were. Considering the traits or attitudes posited by Tough (2012) and Heckman (2013) the data showed that all the respondents were resilient; physically and mentally healthy; persisted; were attentive enough to become literate; were noticeably self-confident in their communities - and when interviewed - were all highly motivated. But how had they developed these traits that helped them to hold on to their aspirations? It was clear from the data that their aspirations had helped them achieve their goals. The data also showed that non-cognitive characteristics had also played a part in helping them hold on to their aspirations and achieve their goals of changing their circumstances. I wondered if there was something else that had helped them hold on to their aspirations - another core category?

I returned to reading GTM to assist with the data that had become almost unmanageable (See 3.3.11. Maps & Diagrams). I then discovered Clarke and Frieze (Clarke & Frieze, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:363). Clarke adds to Strauss’s concept of social worlds by positing situational analysis.

“... in situational analysis ... the elements of the situation are imaged as in the action, as actual parts of the situation or action. The fundamental assumption here is that

everything in the situation both constitutes and affects most everything else in the situation in some way(s). Everything actually in the situation or understood to be so conditions the possibilities of action ... Here the macro/meso/micro distinctions dissolve in the face of presence/absence, while the connections among elements become more apparent (Clarke & Frieze, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:264 & 265).

Using situational analysis brought a whole new world alight. I became more aware of conditional elements that influenced their aspirations like the apartheid system; the rural farming system; a family where at least one member worked; sociocultural belief systems, disciplinary regimes and the nurturing relationships (or lack of) in the home and with community members. What of all these elements had motivated their ambitions? Constant comparison of the data showed so many similarities in their experiences in their communities and families. Was it the effort and structure they had experienced in their homes and communities that had made them hold on to their goals? Discipline now appeared as a possible core category.

2.4.4. Discipline

Discipline seemed such an obvious concept, yet it was not easy to discern in the data. Discipline lurks in everything – the individual, home, school, society - It is also such a contested issue within society, especially in schooling in South Africa. It was hidden because it is in everything and everywhere since *“the conditions of the situation are in the situation ... as they are constitutive of it, not merely surrounding it or framing, it or contributing to it. They are it”* and function as *“intellectual wallpaper of sorts”* (Clarke & Frieze, 2007, in Bryant & Charnaz, 2007:364 & 372).

Foucault argues that:

“discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise ... the chief function of disciplinary power is to ‘train’ ...” (Foucault, 1977:170).

Ball (1990) posits that Foucault’s *“major concern is with what can be called loosely the philosophy of the subject”* that he believed is a *“problematic”* contemporary mode of thinking that places the subject as:

“the foundation of all knowledge and of all signification ... His philosophical project is to investigate the ways in which discourses and practices have transformed human beings into subjects of a particular kind. It is important to note that for him, ‘subject’ is systematically ambiguous; it means both being tied to someone else by control and

dependence, and being tied to one's own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge (Ball, 1990:14)

Dixon (2011) makes use of Foucault's work for "a sustained examination of practices across five classrooms that make up the research sites". This book is about discipline and it makes clear that using "disciplinary power" (Foucault 1977:170) and the use of Foucauldian concepts like "surveillance", "control of activity" and "ranking", children are trained to become "docile bodies". Dixon (2011) presents a most useful textbook for teachers where she shows the "how to" of Foucauldian disciplinary concepts. Considering these concepts subjectively it appeared as if there could be the same sort of disciplinary power in use in the home. Ball (1990) discusses this question.

Foucault has returned to the analysis of space, claiming that since Kant, western thought has been dominated by philosophical considerations of time. But why these spaces? Why not the home as in, for example, Philippe Aries (1962)? Why select these spaces rather than the home? Foucault does not tell us. The analytic grid of power-knowledge is not much help either as the home might well be selected as an appropriate locus for an analysis of power relations at the micro-level favoured by Foucault. If there is a theory for the selection of this data then it is not articulated or immediately obvious (Ball, 1990:17).

It is a pity as the homes of the respondents appeared to be similar in terms of discipline. The adults were busy earning a living. Life was difficult because wages were small, work was often physical, demanding and required long hours so there was no time nor energy for emergent literacy activities nor supervision of homework. The children had to fit into the family schedule and take part in the household chores. There was structure in the home. People had to be fed, be in time for work as well as for all the community activities that centred around their belief systems. The children had to learn to be independent and amuse themselves. They were expected to cope with what parents demanded of them and to become responsible as soon as possible. There were consequences to not completing tasks or being disobedient. All the respondents lived in homes and a community where there is a lot of emphasis on caring for each other and the importance of character traits that comes from their cultural belief system. There is very little focus and pressure on academic achievement.

As mentioned earlier, Tough (2012) posits the importance of non-cognitive skills (character traits) rather than the current overemphasis in many homes and schools on cognitive skills. He finds that parents from different cultural backgrounds prepare their children very differently for adulthood and suggests that it is often the non-cognitive skills that make a difference to adult lives. He focuses on two schools – The Kipp Academy for disadvantaged children and

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Can this quote be from a review or blurb about the book?

Riverdale Country school for privileged children. The Kipp children are immersed in slogans and discussions around character traits so that they are motivated to succeed. Much is demanded from them and there are clear rules and consequences. Riverdale children do not need the “*safety net*” of character traits to succeed in life (Tough 2012:52) because they come from wealthy families that provide everything they need. But the wealthy families protect their children from the consequences of their actions and he suggests that this leads to a lack of resilience. He believes that because of the lack of character traits and resilience adults from these homes often do not achieve as well as they should as adults and suffer from stress and depression because of the pressure to succeed. The Kipp schools on the other hand give the disadvantaged children coping skills through also teaching them non-cognitive skills that appeared to help them achieve beyond what was expected from them.

The respondents, Mpume, Rubin, Deanne, Karin and Jasmine, appear to have been brought up in homes that emphasized performance character traits that develop values like effort, diligence and perseverance Tough (2012:73) in teaching their children - rather than academic skills. Did the way these five participants were disciplined at home motivate them to hold on to their aspirations?

There is a real possibility that it did have some influence because they were all given basic life skills and taught character traits like hard work, perseverance and that there were consequences to actions. Discipline, though, is such a vast and contested subject that I would be unable to spend the time necessary to investigate it. It would need to be a topic on its own for further investigation.

I finally decided that “Disciplinary regimes” (Clarke & Friese, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:365) was a better description for something that is present in some way in all cultures, societies, families and individuals. It remained as a causal condition in theoretical integration but was not the core category. “Voice” now appeared as a new concept to explore.

2.4.5. Voice

Voice: A particular opinion or attitude expressed ... An agency by which a point of view is expressed or represented ... The distinctive tone or style of a literary work <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com> [3 January 2016].

There are many definitions of voice as it applies to different genres. (See Chap 5:1. Appendix D. for other definitions). For this study “Voice” is viewed through the lens of educational qualitative research and critical race theory.

Knaus (2011) posits "Voice" as "a means of personal liberation and political activism for oppressed and marginalized students of colour". He believes that "schools should focus on developing culturally rooted voice" He continues:

This book is an attempt to clarify the ways I centre student voice, partially because there are few examples of White educators who use student-centered, race-conscious approaches that directly center cultural expression rather than, for example, centering on their own whiteness. Yet I am able to develop student voice because I do a tremendous amount of work preparing myself to listen to my students, working through my own internalized oppression and my internalized privilege that promotes arrogance and ignorance (Knaus, 2011: xvi & 4).

Reading Knaus (2011) was an experience of a very different kind. I suddenly "saw" with different eyes and I felt embarrassed at my bland statement in Chapter 3.2.7. that I was not racist. I realized suddenly my own "internalized oppression and my internalized privilege" that keeps me ignorant because I had not understood nor acknowledged my inherent racism. Reading Ladson-Billings (1998) mentioned in Knaus' book I began to see more clearly my own racism in my everyday language and belief system. She writes:

... Our conceptions of race, even in a postmodern and, or postcolonial world, are more embedded and fixed than in a previous age. However, this embeddedness or 'fixedness' has required new language and constructions of race so that denotations are submerged and hidden in ways that are offensive though without identification. Thus, we develop notions of "conceptual whiteness" and "conceptual blackness" (King, 1995) that both do and do not map neatly on to bio-genetic or cultural allegiances. Conceptual categories like "school achievement", "middle classness", "maleness", "beauty", "intelligence," and "science" become normative categories of whiteness, while categories like "gangs", "welfare recipients", "basketball players", and "the underclass" become the marginalized and de-legitimated categories of blackness ... The creation of these conceptual categories is not designed to reify a binary but rather to suggest how, in a racialized society where whiteness is positioned as normative, everyone is ranked and categorized in relation to these points of opposition (Ladson-Billings, 1998:9).

Some of the words cited above apply to our situation in this country but some do not because we have our own marginalizing vocabulary. Knaus (2011:72) suggests that "voice is difficult to define concretely, but you know voice when you hear it" and continues "Poetry is one of the ways to express voice, but there are infinite ways to take control of our personal language in (drawing, cooking, watercolors, building, song, dance, knitting, novels, journals)" or as I was suggesting, the voice given to each of the respondents by their family that had brought them respect in their families and communities and had led to a sense of responsibility and self-worth. Given voice in their families they were socially-emotionally confident enough to focus

on ways of improving their own circumstances. As discussed earlier their families, communities and their culture had also given them non-cognitive traits like perseverance and taught them the importance of hard work and the data also showed that although they believed they had been left to cope on their own with much of their living they all had a significant person/s in their lives either at home or in the community who gave them special attention. Thus, although I believed voice was possibly the core category I needed to explore two more concepts: “Nurture” and “Community resources”, before making a final decision based on the use of conceptual saturation.

2.4.6. Nurture

Recent research into personality traits and the quality of family life (Heckman, Humphries & Kautz, 2014; Campbell et al., 2014) posit the importance of “*both cognitive and socio-emotional skills*” and that “*development depends on the family environment*” (Heckman, 2013). They all believe that these skills develop in early childhood. Heckman (2013) argues that “*disadvantage is most basically a matter of the quality of family life and only secondarily measured by the number of parents, their income, and their education levels*” (Heckman, 2013:4).

Although all the respondents were born into socio-economically disadvantaged homes there was something in their family life that appeared to mitigate against that disadvantage and led them to achieve their aspirations. I wondered if it was the presence of a supportive adult that nurtured them as they developed?

Research by Heckman (2008:289) found that family environments of young children are major predictors of cognitive and socio-emotional abilities, as well as a variety of outcomes such as crime and health. In a 14-year longitudinal study of 2,000 families by Zimrin (1986) identified the presence of one supportive adult, among several other variables, that helped children despite the trauma of childhood abuse become well-adjusted adults. Masten’s (2014) research into resilience brings many of the above factors together. Systematic research on resilience began in the sixties because of the harmful effects, of World War 11, on children (Masten, 2014:4). Surprisingly they found that there were no special skills that made some children more resilient than others:

... most of the time, the children who make it have ordinary human resources and protective factors in their lives. Resilience emerges from commonplace adaptive systems for human development, such as a healthy human brain in good working order; close relationships with competent and caring adults; committed families; effective

schools and communities; opportunities to succeed; and beliefs in self, nurtured by positive interactions in the world (Masten, 2014:8).

All the respondents came from a nurturing environment – they had a caring relationship with at least one significant adult at home or in the community. They lived in an effective community that had a belief system that was positive and emphasized caring for one another. It is interesting that the data suggests that all the respondents also nurture and care for others. It was clear that the homes and/or community they had grown up in had contributed to their being able to transcend their disadvantaged circumstances and become resilient. I was not yet sure whether “Voice” or “Nurture” was the core category as “Community resources” also seemed to be a possible core concept.

2.4.7. Community resources

The situatedness of literacy as posited by Street (2013) describes how the respondents’ emergent literacy had been supported by community resources. All of them were exposed to the social aspects embedded in the social practices of their small communities, as well as to available resources that gave impetus to their growing awareness of signs and symbols and the natural development of an understanding of language that combines to lead on to reading (Street, 2013:1; Street, 2006:2; Hall, 1987 in Weinberger 1996:3).

In his introduction to his book Street (2013) argues that in the past the emphasis in research on literacy has been on “*cognitive consequences of literacy acquisition*” where literacy is viewed as a neutral skill. He posits that the trend now:

...has been towards a broader consideration of literacy as a social practice and in a cross-cultural perspective. Within this framework an important shift has been the rejection by many writers of the dominant view of literacy, as a ‘neutral’, technical skill, and the conceptualization of literacy instead as an ideological practice, complicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices. And “(T)he book is entitled *Social Literacies* in order to emphasize the focus of these new enterprises; first on the social nature of literacy and secondly on the multiple character of literacy practice (Street, B. V. 2013:1-2).

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Street (2013:2) broadened literacy practice to include both behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualizations that give meaning to uses of reading and/or writing” (Street, B. V.). This now incorporates environmental resources and the child’s involvement in their own learning and illuminates a whole world that had been working unrecognized in the process of becoming literate – particularly in disadvantaged communities - as was the case with these respondents. Community resources boosted each of them in some way.

There is a strong belief system in all their communities around which community life revolves. This gives structure, leadership and identity or a sense of belonging with a strong emphasis on caring for others. There was also exposure to some of Gunn et al, (2004) suggested core fields of literacy knowledge and literacy expression. This was through exposure to adults reading their holy book and regular Bible study meetings at home and attendance at Church at weekends as well as through popular culture and shopping and visiting in the neighbourhood. They were also fortunate that they attended a school that used their home language – Afrikaans. Jasmine's family were unable to care for her and when she left home at fourteen the church women assisted her. Karin also found support in her cultural belief system and her church community. These women provided a nurturing presence for them. Living in their community offered resources that supported their emergent literacy, offered nurturing by a family or community member and a belief system that gave hope and encouraged a community spirit.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to Methodology

Newby (2010:494) warns that:

...there is a sense amongst some researchers (see, for example, Jones and Noble, 2007) that there is a lack of rigor in [grounded theory's] implementation and that anything goes.' This is a potentially serious criticism and we should ensure that it is not levelled at us. The best way to ensure this is to (a) be transparent and (b) report our method in some detail.

For this reason, serious attention is paid to transparency and detail in this chapter.

The research approach chosen in this study derives from a constructivist perspective on the nature of knowledge. Newby (2010) defines this worldview as:

A theoretical perspective that represents learning as a process in which we build an understanding of the world (our reality) out of our experience of functioning in that world (Newby, 2010:651).

As I paid attention to the informants' own perspectives of their world I experienced them differently from the way in which I had when I first met them. As we interacted, their perceptions of me changed, so that my final interpretation of the researched situation was a co-construct of our experiences of reality (Creswell, 2013:24 & 36).

The purpose of this study was to understand whether and how the selected socio-economically disadvantaged parents interacted with their children in terms of emergent literacy. The methodology chosen to explore this question was grounded theory. I believe it was a good "fit" (Glaser & Strauss 1967:1) for this study because grounded theory is used to identify themes or generate a theory that explains "a *phenomenon of interest to the researcher*" (Birks & Mills, 2011:17). It is an exploratory research design that offers the researcher a systematic, recursive process where the data is collected and analyzed simultaneously and the enquiry evolves from description to critical thinking and the building of a theme or theory (Denzin, 2007 in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:1; Creswell 2013:83). It is based

on “*rigorous data analysis through multiple steps*” that leads to quality (Creswell, 2013:6) – a vital element in research. There is also limited research on the topic in South Africa.

“*The purpose of grounded theory is to build a theory that is faithful to the evidence*” (Neuman 2006:60). Becoming more precise and rigorous in collecting and analyzing data; following and comparing concepts; finding relationships between concepts whilst searching for themes or theories that were comparable with the evidence became focal in this search for the meaning of the voices of these informants that would lead to meeting GTM objectives (Neuman 2003:52).

This chapter describes the process of the study and it explains the choice of strategy and the course of the enquiry. The first section discusses the positionality of the researcher. Research methods and data collection and analysis follows and a focus on ethical and validity issues concludes this chapter.

3.2. Positionality

The discussion that follows focuses on power relations, Lempert’s (2007) ‘give and take’ approach to interviewing, poverty and “similarity” assumptions, early study assumptions and axiological, ontological and epistemological assumptions.

3.2.1. Power relations

Lempert (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:247), discussing positionality, observes that the influence of the researcher on the research process was initially ignored by grounded theorists although this had begun to change. However, Lempert (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:248) and O’Niel Green et al. (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:483) argue that despite efforts to build equality “*the exchange between researched and researcher remains asymmetrical*” (Berik 1996; Feldman, Bell, & Berger 2003; Nama & Swartz 2002, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:248). It became clear that racial and power issues were sensitive matters in this study as there was very little match between the interviewer and the respondents. There was a gender match with four of the five respondents and some of the focus group members but there was a difference in race, ethnicity, class and age with all respondents and focus group participants. On the positive side, I had worked in this community for five years so my level of awareness and understanding of my colleagues and the parents with whom I worked (and theirs of me) had slowly altered over time.

Acknowledgement of and self-reflection on the interactional social worlds and positions in those worlds of both researcher and researched is suggested by O’Niel Green et al. (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:482) as a means of allowing diversity and power related issues to surface. Memoing is an essential tool in GTM for recording these self-reflective conversations (Lempert 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:245; Corbin & Strauss, 2008:119 and Birks & Mills, 2011:40). As memoing became habitual, interactions with informants pulled me into asking difficult questions about myself and long held assumptions. Why was I uncomfortable interviewing Mpume in her own home in a squatter camp? Was it prejudice, guilt or simply realistic because of power issues? I realized the devastating consequences of being left out of the conversation because Deane had never attended school although she had “*taught*” herself to read and write in Afrikaans and English - leaving her without even the most basic certification so there was no appropriate pathway to becoming the social worker that she longed to become. Some of these issues and the measures taken to reduce imbalances in this study are mentioned later in this chapter.

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3.2.2. Lempert’s concept of “give and take”

Lempert (2007) suggests that there is also a process of “*give-and-take*” taking place during interviews.

In the process of conducting qualitative research, researchers necessarily ‘take’ the words, perspectives, experiences, and personal and cultural stories from their respondents. To consider the resulting negotiations of power between researcher and research respondents, I offer the language of give-and-take in research practice (Lempert 2007). Give-and-take is a conceptual framework where who will give, who will take, and what will be given and taken is ever-present as an interactional subtext between the researcher and the researched. It is continuously negotiated by all participants in the research process. Give-and-take, is not planned, or formally adopted, as is ‘reciprocity,’ rather it emerges from opportunities present in research interactions (Lempert 2007). These opportunities are reflected in memo writing, where, as Laurel Richardson (1998:349) argues, researchers find out about themselves, and where knowledge of self and knowledge about subject are ‘intertwined, partial, historical, local knowledges (Lempert 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:248).

There was indeed an ever-changing give and take as three interviews took place with each respondent. Deanne, for instance, told me that she felt as if I had lived her life. A hard copy of the interview delighted her and reminded her of her strong spirit that she now needs - twenty years later - to encourage her. Rubin as an aspirant teacher found the discussions we engaged in on discipline matters and alternatives to the use of physical punishment useful in his work. Mpumi, encouraged by her own story of endeavour that led her to join a library at

the age of eighteen and take herself out of a difficult life world into the hitherto unimagined delights of books, decided to study further and enrolled in an ABET course. The memoing because of our interactions brought growing “*sensitivity to the ‘language and folkways ... tacit knowledge, social relationships, and patterns of respect’*” (Morrow et al. 2001:595, in Bryant & Charmaz 2007:483). As awareness of the interviewees’ culture and customs grew there was an enormous jump in my feelings of empathy and respect. Acknowledging assumptions during memoing also helped clarify some of my biases as a researcher, such as my overreliance on the importance of formal education as well as generalizations about my own and the “*white*” Afrikaans culture that I had not thought to query.

3.2.3. Poverty and “*similarity*” assumptions

As questions were answered and new questions arose it became evident that all the informants had coped with sometimes very difficult circumstances and managed to become literate and live optimistic and rewarding lives. As I reflected on the voices of people who are socio-economically disadvantaged I began to realize that I had erroneous assumptions about poverty. Poverty had become generalized so that I saw only the poverty and the difference – not individuals. It was an arrogant assumption because of the lens through which I viewed my world - influenced by my own history, culture and the context in which I lived, live and worked. Narayan (2000) discussing the reality of poverty explains:

... we must understand poverty from the perspective of the poor and explore the interlocked barriers poor women and men have to overcome, many of which have to do with social norms, values and institutional roles and rules beyond their individual control. Yet to take local action, the details and contours of the patterns have to be understood in each location, for each social group, for each region, for each country in a particular institutional context at a particular time in history. For example, poor people themselves make important distinctions between the dependent poor, the resourceless poor, the temporary poor, the working poor, and God’s poor (Narayan, 2000,7).

I discovered, however, that it was not the poverty per se nor the presence or lack of emergent literacy that determined the inadequate or positive literacy outcomes for the individuals I interviewed – the data pointed to something different. All the interviewees spoke about “*doing it on my own*”. What did that mean? What was it that had motivated them to become literate despite circumstances that often-negated successful literate outcomes? As I classified the data through constant comparison “*doing it on my own*” became a property or category with which I personally identified, and I began to see more similarities than differences between the researcher and the respondents. This was despite so many positioned differences and a lived apartheid that privileged me and gave me educational advantages but had caused

intolerable and agonizing pain, scars and schisms for most people in South Africa. This cannot be ignored and continues to affect relationships between races in South Africa, but things cannot begin to change without at least recognition and regret on one side and perhaps generosity and acceptance on the other. As an older, white female I had benefitted from apartheid whereas apartheid had had far reaching negative influences on the lives of most of the informants. Nevertheless, the population from which the sample was drawn were also interested in giving their children the best they could; they worked and earned money – most of them had cell phones and they had many values in common with the researcher; they were also interested in continued life-long learning as can be seen by their attending parenting workshops. DeVault (1995:482) cautions that this kind of perception can be “... *asserting a disingenuous claim to commonality*” and O’Niel Green et al., (2007) argue that the kind of positionality between the informants and the researcher in this study is at the least

prone to a type of cultural bias that guides: (1) how the interview is conducted, (2) what type of questions are asked, (3) how the interview is recorded, and (4) what observations are ultimately made (O’Niel Green et al., in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:482).

It was therefore important to commit myself to a critical, open-ended enquiry that Denzin (2007) believes “*can be a decolonizing tool for indigenous and non-indigenous scholars alike*” (Denzin, 2007 in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:457). As Strauss notes:

... the world of social phenomena is bafflingly complex ... How to unravel some of that complexity, to order it, not to be dismayed or defeated by it? How not to avoid the complexity or distort interpretation of it by oversimplifying it out of existence? (Strauss, 1993:13 in Corbin & Strauss, 2008: vii).

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All this remains a challenge to a novice researcher, but it was essential to attempt it.

3.2.4. Early study assumptions

I began this study with a supposition about emergent literacy and parenting because of my background as a formally trained ECD educator. This has given me wide experience in the parenting and ECD fields and I had done some reading around early child development as a student and teacher, as well as on poverty for my recognition of prior learning (RPL) application into a Master’s programme at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Birks and Mills (2011:179) also suggest that it is important to consider what I expected to find because of my early assumptions about the study. Before I began the interviewing

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process I made a list of assumptions as suggested by Sanderson Paton-Ash (2012:56) in her grounded theory thesis on school libraries. These were:

- The participants would find it satisfying to share their own story with a listener.
- I would be able to interview the participants as I had had many experiences of interviewing parents in the past.
- Participants would assist me in investigating the history of their own emergent literacy.
- They would be interested in discussing the differences in what is happening with their own children compared with what happened to them and try to identify, together with the researcher, ways that will help the literacy development of their own children.
- Parents would understand the importance of emergent literacy in their own homes because they had attended a parenting course that drew their attention to emergent literacy.
- Parents would be interested in helping their children do better than they themselves had done at school.
- I would have to take care that the informant's response was his/her own and not what the participant believed I wanted to hear.
- Different perspectives and views would emerge from the data.
- I hoped I would be aware enough to be respectful of differing views and belief systems.

I made the above assumptions because I had spent 20 hours with the informants as members of a group in the parenting workshops I had run over the last few years and I had also spent the same time with many groups of parents over the last 30 years.

As had Sanderson Paton-Ash (2012:57) I then tried to assess what I expected to find in my study as "*often it is only through acknowledging your predictions that ... preconceptions can be avoided*" (Birks & Mills, 2011:20). They believe that care must be taken to avoid imposing "*preconceptions on the developing theory whilst insuring, as Strubing (2007) advises, that the knowledge and experience you possess is used effectively in the application of essential GT methods*" (Birks & Mills 2011:19). I expected to find that:

- Poor and many working-class children were very disadvantaged in the schooling system; and
- The curriculum does not accommodate the needs of children from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

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- Emergent literacy activities like books, drawing materials, educational toys and discussions that involved thinking, talking and listening were usually not a part of the life style of poor and many working-class children.
- There could be other ways of children coming to “know” and learning “how to do” other than the above.
- Parents could be made more aware of how they could assist in the development of their children’s emergent literacy.
- Many children do not cope in the schooling system and drop out because they do not have the opportunities offered to children from more socio-economically advantaged backgrounds.
- The quality of the nurturing environment is an important aspect of the child’s ability to cope with schooling and other life tasks whether they are from an advantaged or a disadvantaged home.

The reality of the situation as they relate to my assumptions are as follows:

- The participants found narrating their own stories most satisfying.
- Despite my previous experience in interviews with parents I found it very difficult to master a research interview. It required far more preparation than I anticipated, and it is a skilled and complex procedure, that I have improved in, but not yet properly mastered.
- Participants were helpful in trying to remember emergent literacy events but were unable to remember much, as it was so long ago.
- As the study followed emerging themes, there was not time nor was it relevant, to compare their own experiences in emergent literacy with their children’s emergent literacy.
- Participants did understand the importance of emergent literacy but were clear that it did not occur in their own homes.
- All respondents wanted their children to do well at school. The respondents who had their own children report that their own children are doing better at school than they did because they, as parents, are more involved with their children’s progress at school.
- I tried, especially with the information sheet that we discussed at the beginning of interviews, to encourage the informants own voice rather than a response to what he or she believed I wanted to hear. It is difficult to know if I was successful.

Assessing my preconceptions now I found that:

- Poor and many working-class children are indeed very disadvantaged in the schooling system and it is correct that:
- The curriculum does not accommodate the needs of children from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Conventional emergent literacy activities like books, drawing materials and educational toys were not used much in the homes of respondents. There were, however, other emergent literacy practices and environmental resources in their homes and community that I had not anticipated that aided them in becoming literate. Their own involvement in the process and the choices they made to become literate was also a surprise.
- There were indeed other ways of children coming to “*know*” and learning “*how to do*” other than the conventional Western emergent literacy key components.
- The study did not evolve in a manner where it was possible or appropriate to make parents aware of how they could assist in their children’s emergent literacy. This was a misconception.
- It proved to be true that many children drop out of the schooling system because they do not have the same opportunities offered to children from more socio-economically advantaged homes, but this is not the only reason as there are many more.
- A most unexpected finding was that the schooling system, despite the schools the respondents attended as children being recognized as dysfunctional, and the curriculum not accounting for cultural and socio-economic differences, was “*good enough*” for some children to utilize to the full and become literate.
- Finally, the quality of the nurturing environment has proved to be a vital aspect in the child’s ability to cope with schooling and other life tasks. This is irrespective of whether they are from a disadvantaged or advantaged home.

3.2.5. Axiological assumptions

Reading the seminal grounded theorists led to an exploration of the “... *philosophical assumptions behind qualitative research*” (Creswell 2013:16). It was then evident that most of the memo writing I had engaged in was interrogating my axiological assumptions. I began to understand that my own value laden history and prejudices had and would always influence my questions and interpretation of the actions, responses and discussions that took place, during and after interviews. What were my values? What were Deanne’s values? What were the values of the other informants? Were they the same or different from mine and each other?

This was difficult to discern as I coded the interviews and it was helpful to be reminded to focus on the interviewees' interpretations. I found for instance that there was a great difference in our values around respect. I became aware as I interviewed twenty-year old Rubin that I sometimes pushed the boundaries of what he saw as respectful when I was too familiar with him, for instance, by expecting him to call me by my first name. In his community, age is important, and I made him feel uncomfortable when my behaviour crossed those limits. I found I needed to be more respectful of his values around respect when I interviewed him. After exploring some of my axiological assumptions I began to explore my ontological assumptions.

3.2.6. Ontological assumptions

When first faced with this question I had a vague feeling that reality is different for everyone as our cultural and social-emotional histories influence how we interact in and perceive the world. Guided by Birks & Mills (2011), Denzin & Lincoln (2011) and Bryant and Charmaz (2007), I finally discovered that I lean towards the philosophical school of symbolic interactionism. This was an important discovery as I needed to know the paradigms and perceptions guiding the interpreting of the data and search for themes and patterns.

Symbolic interactionism is defined by Charmaz (2000) as:

...a world made real in the minds and through the words and actions of its members that Birks and Mills note assumes a relativist position where reality is constantly reformulating as a fluid construction of individuals and, in turn, their social reference groups (Charmaz 2000:523 in Birks & Mills, 2011:52).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) posit the researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist who:

...works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms ... describing paradigms as representing belief systems that attach the user to a particular worldview that tend to prevent easy movement one to the other and perspectives as ... in contrast ... less well-developed systems that can be easier to move between (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:5).

This prevents the straitjacket of classification with its labelling and possible bias and prejudice and allows researchers to ... be more than one thing at a time (Denzin, 1998:338).

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Qualitative research is described creatively by Denzin & Lincoln (2011) as:

The product of the interpretive bricoleur's labour is a complex, quilt-like bricolage; a reflexive collage or montage; a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations.

This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, or a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:5).

I assumed thus the final story would be a complex mix of informants and researcher perceptions and perspectives and that our interactions could be meaningful. I was fascinated by Rubin's confidence and his comfortableness with who he is. Someone had said something racist about him. His response was "*She will have to speak to God about my colour if she is worried about it*". Here was this respectful, highly competent twenty-year old with strong moral principles; comfortable with his identity; interacting firmly and clearly with children and adults in our shared aftercare world. I compared myself as a youngster (and even in my thirties) with him and saw confusion in my life; a lack of identity and mistrust issues. I recognized that this was not determined by race, class or culture but by what Heckman (2013) describes as "*the quality of the nurturing relationship*" (Heckman, 2013:22). This quality in a nurturing relationship became something I explored in the data as it appeared to be a factor in interviewee's lives, as it was in my own. This nurturing trait is discussed in Chapters 2.4.6 and 4.7.

3.2.7. Epistemological assumptions

Having begun to identify my axiological and ontological assumptions I now needed to explore my epistemological assumptions. How can participants be used in a study in pursuit of knowledge? How can this be done without taking advantage of them? (Birks & Mills, 2011:57). Because of my experience as a formally trained preschool teacher, trainer and parenting facilitator I was already inclined towards being a "*subjective active participant in data generation with participants*" (Birks & Mills, 2011:52). The focus in qualitative studies is on the subjective experiences of the participants where they live and work and slowly the researcher also becomes part of this new group – an "insider" so often starts to see the world more from the participant's point of view (Creswell, 2011:20). Corbin describes it as "going native" adding that it was a "*dreaded accusation*" in her earlier days (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: vii). I experienced this kind of shift in the first interview with Mpume. I found it felt disrespectful to have invited myself into her home to ask her questions that would satisfy my search for knowledge. She lived in a squatter camp and I felt that she was experiencing me as someone important and so was acquiescent and respectful in her response to me and that she felt honoured by my visit. Creswell (2013:173), Birks & Mills (2011:56) and Kvale & Brinkman (2009:33) discuss the power asymmetry inherent in any interview and suggest that power issues in researcher participant relationships could be eased by giving the interviewees more control over the situation by allowing them to choose the time and venue for the interviews (Birks & Mills, 2011:57). Mpume, given a choice, chose a quiet coffee shop. It made a

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difference. I experienced her on a different level – more as a colleague - and we both enjoyed the venue and interview. As I memoed these concerns I believed that it was not racial but rather due to feelings of guilt because of apartheid issues and the discrepancy between what I have and what she does not have but there were still many power issues. It lessened them, but they were still there in her enjoyment of a venue she could not afford to visit on her own and her warm response to me as someone who was spending time with her and giving her an opportunity to share her 'story'. I however no longer felt disrespectful and I felt less guilty as I experienced respect and admiration for her as a person as she shared a bit of her world in Lempert's (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:248) subliminal subtext of give-and-take.

In trying to assess my positionality I had begun a process that was making me more aware of the respondents' worldviews and some of my limiting assumptions - even though I had to agree with Berik, 1996; Feldman, Bell, & Berger 2003; Nama & Swartz 2002, in Bryant & Charmaz, (2007:248) that "*the exchange between researched and researcher remains asymmetrical.*" None the less I also believed that "*acknowledgement and self-reflection of one's positionality is critical for both the grounded theory researcher and the research process*" (Barnes, 1996; Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:482) however imperfect and slow that process - it is a process of becoming.

3.3. Research methods

3.3.1. Introduction to research methods

In qualitative research the researcher is the key instrument and gathers data using multiple methods in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013:45). In choosing the grounded theory method I found that "*GTM is the most widely used and popular qualitative research method across a wide range of disciplines and subjects*" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:1). However, several versions of the original method published by Glaser & Strauss (1965) have evolved over the years. The three main versions according to Bryant & Charmaz (2007:10) are the Glaserian, Strauss & Corbin and Constructivist schools of GTM. I used the more structured Corbin & Strauss (2008) approach to analyze the data. The Strauss & Corbin method of GT analysis focuses on "*coding, concept development, constant comparisons between the data and the emerging concepts and the formulation of a theme or theoretical model*" (Creswell 2013:117). Charmaz's constructivist interpretive approach and focus on a theory or theme that develops, because of the view of the researcher, influenced the direction of this study (Creswell, 2013:87). Clarke's (2007) situational and social world/arenas maps brought clarity and helped

make visible “*tacit assumptions*” and unseen elements (Clarke & Friese, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:372). Identifying a site and sampling decisions began this process.

3.3.2. Sampling

In reporting on the interviewees, I would like to use their full pseudonyms as this seems more respectful for a community where respect is important. However, it reads more easily with one name, so I have chosen to use their first pseudonym names. My initial three respondents were: Mpume Zwane, Deanne September and Rubin Buys. My two discriminate samples were Karen Wilson and Jasmine Jeffthas.

I had originally planned to interview parents about their own emergent literacy experiences then compare their experiences with those of their children. I had intended to use interviews, observations and a Likert scale as the strategy of enquiry. However, my plans changed as following the data on its analytical trail, the research questions and methods changed as is common in GTM. I then decided not to do interviews in their homes unless invited as discussed above. (See “Epistemological assumptions” in 3.2. Positionality).

I also decided not to use a Likert scale nor observations. The reasons for this are discussed in 3.4.1. Consequently, I was left with a single instrument: interviews. I decided to triangulate the analysis of the data by comparing it with data obtained from two discriminate samples; two focus groups and maps and diagrams thus viewing the analyzed data from differing perspectives and comparing it with these possibly dissimilar viewpoints. This would add rigour to the analysis and give me more reliable data for exploring my evolving theme (Creswell, 2013:251).

Three of the five respondents, Deanne, Rubin and Jasmine live in Blanco and Deanne and Jasmine lived on farms near Blanco as children. Blanco is a small mixed-race suburb of George that has many very poor families but also many working class and some middle-class families living there. Mpume was born in the Eastern Cape and moved to Franschoek with her husband and two children. Karin lived on a forestry reserve near Knysna as a child and she now lives in Knysna. All three towns are in the Western Cape of South Africa. I had access to many possible informants as I had facilitated parenting workshops in all these communities over the last six years. I continue to facilitate workshops at the Omgee Aftercare Centre in Blanco as I live in the area. I also worked and continue to work with teenagers at this centre.

Mpume was my first interviewee. She was forty-two at the time. She was a cleaner at the Siyafunda Early Learning Centre in Franschhoek and earned between R2500 and R3000 per month. (She returned to the Eastern Cape before I completed this study). She has five children who have done extremely well academically at the local schools (the youngest is nine and the eldest 24). None of her children are involved in drugs or deviant behaviour although they live in a squatter camp in a poor and volatile area. They are a well-respected family with influence in their isiXhosa speaking community.

Deanne began the Omgee Aftercare centre and now runs her own crèche; makes and sells handbags, cards and other artifacts; and is the person community people often turn to when needing assistance. She earns between R2000 and R3000 per month and she was thirty when I first interviewed her. She and her husband live in a rented house and their two children attend the local school. One of them is doing very well academically and the other has a learning difficulty. He is making satisfactory progress and is very good at sport.

Rubin is the only “born free” having been born in 1994 and this is evident in the way he interacts with everyone around him. He is “*comfortable in his own skin*”. At twenty he has matriculated; is studying to be a teacher through South Cape College in George; he is manager of the Omgee aftercare centre; runs a youth group and is often paid by the DoE to relieve for absent teachers at the local primary school. He earns between R3000 and R4000 per month.

Karin was thirty-four when I first interviewed her. She is a Level 5 ECD practitioner and works as an ECD consultant and trainer at a Non-profit Organisation (NPO) in Knysna. She earns between R8000 and R9000 per month. She is also very influential in her community and still takes responsibility for her parents and the two sisters she reared. Her husband supports their family and they have two children who attend the local school and they are doing very well academically.

Jasmine aged twenty-two is the financial manager for the local arts theatre and together with her partner they have managed to build a small house on her grandmother’s property; have bought a cheap car that they have had repaired and restored and have bought a piece of land in Pacaltsdorp, outside George, that they have planned to have paid off in five years. She earns between R5000 and R6000 per month.

All five respondents are leaders in their communities and cope competently with both the reading and writing requirements of their communities. Three of the informants, Rubin, Karin

Commented [JS16]: In all the versions that I have of May 19 2017 the nearest I get to page 38 is page 39. This is fine for the correction re isiXhosa but the next correction is pg 39: Rephrase Paragraph 2 – I can’t decide which paragraph it is

Seeing that the examiner did not specify the phrases to be rephrased, I don’t think you need to do this. I can’t see anything perjorative or unclear in your phrasing.

and Jasmine matriculated and are officially literate. The other two participants were unable to matriculate but can read and write - Mpume in isiXhosa (her home language) and Deanne in Afrikaans (her home language) and in English. Mpume attended school irregularly and dropped out in High School because she had difficulties at home and lived in a farming district. See more details in Chapter 4.2. Deanne on the other hand never went to school because she lived on a farm and she taught herself to read and write in Afrikaans when she was eleven and tackled English when she was fifteen. She can write and speak in both languages sufficiently well to do presentations and reports to funders and supporters of the Omgee aftercare centre and reads satisfactorily in both languages. I was amazed when I found out in the interview that she had never attended school.

The first three informants – Mpume, Deanne and Rubin were chosen through purposive sampling. They were participants who had shown themselves able to ask questions and express opinions during the workshops and therefore more likely to provide information that would lead to the data required by the study (Birks & Mills 2011:37). They were a homogeneous group in that they were all parents, as defined in Definitions in Chapter 5.1. Appendix D. Rubin is not a father but fits my definition as a youth leader who, despite his age, is very influential in his community. He takes on the role of parent to youngsters and children in the youth group and in the aftercare centre. All three respondents Mpume, Rubin and Deanne had attended the two-hour parenting workshops that had taken place at their centres over a ten-month period during 2013 (Creswell, 2013:155). After interviewing my first participant, Mpume, in Franschoek, a centre that I only visit once a month because it involves a long journey, I decided to concentrate on the area where I live. So, the next two informants, Rubin and Deanne, came from Blanco. Later in the project when there was a discernible theme I used discriminate sampling to “*verify the story line*” and relationships between concepts from someone like the original three informants, Karin, to assist in the saturation of the emerging theme (Creswell, 2013:288, 89). Karin lives in a neighbouring town, Knysna. She is also a parent and had attended a parenting course in her own community that I had facilitated in 2010. I used discriminate sampling once more - this time to find someone from the Blanco area that was different from the initial four participants to verify or disconfirm the emerging properties and concepts (Creswell, 2013:90). I chose an informant, Jasmine, who did not have children and had not attended any parenting groups and was not working with children but in an Arts theatre in George. This would bring rigour to the analysis as I looked at the data from different angles and compared the results and possibly find variations that would lead to credibility in the final report (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:302).

I drew from participants of the 2014 Franschoek and Blanco parenting groups to form two focus groups. Using people known to each other through living in the same small community and attending the same parenting course is classed as “réipient design” in focus group planning, as existing roles may inhibit discussion. From a constructivist point of view though it is all data and can be analyzed as such. It was also of benefit because there was an existing relationship between the group members as well as with the interviewer and this did make facilitation and discussion easier (Roulston, 2010:39). A recommended size for focus groups is 8 to 12 participants although smaller groups of 4 to 6 are suggested for some topics (Krueger & Casey, 2000, in Roulston, 2010:41). I elected to work with smaller groups as I was unable to video the proceedings and felt the smaller group would be more manageable for recording and transcribing purposes and I was nearing saturation of the categories and did not need a lot more data to analyze. As I began with the first interview of my initial sample the coding began.

3.3.3. Coding

Data is the focus throughout a study in a GTM approach. All information is seen as data and the data from successive interviews directs the path the study is to take. To follow this path, I had to create codes that represented what I saw in the data – defining significant ideas, surprising comments and my own emotional responses, insights and reservations – as I continually asked questions of the data about the how, what, when and why of these other lives (Birks & Mills, 2011:65). Lempert (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:605) describes it as “*capturing patterns and themes and clustering them under an evocative title*”. Once the first interview has been transcribed the coding of words, lines or portions of data begins. The codes are emergent as they develop as the researcher explores the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:605). I found that noting possible categories and properties in the margin of the first hard copy of each interview as suggested by Glaser & Strauss (1967:106) most helpful. Glaser (1978, in Birks & Mills, 2011:96) advocates analysing the data “line by line”. I found this method less successful than fragmenting the data into small segments as suggested by Corbin & Strauss (2008:163) and Birks & Mills (2011:96). I then placed each segment on a new, dated, numbered and coded page ready to analyse as memos. This enabled me to examine each segment in great depth and to ask questions and as I soon discovered, use my own knowledge, growing awareness and experience to try to understand the world from the informant’s point of view (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:163) or as Geertz (1979, in Neuman, 2003:148) remarks “... *to figure out what the devil they think they are up to*”. It was all very challenging at first and it was reassuring to know that even the masters found it confusing at times. Using the above techniques, I found it easy to return to memos as new ideas surfaced

or as I reread them, and I saw further links and anomalies. It was fascinating to find my initial response to the data changing as new meanings and hidden relationships surfaced and higher-level categories and concepts emerged through the process of coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:66). The first reading of Mpume's transcribed interview appeared disjointed and insignificant but as I coded I recognized that she felt that she had grown up feeling she had to do things on her own and that rising through her feelings of doing things alone (either because of it or despite it) there was a drive to find out more about the world "*out there*" that eventually took her to a library that brought comfort and a deeper meaning to her life.

3.3.4. Concept development

Concepts represent the researcher's interpretation of the data. The coded words are used to symbolize the essence of ideas about what is happening in the data. There are higher level and lower level concepts. Higher-level concepts are called categories "*under which analysts group lower-level concepts according to shared properties*" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:159-160). The difference lies in the level of abstraction. Evidence and facts in data change but "*categories and properties have a life apart from the evidence that gave rise to them*" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:36). This is what makes the building of concepts into a theme or theory possible.

Finding an apt or evocative title was as difficult as distinguishing concepts from properties and dimensions. I was bound by my own history and chose labels that had served me well in my working life like '*dysfunctional schooling*' and '*significant relationships*' but they were far from creative. I then used some in vivo codes – choosing for instance some of Rubin's words as a label, "*Doing it all on my own*", and that slowly evolved into: "*Coping alone*". This concept flowed through all five of the informant's responses and was a category I could analyse and expand to see whether this was indeed a significant category or whether there was something else of more importance emerging from the data.

According to Neuman (2003:148) data is interpreted by "*giving them meaning, translating them, or making them understandable*" and there are also different levels of interpretation. As I analysed the data in memos I began with Neuman's (2003:148) first order interpretation that focused on the interviewee explanations of his or her experiences. Deanne gave me her interpretation of why she did not attend school. She thought her parents wanted to protect her and her sister as the family was new to the area and they wanted them to be safe. She also explained what that experience meant to her. "*I was so ashamed. It was one of the most painful things that can happen to a child ... not going to school*". Later as I returned to those

memos and consulted literature in Chapter 5, I used Neuman's (2003:149) second order interpretation. This is a process of reconstructing Deanne's Level 1 reporting to discover "*underlying coherence or sense of meaning in the data*" by viewing Deanne's evidence in the context of related events: living in a labourer's cottage on a farm in the apartheid era; being second last of nine children and her reported estrangement from her mother. I hoped if possible to eventually link the second order interpretation to a substantive theory in Neuman's (2003:150) third order interpretation.

3.3.5. Comparative analysis

Making comparisons, searching for similarities and differences as data is analysed is another tool used by grounded theorists. Constant comparison of data takes place as new data is compared with the emerging concepts as "*data is compared with data, data with category, category with category and category to concept*" (Birks & Mills, 2011:11). Coded concepts from different informants that appear to be like previous concepts are given the same label (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:195). As I transcribed and coded Deanne and Karin's interviews and compared them with the main categories arising from Mpume and Rubin's interviews a clearer picture began to emerge. "Aspirations" had become the main category and "Coping alone" had become a property. The divergent details (properties and dimensions) from the coded interviews added depth and range to the picture that was forming of what had happened in their lives (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:195).

3.3.6. Conceptual saturation

Conceptual saturation occurs when enough data has been gathered to fully develop the properties and dimensions of each of these categories and show differences or variations across sets of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:195). Corbin suggests that it is difficult to reach complete saturation as one could continue ad infinitum finding properties and dimensions for categories and one needs to accept that the concepts are "*sufficiently well developed for purposes of this research*" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:149). I was surprised to find so many similarities as I categorized the data. All the participants appeared to have the same basic script. This was a need to change their circumstances (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:148). It was, in fact, difficult to identify variations.

3.3.7. Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling helps "*develop concepts*" from the data. It extends or finds variations in the elements or properties of the categories and helps explore relationships between concepts and how they differ when conditions are different (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:143-144).

I found concurrent data generation and analysis and theoretical sampling exciting tools to use because you do not know what to expect. It is like following a trail through dense bush. Sometimes the trail seems clear and at other times, to your surprise, you find yourself heading in a different direction. Often the trail is difficult to follow because you cannot see ahead and wonder if you are on the correct track and occasionally there is the elation of discovering something unexpected. It was fascinating to see the focus of the study change completely. I began with an assumption about emergent literacy and the focus changed several times as I followed the voices in the data. Eventually emergent literacy became a property in the discourse. As the data from the interviews and analysis became, what appeared to be, a mass of confusing properties and categories, theoretical sampling helped me focus on the questions arising from the main categories so much of the extraneous data was left behind.

Dey (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:174) however cautions that “*data that provides a useful ground for generating theory usually provides a poor basis for testing it*” because there is much evidence that we tend to see what we want to see. For instance, Gilovich (2007, in Dey, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:174) found that we generally identify patterns in data as meaningful that are a product of pure chance and “*we tend to pay more attention to positive than negative instances and recognize or seek out evidence that confirms the results*”. When we find contrary evidence (something that is seen as positive in research circles currently), we are inclined to “*explain it away rather than revise our assumptions*” (Dey, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:175). See Appendix E for an example of a theoretical sampling memo.

3.3.8. Theoretical integration

Corbin & Strauss (2007:87) define integration as “*linking categories around a central or core category and refining the resulting theoretical formulation*”. This was a slow process as for a very long time there appeared to be two main categories: “Coping alone” and “Aspirations”. Eventually I found there were seven core categories, but it was difficult to find a “*central or core category*” among them as they all appeared to be important and eventually it proved to be the theory that linked them.

3.3.9. Theoretical saturation

Theoretical saturation takes place when no new categories emerge in data collection and the analysis adds little more to the concepts or theme. Corbin (2008) adds that categories can still emerge, and others appear to need further development, even during the writing up of the findings. This then requires the collection of new data and that “*variations can always be*

discovered and “*total saturation is probably never achieved*”. It is finally often a factor of the situation. This was reassuring as time became an issue that helped with a decision about saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:149 & 263).

3.3.10. Memo writing

Corbin & Strauss (2008:160) believe that our most important tools in grounded theory are our minds and intuition. “*The best approach to coding is to relax and let your mind and intuition work for you*”. This often takes place and is recorded through memo writing. Glaser (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:281) believes it “*is the core stage in the process of generating grounded theory*”. Birks & Mills (2011:40) posits memoing as “*the most significant factor in ensuring quality in grounded theory*”. Lempert (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:145) argues that memos “*conceptualize the data in narrative form, thus interpreting the social worlds of the respondents*”.

I heeded the advice of the experts above and used memo writing from the very beginning of the study. Writing memos helped me to plan and record. As plans changed and the data led in different directions the memoing provided an audit trail and kept the process transparent - meeting another of the aims of GTM (Birks & Mills, 2011:179). I also found as I returned to memos and reflected on emerging concepts, insights and the continuing questions that I began to think more critically. I include a brief extract from one of my memos as an example. The complete memo can be found in Appendix A.

“Eureka!! At last some movement. So long just plodding along with Mpume, Rubin’s and Deanne’s data ... not knowing just doing ... and now suddenly there is light. A framework is evolving. I am still very unsure, but all the literature says trust your hunches, so I am going with it. Pushing through all the categories something else is coming into play. It seems to be “Aspirations” that pushes people towards achievement of what they strongly desire. The other categories are suddenly becoming properties. Disciplinary regimes as a property plays a part as the means of achieving these goals. It can be beneficial to the person and society or not. For example, like turning to crime to achieve them ... Did dreams and goals provide the motivation to hang in despite such odds? What did they see in their heads? What did they think about when they made the decisions to focus on their aspirations? Why did this give them the focus to follow their dreams and others (who also aspired to more) did not? What made them persevere?”

Reflexivity, described by Hesse-Biber, (2007:129) as “*taking a critical look inward*” reflecting “*on one’s own lived reality and experiences ... and the specific ... context in which your reside*” and its “*impact on the research process*” is also developed during memo writing (Hesse-Biber,

Commented [JS17]: Please check: She says: reflexive?? I had written Reflexivity – taking a critical look inward – is also developed...

You grammar is correct because the noun is the subject: ‘Reflexivity ...is also developed..’

2007 in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:326). Memoing became an effective tool as it helped me reflect on hidden assumptions; explore new concepts; experience insights and learn how to ask questions as well as slowly develop the analytical and comparative skills necessary for building a theme (Lempert, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:249; Corbin & Strauss, 2008:160 & 118; Birks & Mills, 2011:40). This is discussed in more detail in data analysis.

3.3.11. Maps and diagrams

Clarke & Friese's (2007:375) situational, social worlds and positional maps and diagrams were of great value in bringing clarity to my inchoate data (Clarke & Friese, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:252). Maps "*intentionally work against the usual simplifications so characteristic of scientific work (Star, 1983,1986) in particularly postmodern ways, by revealing the stunning messiness of social life*" (Clarke & Friese, 2007, in Bryant and Charmaz, 2007:370). Through continual defining of the basic "*elements*" in these "*messy maps*" eventually "*neat maps*" emerge. This makes visible key "*human, non-human and discursive and other elements*" as well as helping identify relationships and variation in the data (Clarke & Friese, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:366). It was a laborious process but well worth it. It also brought into view something that was a vital part of all these accounts that had been "*operating, as it were, behind my back*" (Clarke & Friese, 2007:372). Without these charts this concept could have remained unacknowledged and unnoticed and, as Clarke & Friese (2007) describe it, "*been doing analytically consequential work in fruitful and/or unfruitful ways*" Clarke & Friese (2007:372). It was "*Discipline*". It is so much a part of life that I was amazed I had missed it. Like a kaleidoscope, the pattern suddenly altered, and I perceived the data differently. As I memoed my new insights the questions I needed to ask in the next interviews with both new and already interviewed participants became clearer. I found I now needed a mapping system on my computer to record all this activity. "FreeMind" (freemind.sourceforge.net) a free computer mapping system was recommended, and it proved very successful. This cartographic method gave me a completely new perspective on the analysed data and brought a much broader world view into place that helped triangulate the analysis by verifying data.

3.3.12. Theoretical sensitivity

"Theoretical sensitivity in developing categories ... is the ability to 'see relevant data' and reflect upon material with the help of theoretical terms" (Kelle, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:611). This however is dependent on the researcher's insight both personally and into their area of study as well as on their intellectual history. This idea "*cited first in Glaser & Strauss' seminal text (1967)*" is quite a daunting prospect for a novice researcher because academic experience is often limited at a master's level. Fortunately, it develops with the study

Birks & Mills (2011:11) and continues to develop with experience. I found the reading of literature, both the grounded theory methodology at the beginning of the study and the later literature review changing my intellectual history and broadened my perspective (Corbin and Strauss 2011:36).

3.4. Data collection

GTM allows a diversity of data sources (Birks & Mills, 2011:61). Wolcott, (1994, in Sanderson Paten-Ash, 2012:69) posits three ways of collecting data: “*experiencing (non-participants’ observations); enquiring (interviewing) and examining (studying materials or documents prepared by others)*”. Interviews were my main source of data, but I also used memos, maps, diagrams and focus groups. Throughout the data collection process, I had to conform to ethical research practices that govern the consent process and protect the participant from deception; guarantee anonymity and confidentiality as well as their right to read what has been written; retract previous statements and to opt out of the process at any time.

As I began the data-gathering, I was aware from the literature on grounded theory that my plans could change at any time. Creswell (2009:176) states that:

- all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data and
- questions may change;
- the forms of data collection may shift, and
- the individuals studied, and the sites visited may be modified.

This happened throughout the process from interview protocols to the final questions. It was remarkable to see an investigation into why youngsters drop out of school and an initial assumption around emergent literacy, transform in analysis, and lead to a few important concepts that were so different from the initial assumption. As Strubing (2007) posits:

... the data itself, as well as its objectivity, is to be gained through researchers’ continual negotiations with their environment including both the ‘problem within which they lie’ and the questions they try to answer through their analysis. Data, seen in this way, is not the unhewn material that a researcher starts out with, but rather the relation between the field, the researcher issues, and the research established in the course of the analytical process (Strubing, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:584-585).

Olesen (2007) also suggests that:

The work of grounded theorists will be enhanced with a return to the recognition, so deeply rooted in the symbolic interactionist bones of GT, that researcher and participant are mutually imbedded in the social context of the research and that data are co-created (Olesen, 2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:427)

I began collecting data, as planned, by arranging an interview with Mpume in her home. It became clear as I analysed the data that qualitative interviewing takes practice and experience because the quality of the analysis is mainly dependent on the material that is to be analysed - the most “*dense data*” coming from unstructured interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:27). There is a significant difference in the material I collected in that first interview and the last with Karin Wilson. By that time, I had only three theoretical sampling questions to ask her and could allow her to talk unhindered. These were:

- Do you remember if there were any pictures, ideas or thoughts in your mind or things you said to yourself to help you get from where you were to where you are now?
- What was your home like when you were growing up? Was it a home where there were things happened when people felt like it and needed something like food or was it very structured where things had to be done at the right time and in the right way.
- How did your family function? Did they give you any special responsibilities or something to do that made you feel important in some way or did the adults take most of the responsibility and the children all did the same sort of tasks?

In GTM data is transcribed and analysed before more data is gathered (Birks & Mills, 2011:10). Glaser & Straus (1967:106) argue that trying to generate a theory “*requires that all three procedures (collection, coding and analysis) go on simultaneously to the fullest extent possible*”. By the time, I interviewed the third informant, Deanne, I had accumulated a welter of data that was either being collected, transcribed, coded, analysed or being used to tell the story. At this stage I wondered if I would ever manage and despaired of ever becoming a bricoleur-theorist. I had been forewarned though and although the mass and “*mess*” of data was far more complex than I had expected the clues in the data kept me reflecting and beckoned me on to solve these theoretical mysteries.

3.4.1. Interviews

Participant accounts of the issues around emergent literacy were researched through interviews. Kvale & Brinkman, (2009:18) argue “*that the process of knowing through conversations is inter-subjective and social, involving interviewer and interviewee as co-constructors of knowledge*”. I chose to use one-on-one interviewing because I had many

interviewees from whom to choose and this interviewing format accesses “*subjective experiences and realities*”. It also makes it possible to explore past events like the emergent literacy experiences of the parent (Perakyla & Ruusuvuori, 2011, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:529). The interviewing process appears easy but is a lengthy, rigorous, skilled and complex procedure. Creswell (2013:163-164) suggests it begins with a decision on the question/s to be asked; determining the type of interview; choosing recording equipment for one-on-one interviews; devising an interview protocol; piloting the protocol; choosing the venue for the interview; devising a consent form; obtaining written consent from the interviewee and finally using “*good interview procedures*”.

Using good interview procedures was very challenging. How do researchers become skilled at interviewing and observing? Morse (2007, in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:230) believes that it “*requires practice and a careful self-critique of each interview transcript*”. She suggests the researcher “*ask of the interviews: Where is the story line? Was each question and interruption necessary and productive? Am I giving space to the participant to really tell their story?*” I added these questions to the “*Reflections*” on the interview protocol for my two last informants and found there had been progress from my first interview to my last, but I am still in the process of learning how to improve my interviewing techniques.

Although challenging, I found interviewing a life changing experience because of the intense personal involvement and identification with each interviewee. This opened new worlds for me. It often revealing “*oppressive life situations*” that became a part of my world as their experiences lived with me and changed my relationship with and perception of each person. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:100).

I was fortunate that most of my interviewees were easily available. I could briefly discuss initial plans with them as I met with them often in my work. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured depending on how much of the interview is prepared in advance and whether the interviewee is permitted to talk unhindered or not (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:34). The first interview with Mpume was a structured one with many carefully prepared questions and it included a summative Likert scale as I hoped to use the data from it for statistical analysis. I soon realized that the structured interview and the Likert scale gave little opportunity for fostering a more open relationship through “*sharing personal details and answering questions asked both during the interview and afterwards*” that would help with the emerging power and possible racial issues mentioned earlier in positionality (Mills et al., 2006. In O'Connor, 2001. In Birks & Mills, 2011:58). It was also clear that Mpume enjoyed talking about herself in the less structured sections in the interview but was confused by having to

grade her response to questions in the Likert scale. She appeared to feel inadequate thus heightening power issues. I therefore abandoned the Likert scale and used semi-structured interviews. This consisted of a protocol with open-ended questions and prompts that were prepared in advance (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:34). I then began all interviews with a broad question that allowed interviewees to control the initial discussion and talk about their literacy history. This I believed would build confidence and rapport and help with the emerging diversity and power issues. Every informant spent at least half an hour sharing their own history and they often anticipated questions I had planned to ask later. Then after their “story” I asked the specific questions that were emerging from the analysis of the data. I reduced the coded data that had initially bogged me down by only coding the relevant chunks of the life history. By the time I had interviewed my fourth informant I also ceased feeling uncomfortable about power issues as I became more and more fascinated and impressed by all the informants. They had found ways to cope with their lives against enormous odds and suddenly I was an “insider” (Creswell 2011:20).

After my interview with Mpume, I spent time considering how to begin the interviews. I needed to make our relationship clear from the start. This was especially important because of the asymmetrical match between the researcher and respondents mentioned earlier. I eventually wrote a short introduction, and used an excerpt by Spradley (1979) that I believe made a difference, making clear my intentions and so helping guide our encounters and lessen power issues:

It is important for me that you understand that I am learning a lot of new things as I study and one of them is how to interview people and find out what they think about how young children learn to read and write. I have to learn to listen well to you and in one of my study books someone wrote something that I think explains what I want to say better than I can. I don't want you to tell me what you think I want to know:

I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them as I try to find out why so many people fall out of school or don't go to school. Will you become my teacher and help me understand your life?
Spradley in Kvale & Brinkman (1979:34).

Clarification and transition questions and summarizing statements as suggested by Roulston (2010:44) during interviews using the informant's own words, examples as follows, was of great assistance in both the one-on-one and focus group interviews as it clarified my understanding of what had been said as well as easing the change from one topic to another and helped close the interview:

*“You’ve told me that Is that accurate?
You mentioned Tell me a bit more about what you mean?
You have told me about Now I would like to learn your views on ...
Are there any questions that I haven’t asked that we should have talked about?”*

I interviewed each of the five participants at least three times. After the first interview with each of them we met to discuss the written script of the interview and to ask further questions to clarify information. In the final interview, I again gave feedback and sometimes asked further questions that had again to be checked later with some informants.

There were also many decisions that had to be taken during interviews. For instance, there were times in the interviews where I experienced strong feelings of empathy in response to their difficult circumstances and at sensitive moments I was torn between responding to the sensed hurt in a *“more therapeutic vein”* and trying to be an objective observer. Kvale & Brinkman (2009) suggest however that there is a *“risk of ethically transgressing the participant’s intimate sphere”* when not a trained therapist. I felt it was better to err on the side of being an objective observer in this situation (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009:74). Rabinow (1997) reminds researchers of Foucault’s counsel on ethics: *“My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do”* (Rabinow, 1997 in Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:76).

See Appendix B: Protocol used in the initial interview and protocol used in the second interview with Rubin Buys. Appendix C: Theoretical sampling questions for the focus groups.

3.4.2. Focus groups

Focus groups are *“one of the multiple practices and methods of analysis that qualitative researchers-as-methodological-bricoleurs now employ”* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:415). In a thought provoking contribution to The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Kamberelis & Dimitriadis (2011) use the *“image of the ... triangular ... prism”* to demonstrate the three main roles of focus groups: *“pedagogy, politics and inquiry”* that like the prism *“are always at work simultaneously, they are all visible to the researcher to some extent, and they all both refract and reflect the substance of focus group work in different ways”*. In their critique, they *“revision those roles”* and distinguish groups used to *“extract information from people” ... “to manipulate them”* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:419) as in a marketing context and groups like those of Paulo

Frere where he “*worked with people rather than on them*” in the pursuit of “*social and political activism*” through his literacy conscious raising groups (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:548-549). They also argue that feminist conscious raising groups “*give voice to the previously silenced*” by offering safe spaces where eventually focus groups can “*become the vehicle for allowing participants to take-over and own the research*”. Focus groups then become “*the sites where pedagogy, politics and interpretive inquiry intersect and inform one another*” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:419).

The two focus groups that I moderated assisted in theoretical sampling. This was however as a “*beginner*” focus group moderator and as such was a learning experience but in those two group experiences I could glimpse the power inherent in this format, as discussed above, and aspire to being able eventually to use its emancipatory energy in my own work. I also used the data from the focus groups to find variation or more evidence for the evolving theme that was “*faithful to the evidence*” (Neuman, 2006 in Sanderson Paton-Ash, 2012:56) to triangulate data in the analysis.

The first group consisted of parents from the Siyafundisa Early Learning Centre in Franschhoek. Deciding that four to six parents was what I could manage without access to a video and forewarned by Roulston (2010:41) that it was prudent to invite more parents than I required I endeavored to invite at least six parents but because I had only an hour on a specific day most of them could not make it and I ended up with only three people. This was however a good beginning and I could record useful dialogue. The second group was from the Omgee Aftercare Centre in Blanco in George. I invited five people but only two arrived. This was enough however for my purpose.

Appendix F. is the Information sheet used for focus group interviews.

3.4.3. Recording

A good digital recording device that is simple to use is necessary for recording as there is not enough time to pay a lot of attention to the device as well as the interviewee during the interview process. The files can also be downloaded to computers with ease (Creswell, 2013:164). The presence of an audio recording device can however have an impact. “*As Warren (2002) states, recording inevitably has meaning for the interviewee furthermore it is likely to have different meanings for different people*” (Warren, 2002, in King & Horrocks 2010:44). They suggest that the interviewer “*try to anticipate likely responses*” and discuss this beforehand. I found that both Mpume and Deanne were very aware of the device. They were not sure what to say and Deanne began the interview by saying “*shoo!*” then there was

a long pause as if she was ready for a film and then could not think of anything to say. She was aware of being recorded throughout the interview and spoke as if she was talking to someone she did not know and needed quite a lot of prompting. I was glad I had a script with prompts by that time, otherwise there would have been a lot more unnecessary impromptu questions and comments from me, as interviewer. After the first interview, I added "*Quick impressions of the interview*" at the end of the interview sheet as a reminder to record reflections on the interview immediately afterwards. I found I was so taken up with thinking about the interviewee's struggles that I did not do so until the next morning – by that time small details had disappeared. The next interview took place in a coffee shop. This, however, was less successful because of all the extraneous noise. I then found quiet corners for subsequent interviews.

3.4.4. Transcription

The process of transcription was a lengthy one, as I decided to transcribe interviews myself rather than employ someone to do them for me. I was grateful I had made this decision, as by the time I had listened to the interview many, many times, I knew all the details, and this was very useful in the coding and analysing process. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009:177) describe transcription as an "... *interpretative process, where the differences between oral speech and written texts give rise to a series of practical and principal issues*". Discussing this further they mention that this difference can lead to interviewees feeling hurt, angry or offended when given the written text (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:73). This assisted me with one of the decisions I had to make. Do I give the transcript to the informants, with all my and their "ums", long pauses and repeated words? I decided to retype it in a readable form without altering the actual text. It meant more work but I believed that to see the transcript with all the above could cause a loss of dignity and add to power issues. My own "ums", pauses and repeated words, had been embarrassing to listen to, and I had chosen to put myself through this, and knew that it would help me improve my technique. My goal was confirmation from the interviewee of what had been said by both of us. This worked well, and all the informants were comfortable with their scripts, that they kept, once I had made necessary corrections. Another recommendation that was useful, was to "*transcribe the interview as soon as possible because memory will assist in hearing what is on the recorder*" (Gillham, 2000, in Sanderson Paton-Ash, 2012:71) otherwise as Kvale & Brinkman suggest "*the interview researcher's road to hell becomes paved with transcripts*". I enjoyed that gem as at times I felt it was happening to me.

3.4.5. Storage

Creswell (2013:175) offers some advice about storage. He suggests that it is important to do the following:

- Prepare a list of the different kinds of information that is to be collected,
- Protect the identity of the informants by giving them pseudonyms from the beginning of the study.
- Backup copies of computer files,
- Build a “data collection matrix” to help find information

I managed the first two steps but did not have enough back-up files nor did I build the data matrix. I regretted this as incomplete back-up and difficulty keeping track of all the information gathered in a study cost me a lot in time.

I found, that I needed a conventional filing system (for hard copies, notes and the coding process); large pieces of paper for creating maps and diagrams as well as a computer filing system to store the data in all its forms. Corbin (2008, in Corbin and Strauss, 2008:X1) argues that a computer is simply a tool and must “*support*” and not “*take over the research process*”. I initially found mapping categories, properties and dimensions very frustrating until I found the computer programme “FreeMind (freemind.sourceforge.net) as mentioned earlier.

3.5. Data analysis

The data for this study was analysed using the GTM described above in Research Methods. The Glaser & Strauss (1976:106) dictum that generating a theme or theory “*requires that all three procedures (collection, coding and analysis) go on simultaneously to the fullest extent possible*” directed the data analysis.. Analysing data systematically, in this way, constructs a theory from data and verifies it at the same time, as envisaged by Glaser & Strauss (1967:1). This ground-breaking method was used in place of the rigorous testing of theory, through the finding of more accurate facts, that was common in research at that time.

3.6. Validity and ethical considerations

3.6.1. Ethics

All names of people and centres used in this study are pseudonyms to protect the interests of the participants. This is in accordance with research ethics. Engel-Hills in a lecture at CPUT in 2010 argued that ethics is about people and moral philosophy and the effort to guide with

reason while giving equal weight to the interests of everyone who will be affected by what the researcher does. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009:74) propose that the researcher is the “*main instrument for obtaining knowledge*” and therefore his or her knowledge, experience, honesty and fairness is vital to the quality of the study and decisions about ethical issues. I did not have much knowledge or experience in research but I had run a pre-school; trained teachers; managed many projects; read widely and had written material, so these skills – together with guidance from tutors at the University – helped me begin to become more scholarly in my approach to research. I believe that I tried to be honest and fair in my dealing with the informants. In using data from informants solely for the researcher’s benefit there is a risk of “*using*” them and several theorists suggest rewarding the informant in some way. I did not offer a reward to the informants initially because I did not wish informants to do this for money. I then, at the end of each interview, gave each informant a gift of money to thank them and it was accepted with pleasure. As is mandatory in research I explained the purpose and the data use in the study verbally and in writing and obtained their written permission to be interviewed. It was important that they understood that the process would not harm them in any way and that I, as the researcher, would protect their interests. I gave participants a typed copy of each interview for them to check for accuracy. In doing so I used member check to make the study more credible. I also promised to share the final report with them (Creswell, 2013:56 – 60). **Reflection** on my position as researcher and my lived relationships in my own world and in the study, as well as reflection on the informants (centred in their own lived world and their position in it and in this study), was important in assessing and understanding ethical issues. The reflective process that took place in memoing allowed some of the racial and power issues that had emerged (because of differences in race, ethnicity, class and age), to surface (O’Neil Green et al., 2007, in Bryant & Charnaz, 2007:482).

3.6.2. Validity

Creswell (2013) argues there are many differing perspectives on validation (Creswell, 2013:244). Corbin & Strauss (2008:301) explains that for many theorists, validity is synonymous with quality. I agree with Corbin in Corbin & Strauss (2008:301) however when she argues that in qualitative research they are not synonymous as she believes that “*quality findings*” have an innovative “*richness*” and genuineness that is evident in the analysis that is not often found in more formal approaches. From the readings I have been led through in this GTM process I understand her argument that “*validity*” “*reliability*” and “*truth*” “carry with them” ... “*a certain degree of dogmatism*”. Glaser & Strauss (1967) discussing evidence for discovering a theory posit that:

Commented [JS18]: Please check these two sentences – changed it so not sure of commas & brackets

Fine as they are.

... one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence, then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept. The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt (nor is it even in studies concerned only with accuracy), but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area studied. Furthermore, the concept itself will not change, while even the most accurate facts change. Concepts only have their meanings re-specified at times because other theoretical and research purposes have evolved (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:23).

I feel comfortable with Corbin's (2008) notion of "credibility" which she explains:

...indicates that findings are trustworthy and believable in that they reflect participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with a phenomenon but at the same time the explanation is only one of many possible 'plausible' interpretations possible from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:302).

Credibility has a "fit" with Denzin & Lincoln's, (2011:5) bricoleurs's "complex, quilt-like bricolage" with its "interconnected images" and "sequence of representations, connecting parts to the whole". Rigour in analysis where data is viewed from different angles and perspectives leads to credibility. I endeavored to be rigorous in my analysis of the data and as a means of achieving this, triangulated my findings by using memos, maps and diagrams and focus groups. Kincheloe, 2011, suggests that:

... the bricolage is dedicated to a form of rigour that is conversant with numerous modes of meaning making and knowledge production – modes that originate in diverse social locations" ... that "consider the relationships, the resonances, and the disjunctions between formal and rationalistic modes of Western epistemology and ontology and different cultural, philosophical, paradigmatic, and subjugated expressions (Kincheloe et al, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:169).

I had tried to represent and interpret the informant's meanings and knowledge as accurately as I could. I understood more about the informant's lives as our relationships developed and I saw some of the disjunctions between my world and their world as I became more respectful and aware of the struggles and satisfactions of their lived world.

Glaser, (2004) in Birks & Mills, (2011:37) argues that quality in research is the result of the rigorous application of grounded theory methods that I enjoyed discovering and used, on this methodological adventure, to the best of my ability.

3.7. Conclusion

Commented [JS19]: Dictionary says rigour but computer changes it. I have kept it as rigour

Computer is using American spelling. Strictly speaking, if it's 'rigor' in the quote, keep it like that, but use 'rigour' in your own text.

This chapter described the methodology used in this study and the use of the grounded theory method in analyzing data. The analysis of the data took me on a journey to try to “answer Glaser’s (1978) classic question – *what is actually happening in the data?*” (Birks & Mills, 2011:40). I found power issues were important in this study. I tried in many ways to ease them by interrogating my own positionality and giving participants more choice over times and places for interviews. Lempert’s (2007) concept of “give-and-take” was also useful as I realized that in interviews both researcher and respondents negotiate as a “*subtext*” giving and taking what they wish to give and take and later in memo writing the researcher learns more about self – and the participant – so that those knowledges become “*intertwined*” and part of the researcher (Lempert, 2007, in Bryant and Charmaz, 2007:248). As the study progressed I found that I had misconceptions about poverty – seeing only the poverty – not the people as persons. I then discovered that I could identify with the respondents as there were similarities in our lives. I soon realized however that this was a dangerous way of thinking as even the interview structure and the questions I asked were based on a cultural bias (O’Niel Green et al., in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:482). My life experience had also been very different from theirs. I had noted my early assumptions and preconceptions and later returned to them to assess them against reality – there were some surprises. Interrogating my axiological, ontological and epistemological assumptions I became aware that my own value-laden history and prejudices would always colour interactions and interviews. I also learnt that reality is in constant flux as it is “*a world made real in the minds and through the words and actions of its members*” (Charmaz, 2000:523 in Birks & Mills, 2011:52). I had become an “insider” in this new group of researcher, respondents and their experiences and now identified with them because of the focus in qualitative research on the subjective experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the themes that emerged from the data, and the categories that were derived from them to inform the data analysis.

4.2. Emergent literacy

My initial research question led me to a supposition that the lack of emergent literacy support from parents of disadvantaged children may have been one of the reasons Enzo had become a statistic in the ongoing retention crisis in education in South Africa. This was borne out by a clear theme that ran through all the evidence that there had been little or no parental involvement in emergent literacy except for Rubin Buys who came from a more literate home.

Figure 1 below gives all five informants exposure to conventional emergent literacy experiences.

Emergent literacy experiences	Mpume Zwane	Rubin Buys	Deanne September	Karin Wilson	Jasmine Jefthas
Parental involvement	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Exposure to books &/or stories	NO	YES (BIBLE AND SOME BOOKS)	NO ONLY FROM 11	YES (CHURCH)	NO
Books &/or experiences discussed	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Drawing materials in home	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

Drawing in sand with fingers / sticks	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
Home as print rich environment	NO	Some books and lists and Aunt that modelled daily homework	NO	NO	NO
Toys at home like puzzles & games	NO	Few puzzles	NO	NO	NO
Singing & rhyming games	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Attended crèche	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Imaginative play with friends	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Orthographic stimulation	NO – NOT UNTIL PRIMARY SCHOOL	YES – CRECHE	NO	NO – NOT UNTIL PRIMARY SCHOOL	NO – NOT UNTIL PRIMARY SCHOOL
Phonographic Stimulation	NO – NOT UNTIL PRIMARY SCHOOL	YES – CRECHE	NO	NO – NOT UNTIL PRIMARY SCHOOL	NO – NOT UNTIL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Commented [JS20]: She says I must adjust – don't know what she means
If it's not clear, ignore. Don't risk messing it up.

Literate members in home	NO	Lived with Grandmother who was semi-literate. Interacted with mother who had Matriculated.	Seven older siblings semi-literate	NO	NO
Desire to learn to read	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Figure 1: Informant's exposure to emergent literacy experiences

All the above respondents believed that their parents had not supported their emergent literacy nor their schooling. Four of the respondents came from homes with low or semi-literate parents who were unable to support their children's emergent literacy. Rubin was the exception as there was more emergent literacy stimulation. Mpume reported that her mother was not literate and as an alcoholic, she was unable to provide the support that she needed. Rubin explained that:

There wasn't any time for reading stories to anybody so I just had to do it on my own because at school I did learn some stuff and so that stuff that I learned at school ... so that's where I got these books that my mother gave me so when they are at work and busy so I will be busy reading (those books) and that's how I got the reading experience so I just did it on my own".

Deanne came from a large family, but her mother was depressed, and all her older siblings and father worked too hard to be able to spend time with her. She was exposed to emergent literacy, at the age of eleven, by the farmer's wife on the farm on which they lived. Karin lived with her grandmother until she was nine years old and as her grandmother was not literate she provided little emergent literacy support. Jasmine's parents were low literate people and had drinking problems that affected the home negatively. She reports that:

"... my parents never told me how to read a book, how to write, I had to learn everything in school. They never told me about getting my periods and stuff. I had to learn it from school and people that were close to me ... so they told me all this sort of things".

Commented [JS21]: Not sure what she wants me to rephrase – para 1 & 4 pg 61 & Bible so added bits & pieces but did not rephrase anything & also added bit about bible here - though it is below

As can be seen from Figure 1 above, the five researched respondents learnt to read and write despite lack of exposure to many conventional emergent literacy experiences. Activities, like sharing books with adults; using drawing materials and educational equipment were not part of their lives. Rubin was the only one who attended a crèche and was exposed to literacy experiences. However, all of them were exposed to community resources and a shared church life that led to some of them being exposed to their Bible or at least the singing of worship songs (see below). Jasmine was the exception here as her family were not involved in Church life, but she was surrounded by women who belonged to the church who interacted with and helped her.

With so little conventional emergent literacy experience for four of the respondents it is interesting to note the areas of literacy expression that the informants had in common. These were:

- Imaginative play with community children;
- A bible in their home or in a close neighbour's home;
- Cultural singing, chants and rhymes; and
- A desire to learn to read.

Commented [MOU22]: I think she means use a capital letter for 'Bible'.

(See Cultural and Community practices in Areas of literacy expression: Chapter 2.4.1).

They all played imaginative games with siblings and the neighbourhood children. Houses are built close together and, in the evenings, the streets are full of playing children and on the farms, too, the workers houses are close, and children play together. They also played rhyming games with friends and were exposed to the songs and rhymes they learnt in church or in Deanne's case at a weekly 'pray together' at her home.

Blanco is an area where there is a strong belief system associated with the Christian culture of church attendance. Most of the community life revolves around church activities, and there is an emphasis on each family having its own bible that could have had an influence on their emergent literacy. Three of the informants, Rubin, Deanne and Karin, had bibles in their homes and Jasmine's neighbours and the family that she spent a lot of time with (in her teens) had a bible. There was a bible in the home Mpume moved to when she was nine years old. Rubin says: "*In senior primary school ... the only time that I had to read was when we did the weekly bible study at home and my grandmother did (ran) the bible study so then I had to read the bible*". Deanne's family had a bible and she remembers, singing "... church songs at our

Commented [JS23]: Examiner said earlier capital B for bible. Is this correct. I have not changed it here

It depends on whether you mean *the Bible* or just 'bible' meaning an authoritative book.

once a week pray together”, but did not go to church until she was a teenager. Karin’s home was also centred on the church and although Karin’s grandmother could not read the bible, it had pride of place and was taken with them to church every Sunday. Rubin and Karin would have heard the bible being read and been exposed to bible stories and the print rich environment of their churches. Mpume, Deanne and Jasmine lived on farms in their early years. Jasmine lived there until she was five years old and Mpume and Deanne during their teen years. This meant that Mpume, Deanne and Jasmine were not exposed even to the incidental print rich and story reading of a community church during the emergent literacy years. They were also not exposed to much incidental print as they did not visit shops and there were no TVs but they were exposed to food packaging, imaginative play, cultural singing and the bible.

The four respondents who attended school, spoke about a strong interest in learning to read when they began formal schooling. And Deanne when she was exposed to reading – at eleven – was desperate to learn to read. This was perhaps an important factor that led to their literacy achievements (Adams 1993:207 in Riley 1996:14).

Deanne’s experience of emergent literacy is also interesting. Her father was a farm labourer and they moved to a new farm when she was eleven. There were other children on the farm who attended school and Deanne witnessed them reading and the farmer’s wife invited Deanne and her sister to visit sometimes to share in the reading of stories to her own children. She says of the first farmer’s wife:

We lived on this farm with a white lady, the farmer’s wife, she showed interest in me and she had children. I saw them with books, like the Huisgenoot, because they were Afrikaans, and she gave me books ...” and of another (this is when she is fifteen) *“I was working for lovely people, she taught me, she was so patient. I was just a child so I could go through her, the children’s books and the children’s toys. When she comes from town I was playing (laughs with delight at the memory). She actually taught me how to work.*

She was also allowed to take books home. This stimulated a desire to learn to read. She describes her growing awareness as emergent literacy developed – this at the age of eleven.

She just gave me books and she, she just read to us and I have started to write the letters that I saw – to write it down and just ask anybody who was around what is this what is it called and they told me and I remembered that’s a ‘b’ that’s a ‘a’ and after that I wanted to put them together so ... I asked my big sister ... and she helped me

... (then) *I am starting to see it makes sense. I could form very short words like 'ek', 'lief' and 'diere'.*

She then taught herself to read and write with a little help from her older sister and people in the community. When she took books home she reports:

I wrote all the words down that I couldn't read or pronounce and asked somebody who could'. She also says 'I started losing interest in playing actually. I disappeared every day with the books and I went lying down ... like we lived very close to this foresty kind of place and I went there and I lay down and read the whole day and only came back when school comes out at 3 o'clock so I was like doing like my own school thing.

She continues later:

It was like a blind person getting new eye sight" and "The screaming and the crying ... because the story books that you read alone in that private space you couldn't put them together, you couldn't make out what the other guy is trying to tell the other one. Very frustrating. Why, why, can't I get this right? It took me some years, it did.

Rubin was the only informant whose family could afford to send him to a crèche where he was exposed to areas of Literacy knowledge and Literacy expression (See 2.4.1.). Although his family did not themselves show interest or participate in emergent literacy experiences, except incidentally, there were books in his home. His grandmother was unable to read well but she came from a literate family so had some books and his mother matriculated and bought him Disney books when he was small. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2.4.1., he also saw reading, writing and studying modelled by his aunt who was a teenager and did her homework in the home every afternoon (Weinberger, 1996:55). And he had extended family who encouraged him: "... they (his uncles) were the ones who always encouraged me ... because I had their surname and they wanted me to go further... they were teachers and professional people" (Mason & Allen, 1986, in Penn et al., 2004:14). All this was significant.

Mpume attended school irregularly because she lived with her mother, who was an alcoholic. Her aunt removed her from her mother's care, when she was nine, but she lived on another farm so again often missed school because of the distance. Despite this, reading became important in her life. Recent literature "*acknowledges the child's involvement in their own learning*" and that "*literacy learning emerges with increasing experience over time*" and perhaps this played a part in her life (Hall, 1987 in Weinberger 1996:3). She also probably had a lot of innate ability, because all five of her children performed very well academically at school. She reported, that all her life she loved reading, and that "*the books they make me forget all my troubles*". When I visited her in her home, the bible had pride of place and she read aloud to her family from it every evening. There were a few books and magazines in a

small cupboard too – even though it was a small shack in a squatter camp – where five children and two adults lived in two rooms. She showed me a torch, and the isiXhosa book she was reading. She read every night. She explained that she had to read by torchlight so as not to disturb the rest of the sleeping family.

The five focus group participants confirmed that although their homes were not print-rich the bible and their church community played an important role in their homes. They also played imaginative games with other children with rhymes, chants and cultural songs and all of them wanted to learn to read when they went to school. James said “*Ons het passie gehad om skool toe te gaan*” (We were passionate about going to school). He was the oldest of seven children, and he had to leave school at Grade 8, to help support his brothers and sisters. Working in a menial job in the road construction industry, he worked himself into a senior position, and paid for his siblings to go to school. They all matriculated, with one of them becoming a doctor and another a lawyer.

By the time, I had accessed information on emergent literacy I realized that despite little emergent literacy support my first three respondents had become literate. There were also new categories evolving from the data and emergent literacy suddenly changed – becoming a dimension in the final story. What had pushed these informants to achieve against such odds? What was it that motivated them? “Coping alone”, was a clear theme throughout all the data. Was it the core concept? Perhaps it had made them independent and resilient and focused enough on what they wanted that it had motivated them to achieve.

4.3. Coping alone

They all spoke about “doing it on my own”. The focus group respondents also mentioned it. Frans said: “*I had to do it all alone, but it’s not blaming anybody. It was just like that then*”. What did that mean? Why did they feel that they had to do things on their own? Mpume explains: “*I learn early to look after myself ... my mother she was drunk ... so much*”. For Rubin, it was because his family were all working, and too busy to spend time with him. He says: “*... when we at home because you don’t have people telling you to do that or that and so you were on your own at home and you had to find your own way of doing something*”. He refers to doing it on his own many times during the interviews. Deane also talks about coping alone. She says: “*I knew there was no other way*” (to learn to read). “*Nobody was doing it for me, so I had to do it. And if I didn’t get it right by myself I knew I would be stuck for the rest of my life*”. Karin says of her mother: “*She never cooked any food in our own house. Never ... never*”. Karin performed as an adult, and did everything on her own. She explained: “*People*

said *I was the second mum*". Jasmine reports that *"There are a few things I remember of my childhood life but some of it I can't remember because of the ... It was hard to grow up because my parents they were always drunk because my mom was so alcoholic and my dad and my grandmother and my grandfather"*. A premise running through all the data was that the parents believed their children could and would cope. They expected them to complete chores on their own; not bother adults and to respect and obey them.

Yet in other ways they were given a lot of freedom of choice. Mpume went to school when she felt like it (if she felt like it). Rubin did his "own kind of homework" in the evenings, because his teenager aunt was doing her homework. Everyone was too busy to help him, so he did it on his own. Mpume and Deanne living on farms, could go where they chose and do what they wanted. Karin, at twelve, was expected to make adult choices about what to eat and what to buy and what her small sisters could and could not do. Jasmine, as the older child, also made decisions for her sister and herself. She even chose to attend school regularly and encouraging her sister to join her. As a result, they all learnt to be independent and responsible. But, was this the reason they became literate? It did not appear to be so. Many of the children, in this community, cope alone. There are many reasons for this. Parents, who work, often have long working hours. The work is generally menial and physical draining. When they are home, there is much to do, and the children must help. There is a lot of unemployment, and many families live on the Government grant. Alcohol and drug abuse is also rife in this community. The children must cope as best they can. As a result, this kind of freedom of choice and "coping alone" is common, but few of the children choose to go to school and become literate. There appeared, therefore, to be something else that pushed these respondents to persevere and hold on to their schooling opportunities. Deciding that "Coping alone" was not the core category, I continued with concurrent data generation and mapping. I also prepared theoretical sampling questions for my next interviewee and my first three respondents. Aspirations now emerged as a possible core category.

4.4. Aspirations

There was another theme that ran through all the data – all the respondents wanted to change or escape their circumstances. Karin responds to a theoretical sampling question with:

"I was actually fighting to get out of it. So ... I knew I must ... I must succeed in life to get out of it (her circumstances) ... but I knew if I fail and fail I will just be a failure in life and I might take that route of my Dad. I just had that thing in me. I don't know where it came from. But I had that thing to be successful and to pass".

She saw education as her path to success even though there was no-one in her family who was educated: her father dropped out of school at Grade Three and her mother completed Grade Five.

It was important to Rubin to be independent and study. He did not want *“to end up like the others in the family so then I had to stand up and stand on my own two feet and work hard to get where I am”*. His close family did not want to study further. *“I am the first one in my house that is studying ... so for me, I don’t want to end up like the others ... I want to be better. I want to stand on my own two feet”* Asked in theoretical sampling why he and his friends had chosen to complete their homework daily by working during breaks at school; at the library in the afternoons and then finishing the remainder at home in the evenings, he replies:

Because we had a vision. We had a vision. We wanted to become someone, somebody someday ... if you don’t work hard how do you expect to get a better job ... to be a better person if you don’t have a vision and work hard?

Mpume did not want to be like her mother, and books provided further motivation, as she found that they took her out of her circumstances into a new world. Here, she could forget what was happening to her, and lose herself in imaginative worlds: *“When I was eighteen I join the library. It help me forget my ... my trouble by the house”*.

Jasmine was also motivated by not wanting to be like her family but she had a further dream. She wanted to help other children like herself:

Because of all the way I grew up – all I see – so I always wanted to become a social worker ... so as I can go out and help those children because I will understand how they feel – because I know where that comes from. I come from the same background.

Deanne spoke about an energy:

I knew there was something inside me that I didn’t see in other children. I didn’t know what it was but there was an energy, something that drives people.

Her determination, at eleven, first to read in Afrikaans; then to write; and later (because of TV) learn to read and speak in English, is remarkable. She aspired to read and write.

The focus group confirmed the above information. For all of them, schooling was very important. All of them saw matriculation as a passport to a bright future, often despite an inadequate schooling environment.

Did dreams and goals provide the motivation to hang in despite such odds? What did the respondents see in their heads? What did they think about when they made the decisions to focus on their aspirations? Why did this give them the focus to follow their dreams, and others, who also aspired to something else, did not? What made them persevere?"

What created the aspiration? The situation appeared to create the aspiration for these respondents. They did not like the situation they found themselves in, so they aspired to a lifestyle different from their parents. We see from research, though, that there are many situations that perpetuate cycles, and do not create aspirations (Heckman, 2013:1). In fact, some situations make them worse. An aspiration is also not necessarily positive. If someone aspires to being very wealthy for instance they may choose crime as the vehicle to achieve this. (See Figure 2 below).

<p>Situation creates: <i>aspiration</i></p>	<p>This can lead to a positive response: <i>achieve desired goal within bounds of law</i></p> <p>or a negative response: <i>achieve desired goal using unlawful means</i></p>	<p>These respondents aspired to change and attend school and use any positive response offered them in place of responding negatively by using unlawful means or giving up</p>
<p>Situation perpetuates: <i>cycle or worsens situation</i></p>	<p>This can lead to a positive response: <i>Accepts status quo and lives a productive life</i></p> <p>Or a negative response: <i>Becomes involved in crime, drugs etc.</i></p>	<p>They were dissatisfied with the status quo so aspired to something different but kept away from becoming involved in drugs, crime etc. to achieve their goals</p>

Figure 2: Comparing positive and negative responses to an aspiration.

As I was grappling with theoretical integration around aspirations a “hidden element” suddenly emerged (see 3.3.11. Maps and Diagrams) from further situational analyses of the data. It was “Discipline”.

4.5. Disciplinary regimes

Did the way they were disciplined at home affect their aspiring to a different life from their parents? Comparative data (including data from focus group informants) showed that all of them, came from homes, where they were expected to obey without question or discussion. There were also consequences to disobedience. In most cases, this was a hiding. Rubin was the exception among the original five respondents. Describing his grandmother, who brought him up, he says:

I didn't went out to the street before my Grandmother arrive (home) because if she catches me there (laughs) ... she was more overprotective of me, she wanted me safe, ja she was strict ... If you didn't do your things at home that you were supposed to do, then ... normally she gave us treats in the morning to go to school like a chocolate and stuff like this so (then) I don't get anything for the next day for school.

Karin explained that “My Mom was very strict with me ... especially ... so I couldn't really go out like any other child to a party ... and all sorts of places”. It appeared that there was no space for any of her own interests. She had to run the household and had to be there for her two sisters. She had to fit in her schooling, any way she could, without disturbing anyone. Jasmine's father, on the other hand, often hit Jasmine, her sister and her mother. She left home at fourteen, because her father beat her so badly, that she had to call her aunt for help. Her aunt advised her to call the police. She did so, and her father spent the weekend in jail. Her mother was furious with her for calling the police. Jasmine reports:

We did not have TV at our home so then I sit there at Ousis house and watch TV there ... and she used to have this dance group and we practice at Ousis' house ... and one evening ... he fetch me there and shout at me telling me I am with boys ... I told him it was just a girl's dance group ... He was drunk and my Mum was drunk but my Mum wasn't so drunk and he beats me up with his belt ... even takes the clothes off ... my shirt – with his bare hands, big hands and beats me ... then I decided no longer I am going to let my father abuse me because that is what we is used to – he always beat my mum ... and when my mum told him that he mustn't beat me then he clap her so she must just shut up & she must just look at how he beats me up & then aunt Drikie was there and fetching me and she told me I must phone the police so I phoned the police because I was so fed up with his nonsense because every time he used to beat us up for small things that we never done .. me and my sister ... but my mum was so angry with me because my dad wasn't at home that weekend ... and (later that week) she had to come with me to the court to make the statement ... I was underage ... and my mum was so angry at me because it was a day off of work – for her it was the money ... so she said I had to pay her for that day and all that kind of nonsense but she was always take my Dad's part ... always ... but after that I moved out of the house so I move out of the house and I was staying with ousis.

It is interesting to note, that although rules and consequences were clear in all these homes (except in Jasmine's case where drink clouded her parents thinking and actions), the consequences to disobedience was different in the homes. Rubin was not given hidings for misbehaviour. There were consequences, but alternative strategies were used. Now, as an adult, he states that his relationship with his grandmother is very good. Deanne, Karin and Jasmine were given hidings. Deanne was given hidings by her mother, and she had a poor relationship with her, until her mother died when she was twelve. Karin was also given hidings by her mother, and not by her grandmother. Karin says that it is her grandmother that she loves. She does not have a warm relationship with her mother. She feels it is more of a dutiful relationship. Jasmine still lives on the same property as her parents (the property belongs to her grandmother) but she has very little to do with her parents, as their relationship is still damaged. She has a good relationship with her grandmother who never hit her and helped

her where she could. I was unable to ascertain what happened around discipline in Mpume's home, as she had moved by the time these questions arose.

The evidence from four of the five focus group members was similar. Four of the five received hidings and alternative strategies were used with one of them. James said he was given severe hidings by his father, and although he respected his father, he did not like him and feared him. It was interesting to note, that James is now passionate about his grandchildren not being given hidings. Clifford reported that his mother gave him hidings as a youngster (she was a single mother) and that he had, and still has, a good relationship with her despite the hidings because he knew he deserved it and he knew how she battled to provide for them. He also related that he had to learn to read early, as she could not read, and needed someone to read the bible to her. He read the bible to her every day and felt close to her always.

How the parents respond to disobedience appears, in this study, to make a difference to the relationship with the caregiver who administers the hidings. Clifford was the exception, where there appeared to be other variables. This assumption is a possible area for further research.

The manner, in which these respondents and Enso, who came from the same community, were disciplined by their culture, community and home, could certainly have had an influence on their aspirations. Never the less, from continued exploration of the data, it did not appear to be the core category. As the categories shifted again, with new questions, I perceived the data differently. As I memoed my new insights, I discovered another possible core concept: "Voice".

4.6. Voice

The data showed that all of them (except Mpume, in her life with her mother) appeared to have a special position in the family, that gave them a respected voice within the family. Mpume formed a special bond with her aunt, when she moved there, as her aunt's children had already left home. She relates that she loved her aunt who made her feel special. Mpume became a mother at eighteen with all the responsibilities of a mother and wife. This was when she joined a library to "*help her forget*". Unfortunately, by the time I had reached the theoretical sampling stage Mpume had moved to the Eastern Cape and I was unable to ask further questions.

Rubin comments that the only reading he did at home from Grade 4 onwards, was reading the bible at his grandmother's weekly bible study group. He led the group later, when he was a

Commented [JS24]: I assume these are the 2 pages she says review sentence structure/punctuation. I am so poor at punctuation that I often don't know what to change. I have tried but wonder if it is correct???

teenager, as he was the only person who could read. They were studying, a best-selling devotional book, called the "The Purpose Driven Life (Warren, R. 2002). Rubin explains:

... so, I had to teach them ... and do all that stuff with them ... so that was one of the challenges I had to do. So ... I had to read it and learn them about the family and the different types of families.

It was in English, so before teaching it, he had to translate it into Afrikaans.

Karin was the "second mother" to her two sisters:

It started ... at between 10 and 11-years old ... it kicked off. And then when I was 12 or 13 I had to run my Mum's house ... we used to stay at a forestry place ... Bergplaas in the Hoekville area ... so those people only goes to town once a month ... so you must go buy shopping for a month (traveling all by herself on a bus, carrying a lot of money, and bringing back a months-worth of shopping). And she used to give me R1200 and I used to now think at the age of 12 years old what I need to buy ... I need veges ... I need to buy all sorts of things knowing that this needs to be cut off and put in the freezer ... and meat and fish and everything ... everything. I really ... I was ... I was a second Mum.

Jasmine was the eldest of two children and looked after her younger sister. She cleaned the house; washed their clothes and preparing a lunch of "sugar water and bread" each day.

Deanne also had a special place in her family. She appeared to take emotional responsibility for her older sister. She also seemed to be able to persuade, one of her brothers and two of her sisters, to work together towards goals. She was the only one in the family, who was very creative and imaginative. In answer to a question about what they did at home She says:

We (Deanne and her younger sister) played ... you know ... family-family ... making clothes for my doll ... but always happy families ... I never expressed what was happening in the house in my play ... I always played happy and later she adds I made my own shoes .. my family would walk ... they would walk like on the other side of the street, they were so embarrassed.

Later, when she is 18, she is distressed by the life her older sister is living, so organizes a meeting with her other sisters and brother and explains:

I said listen we have to make a plan ... I said what are we going to do ... you are all working ... so why don't you rent the place for Lena ... and we were looking for a house ... and we all moved and we got a lovely house ... just to get her out of that situation so she started being happy again.

They all took on responsibility beyond their years. This, though, also gave them a respected “voice” within the family. In Jasmine’s case, it possibly gave her the courage (at fourteen) to report her father to the police, then leave home.

That some children have a “voice” in the family was borne out by data from one of the focus groups. In this group of three, James and Frans were the eldest members of their family of origin, and Zenie was one of the younger members of a large family. Both the ‘eldest’ members believed they had a special place in their families and aspired to make something more of their lives than had their younger siblings. Zenie (as a younger member of her family of origin) was content to play a secondary role to her husband in their home and was a competent and supportive mother and wife. She completed her schooling, but she did not have the aspirations that her husband nor the other ‘eldest’ respondent had.

I believed that I was nearing theoretical saturation when another two possible core categories emerged: “Nurture” and “Community resources”.

4.7. Nurture

Current research (Heckman, 2013; Masten, 2014) points to the importance of a nurturing environment. Although all the respondents came from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities and all of them came from homes where excessive drink and poverty compounded their disadvantage all of them had one or a few nurturers in their environment.

Mpume’s mother was a single mother who drank excessively. It was the women on the farm living close to them who helped Mpume survive and her aunt cared about her and for her – taking her away from her mother, to live on another farm, when she was nine. When I interviewed her she still saw her aunt as her “mother” and visited her regularly, saying “she save me”. Rubin’s mother, also abused alcohol, but she lived with her mother as she was still young. His grandmother became Rubin’s “mother”. Rubin, answering a theoretical sampling question about his grandmother says of her: “She’s a strict person but also loving and always there for her family”. It is clear from the data that she played a vital role in his life – nurturing and guiding him throughout.

Deanne says of her mother: “...we were too many ... I was too far in line ... so there wasn’t time for me really ... so I just estranged from her”. Natasha, the eldest daughter, became her “mother”. Deanne continues:

We were nine all together, and she (Natasha) worked like a slave, and that's how she impressed my mother ... and that's the only thing they would talk about ... what's the next, you know, the next day's work and she was housekeeping ... actually she was taking care of all the families. Later she says: She was the only mother (I had) but the data shows she did not play a nurturing role in her life. Her father played that role. ,I was more close to my father ... I was my father's child, so I helped him with the cows and you know, doing some work around the farms and I enjoyed (it). It was my 'me' time, our together time, and I helped him with all of those kinds of things. It was so wonderful for me to be close to him at that time".

Interestingly, Deanne then finds more nurturing relationships out of the home. Living on farms, she learnt to relate well to the farmer's wives' Throughout the years from eleven to twenty, she forms warm nurturing relationships with five white women. This was even though she was working for them. Karin lived with her grandmother during the week, often going to her parents at weekends. She was nine when she went to live permanently with her parents. This was to look after her two toddler sisters so her mother could return to work. She also had to look after her father – when he was there. She describes him variously during the interviews as:

Dirty ... he was stealing, ... sometimes he was drunk for a week at a time, ... he also took drugs and ... I was so shy and humiliated ... I tried to hide amongst the other children when I saw him, with his friends, sitting under the trees ... on my way home from school.

She later recounts an amazing story of how her father, without help from anyone, changed his life around. Now, 15 years later, he owns his own tree felling business with 30 employees. However, it was her grandmother who nurtured her, and she is still one of the most important people in Karin's life.

Jasmine's mother, father, grandmother and grandfather abused alcohol. She seems from the data, to have a poor relationship with all members of her family, except her Grandmother. Thus, she formed relationships with community women outside her family. This was except for an aunt, who did not live near them. She had a relationship with her, that allowed her to call her when her father beat her very badly but she could not live with her.

I first stay with Aunt Drikie, and after Aunt Drikie I stay with Ousis, and after Ousis there was another lady that I stay with. She always used to help me with my hair, wash my hair and stuff like that. (when she was still living at home), Before I go to school in the mornings, I would go around there and she was combing my hair or she will make me some breakfast ... or I would just go in and the back door was always, always open in the morning ... and I would just go in and maybe do my hair or maybe make myself

breakfast ... and after school I would go around there before I go home. I had a lot of people who support me from the church of ousis – the church people used to help me.

It appeared that it was not necessarily having a nurturer in the family that was important (as I had earlier assumed). If there was a nurturer or nurturers in their environment it appeared also to make a difference. Rubin and Karin had grandmothers from when they were small. Although Karin had to leave her grandmother, and live with her parents when she was nine, her grandmother is the person she identifies with as her mother. Her mother was a cook in a hotel, so was away for long periods. Her church community gave her the support she needed when her mother was away. Mpume found nurturers in her community when she was living with her mother, and when she went to live with her Aunt she was nurtured by her aunt. She became the most important person in Mpume's life until she died. Jasmine had a grandmother who provided some nurturing. She also found nurturers in her church community when she left home at fourteen. Deanne had her father, until she was thirteen, when he moved back to a farm and left her behind with her oldest sister. Deanne also found support outside her home, as there were problems in the home, when she was living with her sister as a teenager. All the respondents experienced a nurturer in their environment, so this continued to be a possible core category. I now could find only one more conceptual category to explore. This led on from a nurturing environment. It was: "Community resources".

4.8. Community resources

The situatedness of literacy as posited by Street (2013) describes how the respondent's emergent literacy had been supported by community resources (Street, 2013:1).

Deanne recounts her excitement on being taken to town for the first time. They lived on a farm outside Blanco.

I think Blanco is a fantastic place to be, that opened up opportunities and dreams for us because we have to go to the shops ... and you saw another world because we never came to town, nobody took us and brought us to town (before). We just knew the farms. And then this white lady (when she is about 11) when she comes to Millies, the biggest shop in Blanco, she always brought us with, and we saw this absolute, [sic] fantastic side of life and, ja, it really helped you to say: Okm there's something else about life and I want to know more about this life ...

and

I started by reading Afrikaans first, until I could, you knowm totally read it. Then I said: Ok, I would like to know what people are saying, you know, over the TV ... so I was asking, especially my father, what did they say? What does this word mean? And he

told me, and I studied it, and afterwards, I started to understand and I said, now I must learn to pronounce it. So, I worked so hard towards that, as well until I could do it. It took me some years.

Rubin mentions the importance of the library for him:

I also went in the afternoon to the George library where I did my homework and everything, because it was a quiet atmosphere and it was a homework atmosphere ... some of my friends also did homework there.

Commented [JS25]: I can't indent these two

As mentioned earlier, Mpume also joined the library when she was eighteen where she 'escaped' from her world. Jasmine explains how her community helped her: "... there was always people that will help me go to school or maybe buy me some Pritt and books and stuff or school shoes". It was also school that provided Karin with many of the resources that she needed that she had not received at home. She reports: "*I loved school. I was ready for it and I loved it*".

Culturally they were all encouraged to become skilled in the home and responsible for themselves from an early age. Even boys, if there was no girl in the home, learned to cook and clean. Both James and Frans from the first focus group could cook and clean from an early age. Frans reports: "*They teach me, I think I was in Standard 1 (Grade 3), how to make bread and how to cook*". Mpume, as an only child, living alone with an alcoholic mother took on responsibility for herself and her mother (however adequate or inadequate) from an early age. They were all given or took on responsibility beyond their years. Rubin ran a bible study group as a teenager. Deanne's family accepted her in a caring leadership role although this was never voiced. Karin was exhausted by her role as "mother" but received the gratitude of her sisters and community respect. She says of time to do her school work:

I had to like really look after my sisters, seeing that everything is done. I never had any time for my schoolwork. I remember when it was exams, or with homework, I used to do everything and then go to sleep because I used to be so tired & then I would set the alarm ... for two o'clock or three o'clock in the morning, & then I would get up & start studying or do homework ... or whatever ... and then just go lie down a bit before I get up & get ready to go

It was really tough, it was really tough. I ... I sometimes feel that I really didn't have a childhood, like any other child would have ... you know ... play ... still at the age of thirteen and do silly things. I couldn't. There wasn't time for me to do that. I had to be an adult. I was actually pushed to do it. Really ...

Jasmine left home as a young teenager and took responsibility for herself. She stayed with different community members and continued her schooling. She did chores for her hosts by looking after their children in the afternoons and during holidays.

All of them belonged to a community with a strong belief system that helped them “hold on” during difficult times. Karen describes what it meant to her.

I had a strong relationship with God, I must say, and I think it's because of the fact that I needed him so much in my life ... And I think ... with that relationship ... it kept me going ... Ja it was ... Ja it was truly ... it was ... cos without that ... I don't know ... I don't think I would have made it (last line very soft).

I considered now that I had finally reached theoretical saturation. The themes that had emerged from the analysis of the data were: Emergent literacy, Coping alone, Aspirations, Disciplinary regimes, Voice, Nurture and Community resources. I could not decide on a core category, as they all appeared to be important.

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Does she specify what she means? It looks clean to me. As long as it's consistent, it's acceptable.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with the definitions used in this study (Appendix D). It continues with the discovery of a theoretical concept that gives coherence to the themes discovered in the data. The influence of the research on the researcher's positionality and the value of the GTM process is discussed briefly. This is followed by suggested areas for related research and the limitations of this study. The study ends with some thoughts on Enzo, the youngster who precipitated this research project and

5.2. Theoretical concept

Seven themes emerged from this study that gave the respondents traction in the process of becoming literate. All of them had engagement with community emergent literacy at some stage that was driven by their aspirations. Their aspirations were fed by the themes. "Coping alone" that helped them become independent and resilient; the "Disciplinary regimes" of their homes gave them structure and taught them basic life skills and non-cognitive traits like completing tasks and the value of hard work; being given a "Voice" in their family built self-confidence; the presence of one supportive adult (in the home or community) helped them feel nurtured and "Community resources" provided the social practices that offered opportunities, a vision and a sense of belonging.

Newby (2010:490) defines the final stage of coding as 'theoretical':

It is the development of a core idea that links all the codes together... we seek to explain 'why?'. In other words, the theory is causal or implies causality.

Was there now a theory that could frame and connect the themes that had emerged from the data analysis? It was a stunning discovery that there was a unifying concept – agency. These themes had given Mpume, Rubin, Deanne, Karin and Jasmine the ability to exercise choices and take advantage of opportunities. It helped them take control of their lives – both intra-personal and interpersonal – and led them to achieve their goals. They had been given agency by their homes and their community. These themes therefore could be important in achieving agency.

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You could just add 'and conclusions' – but this would affect the table of contents. If the other examiner was satisfied, leave it.

Commented [JS28]: I changed this from conclusions to theoretical ... It seemed to describe this section better

Commented [MOU29]: Move this quote 'Newby' to 'causality' to the beginning of 5.2 as this will take care of the 'conclusions' issue.

5.3. Definition of agency

“Agency refers to the thoughts and actions taken by people that express their individual power. The core challenge at the centre of the field of sociology is understanding the relationship between structure and agency. Structure refers to the complex and interconnected set of social forces, relationships, institutions and elements of social structure that work together to shape the thought, I, experiences, choices, and overall life courses of people. In contrast, agency is the power people have, to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories. Agency can take individual and collective forms”. (About education 2015).

5.4. Influence of the GTM study on the researcher’s positionality

The purpose of GTM research is “to generate or discover a theme or theory” through grounding it “*in the data from participants who have experienced the process*” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 in Creswell 2013:83). I had not believed that the data would lead to a theory, so it was a great surprise, following instructions, that it developed into a theory. I had now arriving at Neuman’s (2003:150) third order interpretation. One of the strengths of GTM is that it acknowledges the influence of the researcher on the research process and it has the power to change the researcher’s perspective. As I followed these five respondent’s voices in the data, my perceptions around them changed as did theirs of me and this account is a co-construct of our realities shaped by our experiences (Creswell, 2013:36). It had a profound influence on me as I identified with each respondent, and as I tried to interpret their voices and follow the literature I understood more about how they had been “*systematically disenfranchised*”. I recognized some of the consequences of that marginalization and the “*denial of access to sites of power*” (Cannella & Lincoln, 2011, in Denzin & Lincoln,2011:82) that has been responsible for untold suffering, socio-economic, physical, emotional and intellectual disadvantage as well as the massive loss of opportunity in their life conditions.

I have lived a more privileged life than the respondents simply by being born in a certain place in a certain time. I have become aware that there are class differences that make me feel uncomfortable and that I share some of the perceptions of a western hegemony. It is always there hidden in our social interactions. I also now understand that I am “the face of the oppressor” for many that I meet and that one cannot erase that collective history – especially as so much of our shared world is built on the class system and racism. Never the less, I also believe that in this study I have given the respondents a different perspective on their lives as they have relived them and discussed them with me.

During the process of learning the “*how to*” of GTM in this study I have become aware of power and racial issues and that self-reflection and acknowledgement of one’s positionality is vital in the GTM process. As mentioned earlier I found that it has changed some of my perceptions and limiting assumptions – and will continue to do so (if I allow it) however imperfect and slow the process. It is, after all, a process of becoming (Berik, 1996; Feldman, Bell, & Berger 2003; Nama & Swartz 2002, in Bryant & Charmaz, (2007:248).

5.5. Areas for related research

All seven themes would benefit from further research, particularly discipline and structure, and the relationship between violent punishment and the child or youngster’s relationship with the caregiver that administers the hidings or other form of violent punishment. Resilience is an area that appears to be of importance too. Given more time I would have investigated it. The high dropout rate in the schooling system (Spaull, 2015) continues to need more research.

5.6. Limitations of the study

There are limitations to this study. I am aware that although I have reached theoretical saturation, given time for deeper analysis other categories could emerge. I also interviewed Jasmine as a discriminate sample to try to find contrary data. I did not find any contrary evidence. The use of only one person for this also limits the study as it is not enough to counter or corroborate the main categories or themes. This study would need larger samples of both homogenous and discriminate interviewees to counteract possible bias and properly verify or disconfirm the categories. This was not feasible in the time available to a part-time Masters student. I also found that information from the focus groups helped confirm the relationships between the themes rather than find variations. There would need to be more focus groups too. The interviews from the second focus group moderation were deleted from my cell, by accident, by someone using it before I had completed the transcription. Fortunately, I had transcribed some of it but it was not enough and there was not time to find another focus group. This is a case study, so it is not generalizable, but it opens areas for further discourse around emergent literacy. These areas are beyond the scope of this study but could be investigated.

5.7. What happens to Enso?

In terms of this study the fact that Enso dropped out of school and was silent during the holiday programme indicates that at this stage he did not have enough “Voice” to express himself verbally and that something in his home circumstances and/or the schooling environment has

led to this situation. He is now at “much greater risk of being unskilled, having low lifetime earnings, and facing a range of personal and social troubles, including poor health, ... and crime” (Heckman, 2013:3).

Conversely Enso’s home or school offered him sufficient emergent literacy for him to become semi-literate. Much would depend on whether he has a “Nurturer” in his home or community that gives him a feeling that he is important to that person and can help him turn adversity into resilience (Heckman, 2013:3). The fact that he attended a five-day holiday programme offered by his church and was never absent points to someone in his home or community being responsible for him attending or that he himself enjoyed the programme enough to attend every day. He comes from a cultural background that could have helped him learn to “Cope alone” and together with the “Disciplinary regimes” offered him structure and taught him basic life skills. The community belief system may offer him enough of a sense of belonging, vision and hope and the “Community resources” of these communities could still help him towards agency.

5.7. Conclusions

The unearthing of the seven themes was significant as it appears from this study that cognitive drivers are vitally important in the achievement of literacy in disadvantaged communities. These themes appear to have fostered the development of agency that supported them in their efforts to become literate. The data, in this study, shows the conditions were of more importance to the respondents than the process in their becoming literate. It is important then that the methodology used when working with children from disadvantaged homes should be geared towards obtaining agency.

The current focus (from the beginning of formal schooling) on the attainment of academic skills at standards that disadvantaged children have difficulty in achieving and the lack of awareness of the possible importance of cognitive skills could be contributing to the retention rate in the Grade 12 results that continues to be of major concern to analysts (Spaull, N. 2015: Jan 6: np; Equal Education, 2017: Jan 4: np).

Commented [JS30]: Anne, I remember you saying that the thesis could not end with Enso so I added a conclusion or something else. I can no longer remember what it was. I am very muddled by the article as well. This is another reason I think the wrong thesis landed up being marked

Commented [JS31]: Should I add this last bit? I am still trying to source the publication the EE article appeared in

I have also not been able to find the Long and Nsele sources that one of the examiners says is wrong. I thought I might ring Pippa today to see if she can help me

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APPENDIX A: AN EXAMPLE OF A MEMO

“Eureka!! At last some movement. So long just plodding along with Mpume, Rubin’s & Deanne’s data - not knowing just doing - and now suddenly there is light. A framework is evolving. I am still very unsure but all the literature says trust your hunches, so I am going with it. Pushing through all the categories something else is coming into play. It seems to me to be “Aspirations” that pushes people towards achievement of what they strongly desire. The other categories are suddenly becoming properties. Disciplinary regimes as a property plays a part as the means of achieving these goals can be beneficial to the person and society or not – like turning to crime to achieve them. Culture plays a part in Disciplinary regimes too. Foucault has a lot to say on Discipline – I can start reading now. “Schooling” both functional and dysfunctional is a part of it and popular and other discourses comes into it with current discussions. “Significant relationships” play a part as do the “Belief systems” in the family. “Apartheid” plays a large role because it has determined the address of disadvantaged peoples and all the other structures in people’s lives like money, lack of education etc. keep people stuck with their address. The properties of “Aspirations” for Jayden are “Working family” as this pushed him into doing things on his own and making decisions about his life and what he wanted from a young age as well as “Significant relationships” that kept him feeling connected to his grandmother and influenced by her and her literate family. Emergent literacy is difficult. I am not sure if I can put it as an aspiration. On the other hand, the stimulation offered by books for instance can open the person’s world to aspirations, dreams etc as was the case for Mpume Zwane. Emergent literacy activities can on the other hand be a deterrent if forced or not handled well as in a dysfunctional school or for children with social, emotional, learning difficulties (or FAZD for instance). Another property of aspirations I think is “Comfort seeking devices” like drugs, alcohol or even something like reading – if it prevents the person from being motivated enough to pursue the ambition it can prevent the reaching of goals. Perhaps there are also popular discourses for Aspirations? AND DONT FORGET THAT THERE MAY BE OTHER MORE SIGNIFICANT CATEGORIES WAITING TO BE FOUND!! Did dreams and goals provide the motivation to hang in despite such odds? What did they see in their heads? What did they think about when they made the decisions to focus on their aspirations? Why did this give them the focus to follow their dreams and others - who also had aspirations - did not? What made them persevere?”

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW FOR COMPARATIVE SAMPLING

Interview protocol

Project: Emergent literacy

Time of interview:

Date:

Venue:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Description of project:

The problem to which I would like to add researched knowledge through my master's study is: "Why do so many children drop out of school between Grade 1 and Std 9"? There are many possible reasons for this critical situation, so I have chosen one of the possible causes – the status of emergent literacy in the home. My focusing question in this grounded theory method (GTM) study is: What emergent literacy activities do selected socio-economically disadvantaged parents engage in with their children?

Briefing:

Read and discuss the Information sheet and the Consent form. Sign consent form.

Request permission for a photograph.

It is important for me that you understand that I am learning a lot of new things as I study and one of them is how to interview people and find out what they think rather than what I think about how young children learn to read and write. I have to learn to listen well to you and in one of my study books someone wrote this, and I think it explains what I want to say better than I can.

I don't want you to tell me what you think I want to know. "I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them as I try to find out why so many people fall out of school or don't go to school. Will you become my teacher and help me understand your life"? Spradley in Kvale & Brinkman (1979:34).

Because of the course, you know some of my history and I know some of yours. I would like to start by you telling me more about your life as a young child as well as about your life as you grew older and got to where you are now.

Interview questions	Prompts	Reason for question
Would you like to tell me about yourself and your life?		Allowing the interviewee to relax and “tell me about the important things in his or her life.
What do you remember about your parents and your home before you went to school?	First memory? What did daily? Creche / Gr R? School? Position in family? Important adults or siblings?	The question is open ended and broad so as to build confidence and to obtain information that is important in the development of emergent literacy like imaginative play and the use of books. This question also allows me to discover relevant psychosocial elements as they are also significant in emergent literacy.
What do you remember about learning to read and write?	How learnt to read? When learnt to read?	This question will help me explore the literacy history.

Notes:

Debrief:

I have no further questions. Is there anything else you would like to bring up, or ask about before we finish the interview? How was the experience of being interviewed for you? Thank you for sharing yourself and your interesting journey through your life with me. I found the way you

Quick impressions after interview:

(Feelings, thoughts, hunches and learning's (Social context and emotional tone). Describe what happened and reflect on it as well as personal reflections, insights, ideas, confusions, –initial interpretations and breakthroughs):

Reflect:

During interview - was each question and interruption necessary and productive?
Am I giving space to the participant to really tell their story"? Where is the story line?
Morse, 2007 in Bryant & Charmaz, (2007:230)

INTERVIEW 2: Rubin Buys

Date: 5 July 2014

Feedback from last interview:

Give interviewee a copy of the amended document or where relevant read it. Record and discuss as relevant. Photograph

Thank you for spending this time with me. I enjoyed our last interview and am glad you now have an opportunity to read through it at home so if there is anything that makes you uncomfortable you can tell me about it when we meet next and I will erase it.

I also have a few more questions to clarify some of the things you told me in our last interview.

Interview questions	Prompts	Reason for question
Would you tell me a little more about your Grandmother? What is she like as a person? You mention over protective of you. What else?	Warm / distant? Loving? Strict / Easy going? Organised? / disorganised? Caring? Strong willed? Responsible? Relationship with her?	The influence of a significant relationship on emergent literacy and aspirations could be important so I am exploring her personality and the relationship from his perspective.
When I asked you about help with your homework at home you said "everyone was too busy with their own stuff? What were they doing?	Daily routines? When they came home what happened first?	I have a hunch that his Grandmother is highly organised and has set in place strict routines and tasks that brings structure to the family. In this question, I am probing to see if this is so.
You said you did your homework at school and at the library so you had only 3 subjects for home because "how are you going to do all that homework if you also have your chores at home and your stuff at home that you must do if you don't want to be tired the next day and stuff like that", Please will you tell me a bit more about those chores and the other stuff.	First chore when got home? Routine chores? Bible study prep? Youth club? Geelhoutboom? Zenzele?	This question continues to try to establish the routines as well as his other commitments at home.

Why did you obey our Grandmother even though she was not there by not "going out to the street before she gets back home?	"If she catches me"? Consequences? Other consequences?	This question will help me discover how his Grandmother disciplined him. Discipline is an important property in this thesis.
Why did you and your friends choose to do all your homework at school and at the library without any pushing or guidance from adults?		As above.
What do you think helped you through the difficult times in your life?		I am again asking a question to discover if there were aspirations.

Notes:

Debriefing:

Is there anything you would like to bring up that you think I have missed?

Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with me. I am so grateful for the time you have given me and for helping me see your life from your perspective.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Theoretical sampling instrument

SAMPLING QUESTIONS	PROMPTS	REASON FOR QUESTION
I would be grateful if each of you would tell me very quickly about who you are what you enjoy		Help people feel relaxed and get to know each other.
Did you go to school and when did you stop school?		Checking when they stopped their schooling.
What was your home like when you were growing up? Was it a home where the children were left to do their own things and things happened when people felt like it or was it a home that was very structured, so things had to be done at the right time and there was trouble if things were not done?	Responsibilities as child? Left to do own thing? Parents strict or not? Who?	Looking at regulation in the home to see if and how they were disciplined.
Were you given responsibilities in your home or not? What were they?	Did you all do the same tasks? Were they different from other children? Different from brother sisters? Looking after children or helping adults? In home or religious environment or school?	Wish to find out if they were given extra responsibilities in home that gave them a voice.
Were there any pictures or ideas in your head or things you said to yourself to help you get from where you were as a child to where you are now?		Checking aspirations.
Was there anyone in your home or community who helped you and made you feel special?		Assessing nurture.

APPENDIX D: WORKING DEFINITIONS

D.1 Definitions of Emergent Literacy Terms:

“The term ‘emergent’ denotes the developmental process of literacy acquisition and recognizes numerous forms of early literacy behaviour. While frequently discussed in the research we reviewed, these early literacy behaviours (or areas of knowledge) are characterized by terms that are defined in different ways by different authors. The following definitions of emergent literacy terms represent the most commonly used meanings of those terms, and will facilitate understanding of the review of emergent literacy.

- Conventional literacy: reading, writing, and spelling of text in a conventional manner.
- Conventions of print: knowledge of the semantic and visual structure of text.
- Purpose of print: knowledge that words convey a message separate from pictures or oral language.
- Functions of print: awareness of the uses of print from specific (e.g., making shopping lists, reading street signs, looking up information) to general (e.g., acquiring knowledge, conveying instructions, maintaining relationships).
- Phonological awareness: conscious ability to detect and manipulate sound (e.g., move, combine, and delete), access to sound structure of language, awareness of sounds in spoken words in contrast to written words (Gunn et al, 2004:3

D.2 The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of 2012:

Defines emergent literacy as: “Refer(ing) to children’s growing knowledge of the printed word. Children see print and begin to understand its purpose. They learn about books and stories by being read to by adults or older children. They may begin to try and write their names using their own ideas about spelling (invented spelling or emergent spelling) and they may begin to pretend to read books. These behaviours all point to their growing literacy knowledge – emergent literacy (DoE, 2012:163).

D.3 Voice:

There are many definitions of voice as it applies to different genres. The definitions used in this study apply to “voice” as it is used in qualitative research and critical race theory.

Commented [33]:
Probably enough to reference the Chapman article. Put it into your reference list.

D.4 Critical race theory:

A radical movement within jurisprudence that traces its origin to a conference held in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1989. Sometimes called outsider jurisprudence, it sets out to challenge the conventional liberal approach to civil rights issues, in particular the notion that there can be a colour-blind view of social justice. CRT regards the privileged position occupied by mostly White, middle-class academics as a major obstacle to a comprehensive exposure of the racism that is seen to permeate the law, its rules, concepts, and institutions. Adherents generally argue that only those who have themselves suffered the indignity and injustice of discrimination can be the authentic voices of marginalized racial minorities. The law's formal constructs reproduce, it is claimed, the reality of a privileged male White elite, whose culture, way of life, attitudes, and norms constitute the prevailing "neutrality" of the law (A dictionary of law. <http://www.oxfordindex.oup.com> [22 May 2016])

APPENDIX E: EXAMPLE OF MEMO FOR THEORETICAL SAMPLING

MEMO 1: OCT 9 THEORETICAL SAMPLING

Questions and directions for theoretical sampling

I began with the coding of the second and third interviewees data first as a computer crash meant I lost the first interviewee Evelyn's data for a period. When I recovered it I was able to use it as part of the theoretical sampling. I used Corbin & Strauss' method to code the data. I tried Lempert and Urganhart's suggestions first but found the Corbin and Strauss method the most helpful

There were a number of concepts that ran through Fagen and Genie's data. After coding and constant comparison of Fagen and Genies data the possible categories were:

Emergent literacy: 'Wow it seemed like heaven'

Coping alone: 'Doing it on your own'

Significant others: 'a strict person but also loving'

Disciplinary regimes: 'that's where the strictness came in'

Emotional issues: 'back stuffies'

I began the study with Emergent literacy as my main theme. But following the data emergent literacy became a property or dimension because it did not play a large role in becoming literate for any of the participants. All of them learnt to read and write despite lack of exposure to many of the accepted emergent literacy activities like sharing books with adults, using drawing materials, playing with cognitively stimulating toys and discussions that involved thinking, talking and listening. There were many questions that needed to be answered by the data but there were two main questions at that stage:

Why did Fagen and Genie feel they had done things on their own?

Why had they managed to become literate despite the lack of exposure to many of the researched literacy environments and no encouragement at all from adults?

Books were the only activities that both engaged in but they were largely peripheral as although Fagens mother bought him some Disney books from time to time when he was small no one shared them with him and Genie was exposed to books and read

to by a farmer's wife when she was 11. She had not attended school so this was the first time she had experienced books. So, they both had books modelled in some form. Fagen as gifts given him by his mother (only once) and his grandmother had some books in the house and he witnessed his high school aunt doing her homework every afternoon. Genie could come up to the farm house to listen to stories being read to the farmer's children and was allowed to take books home. This stimulated a desire to learn to read. There were also other labourer's children on the farm attending school and she saw them reading and this also made her want to read. Fagen attended a crèche from 3 years old and was exposed to emergent literacy activities which included the reading of stories and drawing

APPENDIX F: INFORMATION SHEET FOR FOCUS GROUPS

INFORMATION SHEET

I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT.

IT IS IMPORTANT HOWEVER THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM TRYING TO FIND OUT SO THAT YOU CAN DECIDE WHETHER TO BECOME INVOLVED OR NOT.

I am studying for my master's degree at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town. To do this I must investigate (research) something that I think is a problem. I want to find out more about how children become ready to learn to read and write at home before they go to "big" school and during the first years of learning to read and write at school. This is called emergent literacy.

You can help me by allowing me to interview you and ask you questions about how you and your children (or the children around you) learnt to read and write. I would like to know:

1. What you think about your own experiences as a young child of learning to or not learning to read and write at home and at school then,
2. A little about your home as you grew up.

The interview will take about an hour and I will need another hour sometime to give you feedback on what I have written. I will also need to take some photographs of the interview and record what you say on my cell phone so that I can write it down later.

Anything you tell me will be confidential. I will always show you what I have written and if there is anything that I have written that you do not like I will take it out. If you give me permission to record what we say you can tell me if you want me to stop recording whilst you are talking. If you want to stop being involved in this project you may do so at any time. When I write about you, you may choose another name for yourself if you wish to do so.

It is important to the University and to me that your rights are protected and that you understand that a lot of what I write will be about how you and your children (or the children around you) learnt and are learning to read and write. You also need to know that a lot of what I write will be about what you think because my research will be based on the thoughts and experiences of all the people that I interview. You will also need to sign to give me permission to interview you.

You already have my cell number, so you can contact me at any time if you have any questions about this project. If there is a question I cannot answer we will contact Anne Hill, my Supervisor at the University.

I look forward to working with you if you choose to participate in this research project.

Thank you,

Jenny Stead