

## CHAPTER 6:

### THEME 3: TEACHERS' DEMONSTRATED ASSET-BASED COMPETENCIES

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

---

In the preceding chapter, I focused on the second theme, namely *teachers addressing barriers resourcefully*. In this chapter I focus on the third theme: *teachers' asset-based competencies*. The third theme addresses the secondary research question: *Which asset-based competencies are demonstrated when teachers implement the asset-based approach for psychosocial support?* This theme includes asset-based competencies that were demonstrated by participating teachers during the planning, implementation and monitoring of their asset-based initiatives. In the first section of the chapter, I present the theme by providing inclusion and exclusion indicators for each of the subthemes and categories (see Table 6.1 for a summary of the subthemes, categories, inclusion indicators and exclusion indicators underpinned by this theme). I use participants' verbatim quotations, visual data and extracts from my research journal to substantiate and enrich the results of the current study. In the second section of the chapter, I consider this result by expanding on similar and contradictory findings and silences in existing literature. Lastly, I present insight in teachers' asset-based competencies. I present positive psychology states as building blocks for positive identity formation and discuss the dynamic interplay between asset-based competencies within the framework of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002). Figure 6.1 provides a schematic presentation of the process that was followed in order to generate insight in teachers' asset-based competencies.

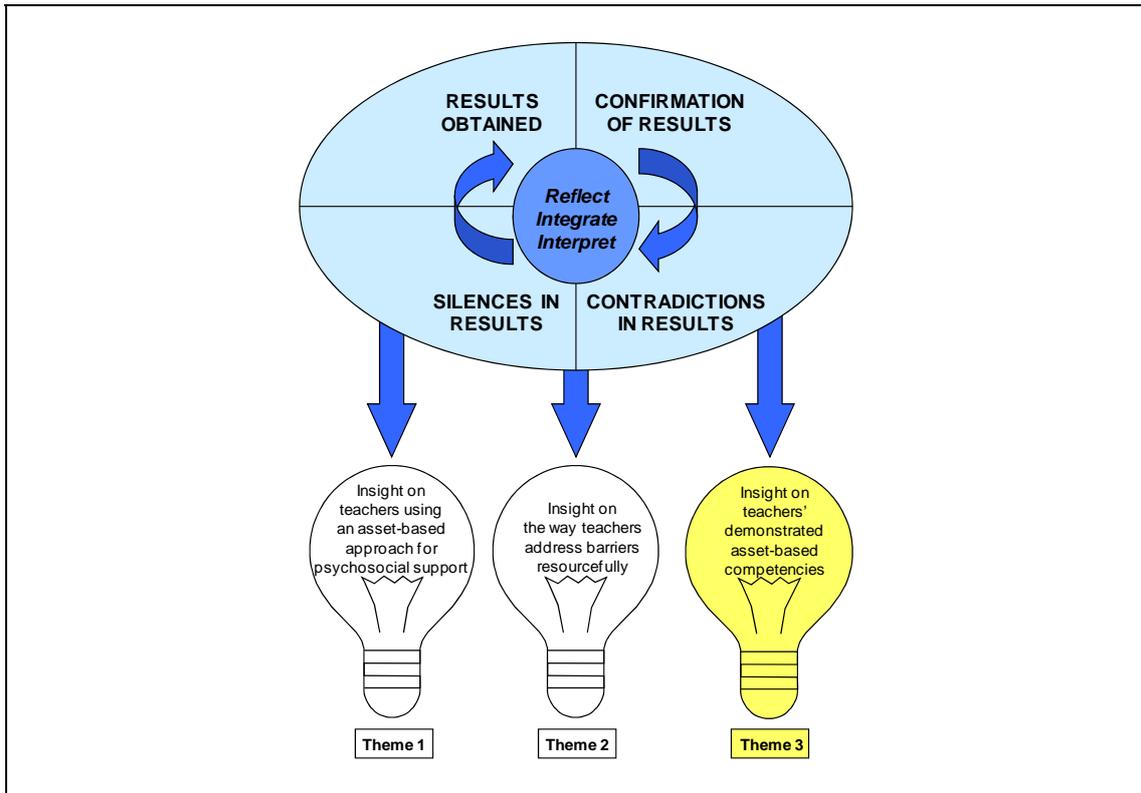


Figure 6.1: A schematic presentation of the process that was followed in order to generate insight in teachers' asset-based competencies.

Table 6.1: Summary of Theme 3’s subthemes, categories, inclusion indicators and exclusion indicators.

<b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Teachers’ demonstrated asset-based competencies</b> <i>We realised that we are capable and did it</i> (School 2, Participant 6, Line 370).		
Subthemes and categories	Inclusion indicators	Exclusion indicators
<b>Subtheme 3.1:</b> <b>Positive identity formation as outcome of asset-based intervention</b>	This subtheme focuses on participating teachers’ positive identity formation. Identity formation refers to a discovery process where teachers generated an understanding of the way they think about themselves, view themselves, feel about themselves and understand themselves to be (Ebersöhn, 2006c). Positive identity formation therefore refers to the constructive manner in which the teachers formed an identity based on positive characteristics or traits (each indicating a category): personal growth and reflective thinking; commitment; optimism; accomplishment and pride; feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Personal growth and reflective thinking	This category includes data related to the participating teachers’ ability to reflect back on their continuous personal development, openness to new learning experiences and acquired skills, and their feeling of increased effectiveness and knowledge (Keyes & Lopez, 2005).	This category excludes references that do not refer to participating teachers’ personal growth and reflective thinking during the process of planning, implementing and monitoring their asset-based initiatives.
<b>Category 2:</b> Commitment	This category includes data related to participating teachers’ dedication, motivation, drive and perseverance for following through on their goals with regard to the initiated asset-based projects (Roos & Temane, 2007).	This category excludes references that do not refer to participating teachers’ commitment about the planning, implementation and monitoring of their asset-based initiatives.
<b>Category 3:</b> Optimism	This category includes data related to participating teachers’ optimism and ability to remain cheerful in achieving their goals, despite challenges that they encountered in their school-community contexts (Carver & Scheier, 2005; MacFarlane, 1998). For the purpose of this study, <i>optimism</i> is indicated by participating teachers’ positive thinking; focus on solutions and ability to reframe challenges in a positive light.	This category excludes references that do not refer to participating teachers’ observed optimism about the planning, implementation and monitoring of their asset-based initiatives.

<b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies</b> <i>We realised that we are capable and did it</i> (School 2, Participant 6, Line 370).		
<b>Subthemes and categories</b>	<b>Inclusion indicators</b>	<b>Exclusion indicators</b>
<b>Category 4:</b> Pride in accomplishments	This category includes data related to participating teachers' experience of success, achievements, and pride in making a difference in their school-community contexts through the outcomes of their asset-based initiatives (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton cited in Hewitt, 2005).	This category excludes references that do not refer to participating teachers' experience of success and feelings of pride about outcomes achieved through their asset-based initiatives.
<b>Category 5:</b> Feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence	This category includes data related to participating teachers' affirmative relationship to themselves as evident in feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence about their skills, knowledge and capacities in planning, implementing and managing their asset-based initiatives (Hewitt, 2005, MacFarlane, 1998).	This category excludes references that do not refer to participating teachers' feelings of competence and self-confidence during the planning, implementation and monitoring of their asset-based initiatives.
<b>Subtheme 3.2:</b> <b>Group effectiveness skills gained through the asset-based intervention</b>	This subtheme focuses on the abilities and skills teachers demonstrated to function effectively in a group (Ebersöhn, 2006c). This subtheme is underpinned by the following categories: <i>group communication skills, group roles and responsibilities, and positive group relations.</i>	
<b>Category 1:</b> Group communication skills	This category includes data related to participating teachers' interpersonal skills, which is critical for effective daily living (Egan, 2002). For the purpose of this study, this category refers to the ability of teachers to communicate effectively within their asset-based groups, which entails their ability to share their ideas, insights and knowledge openly, but also to learn from each other during the process of regular group consultations, meetings and discussions.	This category excludes references of teachers' group communication skills outside the context of the planning, implementation and monitoring of their asset-based initiatives.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies</b> <i>We realised that we are capable and did it</i> (School 2, Participant 6, Line 370).</p>		
Subthemes and categories	Inclusion indicators	Exclusion indicators
<p><b>Category 2:</b> Group roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>This category includes data related to participating teachers' ability to adapt effectively to both shared and individual roles and responsibilities within a group (Turner, Barling &amp; Zacharatos, 2005). The following subcategories underpin this category: a) shared responsibility in reaching goals and b) individual roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>This category excludes data that does not refer to teachers' roles and responsibilities within their specific asset-based groups.</p>
	<p>a) <i>Shared roles and responsibility in reaching goals</i> This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers' ability to cooperate effectively in a group and adopt shared responsibility and ownership in reaching group goals.</p>	<p>This subcategory excludes data that does not refer to teachers' ability to work cooperatively by means of shared roles, responsibilities and ownership within the context of their asset-based groups.</p>
	<p>b) <i>Individual roles and responsibilities</i> This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers' ability to fulfil effectively independent roles and responsibilities within their asset-based groups.</p>	<p>This subcategory excludes data that does not refer to teachers' independent roles and responsibilities as individual group members within the context of teachers' asset-based groups.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies</b> <i>We realised that we are capable and did it</i> (School 2, Participant 6, Line 370).</p>		
Subthemes and categories	Inclusion indicators	Exclusion indicators
<p><b>Category 3:</b> Positive group relations</p>	<p>This category includes data related to participating teachers' social orientation in building and engaging in positive group relations and deriving optimal benefit from group interaction (Keys and Lopez, 2005; MacFarlane, 1998). For the purpose of this study, <i>positive group relations</i> are underpinned by participating teachers' ability to build positive interpersonal relationships and contribute to enhanced group cohesion. Other indicators include a sense of unity, sense of belonging to a group, sense of togetherness, team spirit, affection, empathy and encouragement within the group.</p>	<p>This category excludes data that refers to participating teachers' positive group relations outside their specific group context.</p>
<p><b>Subtheme 3.3:</b> <b>Management skills following asset-based intervention</b></p>	<p>This subtheme focuses on competencies and skills teachers demonstrated to ensure that they accomplish their vision and functioning efficiently by ensuring that structures are in place and processes contained so that their asset-based initiatives could function effectively (Swart &amp; Pettipher, 2001). This subtheme is underpinned by the following categories: <i>goal-setting skills; problem-solving skills; networking skills; leadership skills; and agency towards pastoral support and care.</i></p>	
<p><b>Category 1:</b> Goal-setting and monitoring skills</p>	<p>This category includes data related to participating teachers' ability to plan goals, direct their behaviour to reach goals, monitor progress made on goals and revise goals as new information becomes available (Locke, 2005). The following subcategories underpin this category: a) <i>goal-setting and planning</i> and b) <i>monitoring and revising goals.</i></p>	<p>This category excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' ability to set and monitor goals within the context of their asset-based initiatives.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies</b> <i>We realised that we are capable and did it</i> (School 2, Participant 6, Line 370).</p>		
Subthemes and categories	Inclusion indicators	Exclusion indicators
	<p>a) <i>Goal-setting and planning</i> This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers' ability to set and plan goals and direct their behaviour accordingly.</p>	This subcategory excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' ability to set and plan goals within the context of their asset-based initiatives.
	<p>b) <i>Monitoring and revising goals</i> This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers' ability to monitor the progress made with regard to what they have achieved and what they still need to achieve, goals and to revise their goals as new information becomes available.</p>	This subcategory excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' ability to monitor and revise their goals within the context of their asset-based initiatives.
<p><b>Category 2:</b> Problem-solving skills</p>	This category includes data related to participating teachers' ability to solve problems encountered in their school-community contexts effectively (Snyder, Rand & Signon, 2005). For the purpose of this study, participating teachers' ability to make connections and links between different facts; look for future possibilities; and generate alternative ways of reaching goals indicates problem-solving skills.	This category excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' problem-solving skills within the context of their asset-based initiatives.
<p><b>Category 3:</b> Networking skills</p>	This category includes data related to participating teachers' ability to establish collaborative partnerships with different role-players who work together towards providing care and support within the school-community contexts (Swart & Pettipher, 2001).	This category excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' networking skills in establishing collaborative partnerships with various role-players with the aim of providing care and support in the school-community contexts.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Theme 3:</b> <b>Teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies</b> <i>We realised that we are capable and did it</i> (School 2, Participant 6, Line 370).</p>		
Subthemes and categories	Inclusion indicators	Exclusion indicators
<p><b>Category 4:</b> Leadership skills</p>	<p>This category includes data related to participating teachers' observed leadership capacities, which can be viewed as the competency to create a shared vision that can form a collective future and provide a sense of direction (Kilpatrick <i>et al.</i>, 2002; Senge, Kleiner &amp; Roberts, 1999). For the purpose of this study, leadership skills are underpinned by the following subcategories: a) <i>facilitation skills</i> and b) <i>motivation skills</i>.</p>	<p>This category excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' leadership skills within the context of their asset-based initiatives.</p>
	<p>a) <i>Facilitation skills</i> This subcategory includes data related to teachers' ability to facilitate participation and involvement of individuals and/or organisations in order to reach their asset-based goals in an effective manner (Rees, 2001; Kinlaw, 1993).</p>	<p>This subcategory excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' ability to facilitate participation of individuals and/or organisations to reach goals in an effective manner within the context of their asset-based initiatives.</p>
	<p>b) <i>Motivation skills</i> This subcategory includes data related to participating teachers' ability to motivate, encourage and inspire others to realise potential advantages for themselves and others so that individuals could justify their participation in asset-based initiatives (Ebersöhn, 2006c).</p>	<p>This subcategory excludes data that does not refer to participating teachers' motivation skills in inspiring others to stay committed in their participation in asset-based initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Category 5:</b> Agency towards pastoral support and care</p>	<p>This category includes data related to participating teachers' increased awareness as well as application of their role as agents towards pastoral support and care within their school-community contexts (Department of Education, 2000a).</p>	<p>This category excludes references to data that does not refer to participating teachers' increased awareness and/or application of their role as agents towards pastoral support and care within their school-community contexts.</p>

## 6.2 SUBTHEME 3.1: POSITIVE IDENTITY FORMATION

---

This subtheme focuses on teachers' journey towards *positive identity formation*, a dynamic process in which people obtain answers on how they think and feel about themselves and understand themselves to be (Ebersöhn, 2006c). This subtheme is underpinned by the following categories: 6.2.1) personal growth and reflective thinking; 6.2.2) commitment; 6.2.3) optimism; 6.2.4) accomplishment and pride; and 6.2.5) feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence.

### 6.2.1 Category 1: Personal growth and reflective thinking

---

Teachers demonstrated the ability to reflect on their personal growth during the process of planning, implementing and managing their asset-based initiatives. The following verbatim quotations illustrate teachers' renewed views and thinking about the world:

*Our minds were triggered* (School 4, Participant 18, Line 254).

*... it shows that you're thinking differently* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 256-257).

*It came to a point where now our eyes became bigger, we started to see things clearer* (School 2 – PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 561).

Teachers reflected on their learning experience and growth concerning the importance of being part of a group:

*What we have learnt indirectly or directly is that it is possible to move on in life if you are in a group than as an individual. It's possible in life that your ideas can be shaped in a group than saying you can shape it yourself as an individual* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 112-115).

*I learnt to work together ... that is what I learnt, the importance of working as a group* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 187-192).

They also reflected on their growth with regard to realising alternative ways of being a teacher and adopting a pastoral role (see 6.3.5, subtheme 3.3, category 5, for teachers as agents for pastoral support and care) in their school-community contexts:

*One other thing I've learnt is that as educators is that it is possible that we can go an extra mile helping other people out there as long as we have ideas and as long as we communicate and as long as we form groups* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 123-127).

*As a teacher you think that you are only there for academic purposes, but what I learnt is that there are people out there who need help, just to go out and find out what you can do for these people, so that maybe at the end they can also benefit from whatever* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 247-250).

Within the context of teachers' renewed awareness of alternative ways of being a teacher, they reflected on their acquired capacities, knowledge and skills in being able to support vulnerable and needy individuals in their school-community contexts:

*What I have learnt from this project ... that one of working with people who are affected because sometimes if you have to explain things, it becomes difficult for them to understand ... So I think it was very interesting for me to work with such people, even to explain some of the things and trying to make them understand why do we have to have projects in around the community* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 176-183).

*The workshops, as I've already mentioned it, had to do with the question of empowerment and being made aware of what is happening around the community because sometimes you maybe just in limbo, just going through life but because you came and you talked about how we can improve or make this calf to become a cow and then skilled us, we became skilled on how to help our communities ...* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 382-394).

*The thing that I can say is that I can be able to support another person or maybe put myself in another person's shoes, that is what I can say – I saw that as my strength* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 448-449).

*The most important thing that I gained out of the whole experience is to love unconditionally, whether the kid has shoes or has no jersey, or he is struggling at home, he will still be able to put a smile on my face* (School 3, Participant 14, Line 577 – 550).

*I would like to thank you, if we had not met people of your caliber maybe our knowledge*

*would never have surfaced it would have remained in our hearts – we wouldn't be able to share anything with anybody* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 594-596).

Their alledged openness to new learning experiences and growth is supported by the name that teachers in School 1 gave their asset-based group:

*Our name: Masizakheni Family Group – Let us build ourselves* (School 1, Participant 3, Line 999-1000).

One of the teachers in School 4 also reflected on the growth within their school:

*... we are so learner centred that a lot of educators are now studying further especially in remedial teaching to come and plough back into the school. So that's also another form of growth that is taking place* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 226-249).

It seems as if teachers in all four schools reported insight and reflective thinking with regard to their personal growth and development during the process of planning, implementing and monitoring asset-based initiatives. Teachers reflected on their learning experiences, their acquired capacities and skills and subsequent personal development that took place during this process. They reflected on their renewed realisation of how important teamwork is, their empathy for others, how their perspectives were challenged, their enhanced feeling of enablement about their newly acquired knowledge as well as their fresh awareness of their inherent strengths and capacities for supporting and caring for others.

### **6.2.2 Category 2: Commitment**

---

Teachers in all four schools seemed to demonstrate dedication, motivation, drive and perseverance in following through on their vision and goals related to asset-based initiatives, as evident in the following verbatim quotations:

*... it's just perseverance* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 255).

*Yes, we are not going to stop* (School 1, Participant 2, Line 45).

*We wish to continue ... we still have that vision ...* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 351-

356).

*Yes, we stay motivated, we don't have a choice* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 391).

*... and I think we ourselves are committed, as individuals* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 199-200).

Teachers elaborated on reasons for their commitment in following through on their asset-based initiatives:

*What drove me in all this is love and the thought of seeing somebody going up and up irrespective of who you are, irrespective of your status and your level of education and everything, just the thought that everybody has potential, if somebody out there can reach out, the person can move to the next level and become better. It's the drive inside – most of the time I would like to see people better than what they were yesterday and better than what I am – that is what was driving me* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 281-288).

*... it made us to persevere in whatever we are doing, it also made us have the passion of helping especially the poverty stricken families that we are working with here in this community. So it is really paining to see a child not wearing shoes in winter and so on – some coming here you can see they are from poverty, you can see that they are not properly fed because of their physique, their uniform is in tatters and that pains you and gives you the motivation to help. And also, the workshops, the way we were doing these things in the workshops also helped us to get the necessary strength to carry on* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 343-351).

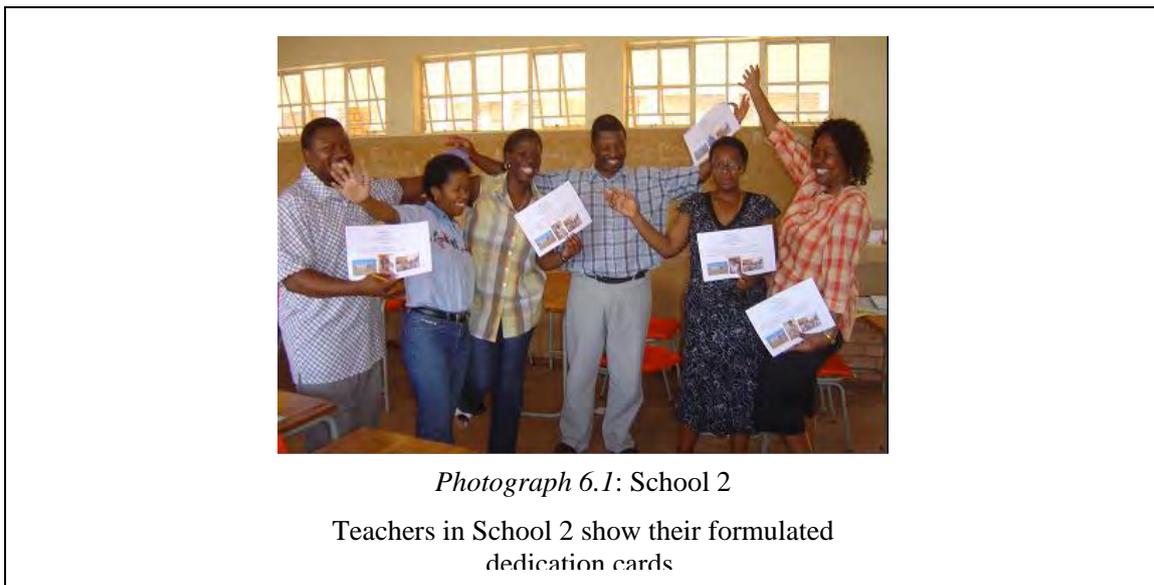
One of the teachers in School 2 indicated that individual group members assisted him to stay committed and to follow through on their asset-based projects:

*It's nice to work with people who are self motivated, as a co-ordinator they will always pinch me, "when do we meet, when do we meet, time is moving" it's worse with X because she will just move up from her office down, "when do we meet" I will then say we meet tomorrow, she will ask what time. It is nice working with such people, people who will push you and in the process, I must indicate that it is very nice ...* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 894-900).

The following visual data (figure 6.2 and photograph 6.1) further illustrate teachers' dedication towards their asset-based projects, as portrayed in dedication cards they created as part of the fifth intervention session (see 3.3.3).



Figure 6.2: An example of a dedication card of one of the teachers in School 1 that was created during intervention session 5.



Photograph 6.1: School 2  
Teachers in School 2 show their formulated  
dedication cards

In addition, extracts like the following from my research journal act as support for teachers' demonstrated commitment towards their asset-based initiatives:

*The teachers really showed so much dedication and commitment in following through on their projects* (Research journal, 10 August 2005).

In some instances, these dedication cards are still in teachers' offices, as reminder of their dedication and commitment towards their asset-based projects, as evident in the following observation note in my research journal:

*After several visits, X (School 1) and X (School 2)'s dedication cards are still on their walls in their offices. When asked X about it, she smiled and said she is still committed to her project* (Research journal, 10 October 2007).

It seems that teachers displayed commitment and determination toward making a difference in people's lives. They reflected on their perseverance in following through on their goal, vision and passion to build and support their schools and communities.

### 6.2.3 Category 3: Optimism

---

Teachers seemingly remained optimistic about achieving their goals, despite the challenges that they encountered in their school-community contexts. The following verbatim quotations illustrate teachers' observed optimism in achieving results even when confronted with adversity, but also their apparent ability to positively reframe challenges:

*I can do it irrespective of financial constraints or not but with the little knowledge I am able to try things that can assist other people – I can do it* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 569-572).

*After having shared all the problems that we are encountering in this area here – nothing will be impossible for us to achieve* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 610-612).

Teachers' optimism seemed evident through their apparent positive outlook on the future as well as their focus on solutions and possibilities:

*... we are going to convince the principal* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 8-9).

*So we are still moving forward ...* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 710-711).

*... it will not be a garden anymore, it will be a field* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 807-808).

*But what I think is, we can still work you know* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 380).

*That is possible ...* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 388).

*I think it can materialise ...* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 480-488).

*I think that will make the school to be the best school* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 526).

*... you see the asset-based thing that we making use of* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 67).

It therefore seems that teachers were optimistic in achieving their goals, despite the challenges and obstacles that came their way. They reframed their challenges in an optimistic light and made use of optimistic thinking. Teachers were able to envision positive outcomes and believed that they could not be hindered in achieving their goals. They focused on possibilities and solutions, rather than needs and problems.

#### **6.2.4 Category 4: Pride in their accomplishments**

---

Teachers experienced success and demonstrated feelings of pride in making a difference in their schools and communities through the outcomes of their asset-based initiatives, as indicated by the following verbatim quotations:

*We know as teachers that what we are doing, we are achieving, we know our achievements* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 766-768).

*So we managed so much* (School 3 – PE Seminar, Participant 21, Line 319).

*I'm looking at our posters of planning, and I'm actually so glad that we've almost covered everything, I'm looking at it. In respect of first aid, each class has got a first aid kit, we buy your savlon, your cotton wool, your plasters, there's just growth and improvement* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 396-398).



The following verbatim quotations illustrate teachers' pride in their vegetable gardens:

*... our garden is very productive and as a result we managed to get an award. We were called, the Education Department went around all schools and it discovered that there are 52 schools that are active in doing gardening, we were among those 52 schools and then there was a short listing, fortunately we received an award* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 256-161).

*I think we are succeeding, we've got a beautiful garden there at the back, we've planted various vegetables, carrots, spinach and so on* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 15-17).

*You must go and see, Mrs X doesn't even have to comment, you must go and see ...* (referring to their vegetable garden) (School 4, Participant 18, Line 93-94).

*Just something I want to add, we won a competition, schools category, there's our garden, we won it* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 190-191).

*I'm proud of the fact that the community drives past, they always complement us on the garden and the fact that the children ..., most of the children doesn't get ... , the needy children don't get food at home and each day we can give them a meal* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 285-288).

*Yes, every year we can show you what has happened. We've been in competitions and we doing really well* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 305-306).

In addition, the following visual data (photographs 6.2-6.5) illustrates teachers' accomplishment and achievements with regard to their vegetable gardens:



*Photograph 6.2: School 1*

Teachers in School 1 proudly show newspaper articles that was published in their local newspaper on the success of their vegetable garden and other asset-based initiatives (see Addendum N and O to view the full



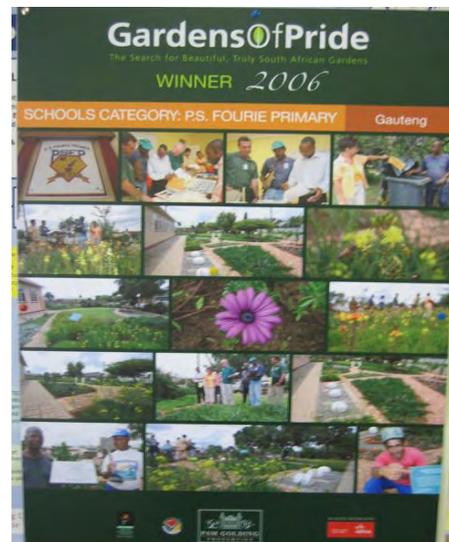
*Photograph 6.3: School 2*

The team leader of the vegetable garden initiative in School 2 shows the success of their newly initiated vegetable garden.



*Photograph 6.4: School 4*

Teachers in School 4 show their vegetable garden.



*Photograph 6.5: School 4*

A poster to indicate their achievement as the winner of the schools category *Garden of Pride* award in 2006.

Furthermore, the following extract from my research journal also supports my observation of teachers' sense of pride about their vegetable garden:

*They (School 4) were so proud and enthusiastic ... Although it was way past the time that we said the focus group would end, they still took time to show me their vegetable garden (Research journal, 10 September 2008).*

Teachers in School 2 also referred to the success of their beadwork project:

*The beadwork project ... I think it worked very well (School 2, Participant 10, Line 199-200).*

Teachers indicated pride about providing emotional and social support to individuals in their school-community contexts:

*I would like to emphasise that the support group is working because the uncle of one of the one he came this morning to thank the support group for the good work that they are doing (School 1, Participant 7, Line 496-498).*

*We managed to support families, socially, emotionally ... (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 119-120).*

Teachers in Schools 3 and 4 showed pride in the way they managed to support children in their schools:

*About the projects that we've been doing I feel very proud of realising that the potential that was unleashed within the kids themselves even though they may be suffering from HIV/AIDS, even though they may be affected by HIV/AIDS, but there is something else that is within them, that they can do better than others ... (School 3, Participant 13, Line 428-433).*

*So it is really something to come and have a look at and take it on camera, just to believe the wonders she's doing with those children (School 4, Participant 17, Line 50-52).*

*I feel proud of the fact that more learners are achieving now, they're experiencing success, in the past maybe they would get there, now they're experiencing, each and every learner is experiencing success (School 4, Participant 16, Line 274-277).*

*I'm proud of the growth and everything that is happening here, especially the fact that it is learner based, the learners are benefiting from everything that is happening (School 4,*

Participant 18, Line 295-297).

Teachers in School 4 referred to their pride in accomplishing to work together in a team:

*I'm proud about the staff, the way we work together as a team and the growth itself, the new kitchen in the school, everything* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 299-300).

*You know what I like about X* (name of the school), *I think as a whole, you're interviewing a few of us now, but in all this the whole staff is involved and that makes us a winning team* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 326-328).

On the other hand, teachers in School 2 also reflected on their asset-based projects that did not seem to materialise and were not a success, as evident by the following verbatim quotations:

*Most of the parents here were saying that they are busy at their fields so they won't be able to come to the school afterwards, so we didn't manage that one* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 260-263).

*So again that group faded away ...* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 782).

However, teachers in School 2 seemed to stay motivated and committed, despite the obstacles that they encountered. They revised their strategies and planned alternative routes to meet their goals (see theme 2, Chapter 5).

*It's the drive inside – most of the time I would like to see people better than what they were yesterday and better than what I am – that is what was driving me* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 286-289).

*That is possible ... we focus our attention ...* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 389-390).

*... focusing on what we have started* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 96).

*... we still have that vision ... we would still wish to continue ...* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 354-358).

In summary, it seems that teachers demonstrated a sense of accomplishment and pride with regard to their asset-based initiatives. They reflected proudly on their ability to make

a positive difference in their schools and communities through successful implementation of their asset-based initiatives. Although School 2 reported on some asset-based projects that did not succeed, they seemingly stayed positive in revising their goals and found alternative ways to accomplish their goals.

### **6.2.5 Category 5: Feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence**

---

Teachers reported feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence in their own skills, knowledge and capacities while planning, implementing and managing their asset-based initiatives. The following verbatim quotations indicate teachers' self-reported enhanced feeling of competence and capability:

*It brought us light, we are now capable of assisting people, before we never had the skill, so you empowered us with the skill of assisting the kids, or assisting the community in all the things that not even all because we didn't afford to achieve all the goals but some of them we achieved through the skills that you empowered us with (School 3, Participant 14, Line 359-363).*

*Exactly, because we didn't have the knowledge of how can we assist those kids and where to start doing this and then how to plan doing it. So ever since you came over and helped us with the networking and the necessary skills we realised that we are capable and did it (School 3, Participant 14, Line 369-373).*

*We are capable and did it (School 3, Participant 14, Line 370).*

*... I have a capability ... but with the little knowledge I am able to try things that can assist other people – I can do it (School 3, Participant 13, Line 572-575).*

The following verbatim quotations refer specifically to teachers' enhanced belief in their newly acquired knowledge:

*And it's so nice, even if they ask questions from you, you are able to answer, you don't say I don't know because you have the knowledge ... (School 1, Participant 4, Line 597-598).*

*Very interesting for me to work with such people, even to explain some of the things and*

*trying to make them understand why do we have to have projects in around the community* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 181-183).

Although teachers in School 4 did not explicitly report feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence (within the inclusion indicators specified for this category) during the focus group interviews, they directed the interview much more towards their accomplishments and achievements, which could indirectly reflect their feelings of competence (see 6.2.4, category 4).

Furthermore, the following visual data (photographs 6.6 and 6.7) illustrates teachers in Schools 1 and 2's feelings of competence about their newly acquired knowledge and skills on memory-box making:



*Photograph 6.6: School 1*

Teachers in School 1 show their certificates after the successful completion of a memory-box-making session.



*Photograph 6.7: School 2*

One of the teachers in School 2 receives a certificate from the facilitator after the successful completion of a memory-box-making session.

In conclusion, on the subtheme of positive identity formation, it seems that teachers firstly demonstrated openness to new learning experiences and displayed the ability to reflect on their growth and development. They also showed insight into their strengths and potential areas of growth. Through commitment to new challenges like their asset-based initiatives and motivation for meeting their goals, they appeared to remain optimistic despite the challenges that they encountered on their way. Teachers reported on their accomplishments about their asset-based initiatives and pride in what they

achieved in their school-community contexts. Their sense of accomplishment and pride reportedly led to feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence. This seems to result in personal growth and their renewed openness to take on new challenges.

### 6.3 SUBTHEME 3.2: GROUP EFFECTIVENESS SKILLS

---

The next subtheme focuses on the teachers' apparent abilities and skills for functioning effectively in a group and is underpinned by the following categories: 6.3.1 group communication; 6.3.2 roles and responsibilities; and 6.3.3 positive group dynamics.

#### 6.3.1 Category 1: Group communication skills

---

During the planning, implementation and monitoring of asset-based initiatives, the teachers demonstrated effective communication skills within their groups. The following verbatim quotations provide supportive evidence of teachers' ability to communicate effectively through regular group consultations, meetings and discussions:

*We sat down with the principal, I said the whole management should go there, management as a whole, teachers, learners also. So we said let's sit down, let's strategise, how are we going to take this to point B* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 157-160).

*As a group we are going to step back, we are going to sit down and discuss and strategise and see which school we can work with, we are going to look at other alternatives and strategies on how can we work with them effectively and efficiently* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 520- 524).

*We used to meet time and again, and share how far have we gone and what is it that we can do because really if you are not alone you cannot do it alone* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 188-190).

*Another thing that is assisting us is consultation ...* (School 3, Participant 14, Line 452).

*We are able to meet time and again and reviewing our strategies, where we are lacking*



*and how can we move forward ... meeting frequently, strategising again and again, checking wherever we are lacking, whether we need to change our strategies and things like that and so on ...* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 562-567).

*We had meetings, we have regular meetings ... we have minutes for the meeting, so it's not a loose thing, it's a structured thing* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 333-338).

Teachers demonstrated a willingness to share their ideas, insights and knowledge within their groups:

*Here at school we are sharing, like I have said, my colleague came to me and asked for information that I have, that I share the information and the other lady this morning* (School 1, Participant 3, Line 641-643).

*... we shared information about the various ... remember our motto therefore is knowledge is power* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, 117-119).

*... with a little idea you have and you start communicating with other people ...* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 121-122).

*You know in a group, the way we were sharing ideas* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 187).

*I think one of the things is coming together, sharing ideas, I think teamwork, really and you see sometimes ...* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 560-561).

*I would like to thank you, if we had not met people of your calibre maybe our knowledge would never have surfaced it would have remained in our hearts – we wouldn't be able to share anything with anybody* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 595-597).

*If I have something that I don't know, I know who to go to, I know where to get assistance ... it has made us to be outspoken to one another, we no longer keep things to ourselves ...* (School 3, Participant 14, Line 453-455).

The following verbatim quotations show teachers' willingness to discuss their problems with each other and brainstorm on possible solutions on addressing problems:

*I always discuss with X, she is doing Economics and we have a link somewhere, because some of the problems that we are dealing with on environment they affect the economy of the country* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 579-581).

*Our school ... it's a committee, we're all part of the committee, where you sit and brainstorm problems* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 75-76).

The following visual data (photographs 6.8-6.11) demonstrates my observation of teachers' ability to interact and communicate with each other on different occasions while implementing and managing their asset-based projects:



*Photograph 6.8: Hartbeespoort Seminar*



*Photograph 6.9: Hartbeespoort Seminar*

Teachers from different schools communicate and interact with each other by sharing stories and listening to each other during a two-day seminar in Hartbeespoort.



*Photograph 6.10: PE Seminar*

Teachers from all participating schools sharing stories while enjoying dinner together at the seminar in Port Elizabeth.



*Photograph 6.11: School 3*

Teachers brainstorm on possible asset-based projects during a focus group at their school.

Through sharing their knowledge, ideas and insights; teachers reportedly learned from group members' input, as evident in the following verbatim quotations:

*So you know you learn from people, you learn some strategies even though you won't tell your neighbour, but in the process you learn a lot of strategies that you can use if you were to be given a certain platform, but I've learnt a lot from the presentation* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 960-964).

*I should think we gained a lot and then one thing again, teamwork, team work, it does play a role because even when we were just brainstorming if I was alone maybe the points that we shared as a group I would not have been in a position to think about them. But because we were a group and then some other things just came up and then you become aware of it and how to make our calf to become bigger and bigger* (School 3, Participant 15, Line 387-394).

*And you learn from each other* (School 4, Participant 18, Line 322).

It seems that teachers took the initiative in arranging regular meetings to consult with each other. They reportedly discussed their progress with their asset-based projects and generated strategies for moving forward. They were willing to share their knowledge and ideas within their groups, but also with community members, children and parents. In the process, teachers seemingly benefited from group members' input and gained valuable insights in their groups.

### **6.3.2 Category 2: Roles and responsibilities within the group**

---

Teachers demonstrated the ability to adapt effectively to both shared and individual roles and responsibilities within their asset-based groups. The following subcategories underpin this category: a) shared responsibility in reaching goals; and b) individual roles and responsibilities.

**a) Subcategory 2.1: Shared responsibility in reaching goals**

The teachers seemed able to cooperate in a group and share responsibility and ownership for reaching their group's goals. They reflected an enhanced team-oriented approach during and after the implementation of the asset-based approach. Teachers in School 1 referred to their group name, implying a sense of partnership, enhanced teamwork and shared responsibility:

*Well we now decided that we must give our project a name, we can't just drop, let's call it Masizakheni, that name also came from the staff, from all of us because I said we are working as a team. Then we named our project Masizakheni* (School 1 – PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 111-115).

The following verbatim quotations illustrate teachers' team-oriented approach in working together towards group goals:

*... here we are working as a team, that is the first thing that I want to mention* (School 1 – PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 11-12).

*What we have learnt indirectly or directly is that it is possible to move on in life if you are in a group than as an individual* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 112-113).

*... work together ... in a group ... meet time and again, and share how far have we gone and what is it that we can do because really if you are not alone you cannot do it alone ... that is what I learnt, the importance of working as a group* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 187-192).

*... we come together, the three of us, we are a group now* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 394-395).

*I should think the other thing that made the outcome to can be achieved was the team work factor ... Working as a team makes the outcomes achievable* (School 3, Participant 14, Line 328 -335).

*I think team work, really and you see sometimes ..., before you came over here, we were not meeting as frequent as we are now, now we are able to meet time and again and reviewing our strategies, where we are lacking and how can we move forward, but it was through your motivation that we are now meeting frequently, strategising again and*

*again, checking wherever we are lacking, whether we need to change our strategies and things like that and so on* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 560-568).

*I'm proud about the staff, the way we work together as a team ...* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 299).

*You know what I like about X (name of the school), I think as a whole, you're interviewing a few of us now, but in all this the whole staff is involved and that makes us a winning team* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 326-328).

Within the context of teamwork, participating teachers seemed to take shared responsibility and ownership for their asset-based projects:

*First of all we want to cultivate the land, we want to cultivate that place in whatever, if there is any person who can assist us from where ever we are going to, she's going to be or he's going to be welcome* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 57-60).

*It wasn't just on paper or in the mind, it was like a hands on thing because we all put our hands in the vegetable garden* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 263-264).

*... this is our project ...* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 497).

In summary, teachers seemed able to work cooperatively in a group towards shared roles and responsibilities. They emphasised the importance of teamwork and that they would not have achieved as individuals what they had as a group.

#### **b) Subcategory 2.1: Individual roles and responsibilities**

Although teachers were able to share responsibilities in a group, they also seemed able to fulfil independent roles and responsibilities within their groups, as evident in the following verbatim quotations:

*Let me start then to say every individual in our school has a role to play in order to reach the standard of education* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 48-49).

*I said every person has a role that they are playing, managers, teachers, learners, we have got now a project that is related to what we are doing, we have seen the plan there when we entered the office* (School 1- PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 153-155).

*So what we do now is we take shifts as educators to go and observe what is happening there* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 67-68).

Teachers referred to their specific roles and responsibilities in their asset-based groups, which included a coordinator or team leader as well as team members in each asset-based group, as evident in the following verbatim quotations:

*In our group we said for who us, that is X, X, X and our coordinator is X. What we are going to do is we are going to share the information with the colleagues first, parents and learners* (School 1, Participant 3, Line 81-83).

*So we were dividing ourselves amongst the different groups ...* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 190-191).

*We formed three projects, the information group, the support group as well as the vegetable garden* (School 1- PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 92-93).

*You know I will start with myself as a link, as a coordinator of the whole project here at school* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 481-483).

*We are divided into groups to look after the learners for the afternoon* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 169-170).

*We had meetings, we have regular meetings, and we told the staff this is what we want to do and this is what we want to do and we need to co-opt members and people availed themselves and that's how we went about doing it. We get co-ordinators, subcoordinators, scribes, we have minutes for the meeting, so it's not a loose thing, it's a structured thing* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 333-338).

*Most definitely, I think the leader is the most important one because we have a good leader, then automatically your people follow, or must I say the "cows"* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 360-362).

Teachers also referred to individual members' strengths that complemented their roles and responsibilities:

*I should think there is a lot of potential within the group itself, like maybe some of us through this project, others are so outspoken, they can represent others who can just be*

*doing things that are practical, they can go out in the field and work out there, but somebody who can just give the report back, it means that we are talented differently to can augment or complement each other* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 438 - 443).

The following visual data (photographs 6.12 and 6.13) illustrate some individual roles of teachers in School 3:



*Photograph 6.12: School 3*

One of the teachers adopted the role of the “chef”, by cooking lunch for participating teachers before each intervention session and meeting.



*Photograph 6.13: School 3*

The three task-team coordinators for each respective asset-based project.

Additionally, the following extracts from my research journal support teachers’ unique roles that were fulfilled within their groups:

*X is a great leader and motivator in his group. I usually contact him and arrange all sessions with him ...* (Research journal, 15 June 2005).

*While the different groups reported on their accomplishments over the past few years, I realised that each and every group member contributed to their success. Each teacher has individual strengths that are so valuable within his or her specific group* (Research journal, 27 November 2008).

In summary, participating teachers seemed able to fulfil individual roles and responsibilities within their group in order to contribute towards group objectives.

### 6.3.3 Category 3: Positive group relations

---

Within their asset-based groups, teachers seemed able to effectively build and engage in positive group relations. The following verbatim quotations illustrate teachers' team spirit and sense of belonging in their groups:

*Here we are working as a team, that is the first thing that I want to mention* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 11-12).

*I think that we ... this is our project* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 497).

*I think we are working as a team and that is the one thing that helps us a lot* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 284-285).

In the following visual data (photographs 6.14-6.17), teachers' physical contact, warmth, waving of their hands, sharing of joy and smiles are evident of their apparent team spirit and group cohesion:



*Photograph 6.14: School 1*

Teachers in School 1 show their team spirit.



*Photograph 6.15: School 4*

Teachers in School 4 show their team spirit in front of their vegetable garden.



*Photograph 6.16: School 2 and 3*

Teachers in School 2 and 3 are ready to board on their way to the PE Seminar.



*Photograph 6.17: PE Seminar*

Teachers from different schools pose for a group photo.

It seems that teachers' asset-based groups created a caring, encouraging and supporting environment, where group members felt valued:

*... when you're in a team they encourage you and then motivates you* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 319-320).

*Sometimes you don't really feel up to it but once you're with the team they encourage you and you understand, it is better to work as a team than as an individual* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 314-316).

*... as a team we can support each other, we can complement each other ... as long as you are supported ... we also give support to one another, then nothing is unachievable* (School 3, Participant 15, Line 584-589).

The following visual data (photograph 6.18) indicates teachers' observed care and support towards each other:



*Photograph 6.18: Hartbeespoortdam Seminar*

One of the teachers put her hand around another teacher to support her.

It seems that teachers developed closer interpersonal relationships within their groups:

*Yes, bringing the group closer and closer ...* (School 3, Participant 15, Line 407).

*We also have a tea club in the morning, we sit and drink tea and chat for about 15 minutes* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 204 -205).

One of the teachers explained that she sensed the positive group dynamics that motivated her to become part of the group:

*Because I want to know more and be part of it all, that is why I joined* (School 1, Participant 3, Line 895-896).

The following visual data (photographs 6.19-6.22) indicate the nature of interpersonal relationships between teachers:



*Photograph 6.19: PE Seminar*



*Photograph 6.20: PE Seminar*

Teachers from different schools hug each other after a two-day seminar in Port Elizabeth.



*Photograph 6.21: PE Seminar*

Two teachers share humour and a hug.



*Photograph 6.22: PE Seminar*

Teachers from different schools exchange their contact details after a two-day seminar in Port Elizabeth.

In addition, the extract from audiovisual data captured at the Hartbeespoortdam seminar presented in Addendum B5 act as further illustration of teachers' sense of unity, team spirit and support amongst another. The extract is namely a song that participating teachers sang with the following refrain: "My friends are your friends and your friends are my friends. The more we are together, the happier we are".

The following extracts from my research journal support my observation of teachers' team spirit and positive group relations:

*Our second seminar was from 1-3 March. The participants were so HAPPY to see each other again. They said that they really missed each other since the first seminar in November 2008 in PE. They shared their stories of success and also some ideas on what worked and what did not work. I think they learned a lot from each other. There were also representatives from the Centre for Study of AIDS, other neighbouring universities and students. The teachers easily mingled with all of them (Research journal, 3 March 2009).*

*Each team coordinator reported on their accomplishments and way forward. They really accomplished a lot ... there was a team spirit that no one could dim. They were very supportive and caring towards each other ... The groups easily established relationships with another. I think they will still walk a long road together (Research journal, 27 November 2008).*

Moreover, the following visual data (photographs 6.23 and 6.24) reflects teachers' sense of unity and togetherness:



*Photograph 6.23: PE Seminar*

Teachers from all participating schools share sense of unity with candles as symbol



*Photograph 6.24: Hartbeespoortdam Seminar*

Teachers' similar t-shirts with their group name and logo is evident of their sense of unity.

It seems that teachers experienced a sense of unity in their asset-based groups. They demonstrated the ability to build constructive interpersonal relationships in their groups and contributed to group cohesion. Their asset-based groups within each school but also

across the different participating schools appeared to create a caring, encouraging and supporting environment, where group members reported a sense of belonging and unity.

## 6.4 SUBTHEME 3.3: MANAGEMENT SKILLS

---

The last subtheme focuses on teachers' demonstrated management skills for achieving their vision by putting structures and processes in place to ensure that their asset-based initiatives functioned efficiently. Their management skills are underpinned by the following categories: 6.4.1) goal-setting skills; 6.4.2) problem-solving skills; 6.4.3) networking skills; and 6.4.4) leadership skills.

### 6.4.1 Category 1: Goal-setting and monitoring skills

---

Teachers demonstrated the ability to effectively plan goals, direct their behaviour towards reaching formulated goals, monitor the progress made on their goals and revise their goals as new information becomes available. The following subcategories underpin this category: a) goal-setting and planning and b) monitoring and revising goals.

#### a) Subcategory 1.1: Goal-setting and planning

Teachers seemed able to set and plan goals with regard to their asset-based initiatives and act accordingly. The following verbatim quotations illustrate teachers' goal-setting and planning skills with regard to their asset-based initiatives:

*... educators are working towards reaching a goal as per our mission and vision* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 40-41).

*Every year we plan, we have our own year planner – we have 7 pillars, each pillar has got its own goals, we give it to say what do we intend doing next year, so that we know exactly what is happening where and how* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 301-304).

*The workshop was actually planning, we were planning it ...* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 259).

*... this is what we want to do ...* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 334).

Teachers verbalised specific strategies and plan of actions with regard to reaching their goals:

*That is supposed to be done tomorrow, tomorrow is the 9<sup>th</sup> so we are going to have that meeting with the principal tomorrow. Another thing, where do we intend having the ... before with the principal we are having some vision you know. We know where we want to establish this garden* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 4-8).

*How are we going to get it. First of all we want to cultivate the land, we want to cultivate that place in whatever, if there is any person who can assist us from where ever we are going to, she's going to be or he's going to be welcome. We want to cultivate that place, to think of equipment, to think of ways of getting the seeds and to have a register, that is how we are going to do it* (School 1, Participant 1, Line 57-62).

*... we will be calling people in to come and highlight or give us more knowledge about HIV and AIDS* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 171-172).

The following verbatim quotations indicate some of participants' expected outcomes during the phase of planning and setting goals:

*Our plan of action is to reach out to the whole community* (School 1, Participant 3, Line 896).

*... we will address unemployment* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 455).

The following visual data (photographs 6.25-6.28) of teachers' formulated goals and action plans developed for their asset-based projects in the fifth intervention session (see 3.3.3), acts as illustration of participating teachers' ability to formulate goals and to plan their behaviour accordingly in order to reach formulated goals:



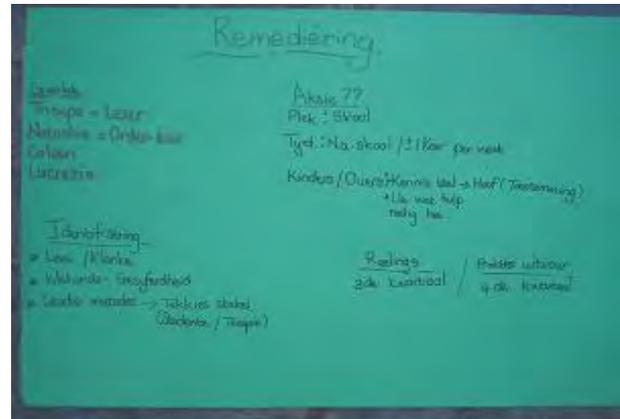
Photograph 6.25: School 1



Photograph 6.26: School 2



Photograph 6.27: School 3



Photograph 6.28: School 4

It seems that teachers were able to set and plan goals on their asset-based initiatives and act accordingly. They used action plans to formulate their goal specifications.

**b) Subcategory 1.2: Goal-monitoring skills**

Teachers demonstrated the ability to monitor their goals by reflecting on their formulated goals and determining how far they were from reaching their goals. The following verbatim quotations indicate teachers' ability to determine what "worked" with regard to goals accomplished:

*I think we are succeeding, we've got a beautiful garden there at the back, we've planted various vegetables, carrots, spinach and so on* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 15-17).

*Excellent, excellent progress* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 42).

*I'm looking at our posters of planning, and I'm actually so glad that we've almost covered everything, I'm looking at it. In respect of first aid, each class has got a first aid kit, we buy your savlon, your cotton wool, your plasters, there's just growth and improvement* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 396-398).

The following visual data (photographs 6.29-6.32) illustrate some of the team coordinators providing feedback on the progress made on their formulated goals:



*Photograph 6.29: School 1*



*Photograph 6.30: School 2*

Teachers explain the progress made on their initial action plans. The arrow on their posters indicates the progress made in meeting their formulated goals.



*Photograph 6.31: School 1*



*Photograph 6.32: School 2*

Teachers provide feedback on their accomplished goals and way forward during the PE Seminar.

The following visual data (photographs 6.33-6.36) illustrates the accomplished goals of teachers in School 2 with regard to their beadwork project:



*Photograph 6.33: School 2*

Unemployed community members in the process of beading “g-strings”.



*Photograph 6.34: School 2*

Two of the completed “g-strings”.



*Photograph 6.35: School 2*

An example of the card that accompanied the “g-string” when being sold.



*Photograph 6.36: School 2*

The coordinator of the beadwork project shows the HIV/AIDS brooches that were made in their group project.

The following visual data (photographs 6.37-6.40) illustrates the newly established vegetable gardens as accomplished goals:



*Photograph 6.37: School 1*



*Photograph 6.38: School 2*



*Photograph 6.39: School 3*



*Photograph 6.40: School 4*

In addition, the following extract from my research journal support teachers' ability to accomplish their goals:

*While the different groups reported on their accomplishments over the past few years ... I realized that they really achieved a lot! They accomplished their goals and much more (Research journal, 27 November 2008).*

Participants also reflected on goals that had not been accomplished yet:

*The things that we have not yet done is to meet with the entire community (School 1, Participant 4, Line 651-652).*

*... we didn't afford to achieve all the goals but some of them we achieved through the*

*skills that you empowered us with* (School 3, Participant 14, Line 362-363).

Accordingly, teachers revised their strategies and planned their way forward in order to meet their goals:

*Our plan of action from now onwards, as you can see that we are moving, but we are not yet to the fat cow, but we are going to the fat cow. Our plan of action from now as the support group is to visit all that have disclosed, those kids and those parents that have already disclosed. We are going to visit all their houses, so that we can talk to them* (School 1, Participant 7, Line 836-840).

*What are our future plans, I am still here ... next year we shall be having a social worker who is going to be based on our school premises, she is going to stay here for us, we are given that social worker who is going to be with us full time* (School 1 – PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 295-299).

*So I think if we can come up with a different strategy now, delegate people amongst the groups, select the ones that seem capable to take the lead. The project will then be sustainable* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 321-324).

*We monitor that* (School 4, Participant 18, Line 113).

Teachers seemd to remain focused on their goals, as evident in the following verbatim quotations:

*In the end we raised some funds for the school in the process, focusing on what we have started* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 95-96).

*... we are hoping for the best in 2009, we indicated that we will try our level best to ensure that our projects kick off, they take off the ground again* (School 2 – PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 890-892).

It therefore seems that teachers demonstrated the ability to monitor the progress made on their goals and revise their goals accordingly.

#### 6.4.2 Category 2: Problem-solving skills

---

Participating teachers demonstrated the ability to solve problems encountered in their school-community contexts. They sat together and brainstormed ways to address challenges encountered:

*It changed much if we sat down and focused again ...* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 93).

*Yes, try and solve our problems so much that we no longer have serious problems occurring during school hours after school* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 162-164).

*And we (teachers) give ideas to remedy the problem* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 78).

*Our school ... it's a committee, we all part of the committee, where you sit and brainstorm problems* (School 4, Participant 17, Line 75-76).

Teachers referred to their acquired skills for solving problems more efficiently:

*I'm so glad for that information that you brought to us, where to go when we've got problems, like to X, all the contacts – it makes it to be easier for us, someone to talk to when we've got a problem* (School 1, Participant 7, Line 531-534).

They seemed able to make links between information and generate insight into problems encountered:

*Unemployment has a direct link to the escalating HIV, that when they start working, through the project, then the HIV may drop to a certain extent and starting on a small scale we will have maybe South Africa as a whole to decrease the level of HIV* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 455-458).

The following verbatim quotations refer to teachers' ability to consider future possibilities and generate alternative strategies to address problems they encountered:

*Because there were people during the launch who volunteered themselves to come and assist, like Dr. X and X and then when we were I think two months later we found that they don't come, you know if Mahomed does not come from the mountain, you must go to Mohamed. So we decided to go to him* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 152-157).

*Each and every home in our culture must have a knopkierie. So what is happening then is, we then said what is it then that we can do to address the challenges we are facing ...* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 674-676).

*... we will going to now try to address these three challenges and having addressed them, on a broader scope, we were hoping that our area is going to improve* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 692-694).

In summary, teachers seemingly demonstrated problem-solving skills by making connections between information, searching for future possibilities, brainstorming on alternative possibilities and creating solutions for barriers encountered.

### **6.4.3 Category 3: Networking skills**

---

Teachers displayed networking skills by establishing collaborative partnerships with both individuals and organisational role-players in order to provide care and support within their school-community contexts. This category relates to teachers' ability to mobilise assets and resources by building networks and partnerships as discussed in Chapter 4. In Chapter 4, I provided verbatim quotations that refer to the different role-players that formed part of participating teachers' networks and collaborative partnerships (see 4.3.4). In this chapter, I therefore provide only one quotation per school, about teachers' networking skills per se:

*We are working with different people, all those workshops were catered for by different NGO's* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 206-208).

*I then asked at the university here which section can I approach to get help so that they come down and help us ...* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 520-522).

*Exactly because we networked with the pastor and place of safety ...* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 61-62).

*Circle of Life is an NGO so we make use of the community, you see the asset-based thing that we making use of, that is an NGO, local institution that we're making use of* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 66-68).

To conclude, it seems that participating teachers were able to build partnerships and networks with both individuals and organisations in their school-community contexts in order to assist them in providing psychosocial care and support.

#### **6.4.4 Category 4: Leadership skills**

---

This category includes data related to teachers' demonstrated leadership skills in creating a vision and providing direction about the planning, implementing and managing of their asset-based projects. Teachers' leadership skills are underpinned by the following subcategories: a) facilitation skills and b) motivation skills.

##### **a) Subcategory 4.1: Facilitation skills**

Teachers demonstrated the ability to facilitate participation and involvement of different role-players with the aim of meeting their goals related to their asset-based initiatives in an effective manner. The following verbatim quotations illustrate their ability to facilitate participation and involvement:

*Involving other ... makes a lot of people to get involved* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 142-146).

Teachers facilitated participation of organisations both within and outside their immediate communities:

*Police are coming once a month, there's the hospice who assist us at the centre, there are nurses who go up and down, assisting us in relation to what is happening ... because as teachers we don't have the time to do everything, therefore we said that these parents are going to stand to look at the parents who are there because now we are dealing with whole community of X, they go there for home visits, they are allocated days for the home visits, in fact Tuesdays they go for home visits, they come to us every week and a report is submitted to us to attend to* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 230-239).

*So we talked more about this up until such time I went to the University of Pretoria, I think it was in 2003, I was frequenting the University most of the time, in the Science department where I met ... Schutte, can't remember he is teaching Biology at the university there. So I met him, we were just chatting you know, it was during lunch, then I asked him, you know I've got this in my mind, I want to ... you know the government has tried its best to make people aware of HIV and AIDS but seemingly somewhere it is failing, coming to the ground you know, maybe on top there the vision is good but at the ground level it is not. Then we talked and talked, I then asked "at the university here which section can I approach to get help so that they come down and help us"* (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 510-522).

*Sometimes we ask them what we need and they donate to us* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 295-296).

Participants reportedly facilitated participation of individuals in the educational, social and health sector, both within and outside their immediate communities:

*We invited one person from ... she told the members how to sew* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 203-204).

*I invited another lady from Elukwatini ... so I had to go to the lady and told her to please come to our school because these people are really waiting for you. So we made the arrangements, I then sent letters with the learners to inform the people who belong to the group, telling them that the lady is coming* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 217-223).

*On the side of HIV support group, we managed to organise a pastor for us who can assist us with a group of people ... So we no longer have that much of a burden of trying to help the kids after school, we can now afford to relax* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 51-57).

*We've appointed, with school funds rent a teacher. It would have been nice to just record how she is working with the learners, the progress learners are making, the different apparatus she is using (School 4, Participant 16, Line 9-12).*

Teachers also facilitated involvement of community members:

*The community members were just going to be brought on board in the process, seeing that the garden was prospering (School 2, Participant 11, Line 104-106).*

*We invite them to the school to come and listen, especially those who are not working, we invite them so that they can hear and maybe try and spread the gospel to other members of the community. Like during the HIV and AIDS thing, the specialists who are invited to the school, we invite even the parents to come and listen so that maybe in their churches, different churches on Sundays, they can discuss those or in their social clubs because we blacks believe in social clubs. So those are the kinds of topics they discuss in the social clubs (School 3, Participant 13, Line 191-199).*

Furthermore, teachers reportedly facilitated children's participation and involvement in their asset-based initiatives:

*The learners inside the school also, during subject-related period, they will also join because to them doing other subjects like agricultural science they could be serving in this project, and they will be able to go there and make observations of whatever that they will be doing, in terms of applying the knowledge that they need, so also they will be involved (School 2, Participant 11, 505-510).*

*The practical skills maybe, I think that one can be done after school, or after hours, we identify those learners, teaching things like tiling, practical work for the learners, maybe you can find that some of the people in the community they can also come, so that after school we know there's a second group of people who are coming after school to teach them the practical skills so that at the end they have something to survive with (School 2, Participant 9, Line 435-441).*

Participants' facilitation skills were further illustrated in their ability to facilitate participation of parents:

*While you have a register of active and those parents that are going to assist us, we must have a register ... And also we need to have one parent who's going to be taken as a caretaker or whoever, who's going to look after that after hours because we don't stay here. There should be somebody who's going to be looking as a security for security purposes (School 1, Participant 1, Line 62-68).*

*What we did here at school, you see ... There are parents that are coming at ... to clean the school. What I did is I asked them if they are willing to have gardens, those that are willing I must take their names down. And they come in large numbers and I've got a lot of them. They were not in numbers the time you came, there are lots of parents and we find out that they are so interested in working here and because of the high rate of unemployment, at least for a day they are having something to do, because each and everyday they must come and have a look at their garden. A person comes with a spade, a fork and rake of their own and cut whatever site of land he wants. We don't have any measurement, what we did is we just gave them an open land to work on, you see. And we are keeping registers. We write them down (School 1, Participant 1, Line 729-741).*

*We requested our learners to tell their parents that we've got this project that they should come so that they get more information (School 2, Participant 10, Line 156-158).*

*We will just step back, when we are busy doing our school work they will be busy at the garden (School 2, Participant 10, Line 503-504).*

*So they were working there, so when they came in X would attend to them because she had chosen somebody to lead the group, so we would just leave things with them and then what we would do is just to come in and check whether things were coming right. Then they will say it is fine (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 728-732).*

*So they worked on the beads, and when X now, on the bead project, she went out to find more people that can help us now to take our beads to the next level, not only concentrate on g-strings (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 732-734).*

Teachers demonstrated their facilitation skills by involving neighbouring schools:

*To add maybe more, we would like maybe to work with other schools, maybe as facilitators, but the time will be very limited, so as a group we are going to step back, we are going to sit down and discuss and strategise and see which school we can work with, we are going to look at other alternatives and strategies on how can we work with them effectively and efficiently* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 519- 524).

Within their own schools, teachers reportedly also involved staff members to assist in their asset-based projects:

*We had meetings, we have regular meetings, and we told the staff this is what we want to do and this is what we want to do and we need to co-opt members and people availed themselves and that's how we went about doing it ...* (School 4, Participant 19, Line 333-336).

The following verbatim quotation of one of the teachers in School 4 refers to teachers' facilitation skills, as a capacity that allows a goal to be reached in an effective manner:

*The workshop was actually planning, we were planning it, it could have stayed at planning, but as a team and as a school we really let it materialise* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 259-261).

Participating teachers' demonstrated facilitation skills reportedly assisted them in reducing their workload with regard to asset-based initiatives:

*And you know what the good thing about all this ... they usually drive this all the projects mostly ...* (School 4, Participant 16, Line 340-341).

It seems that the teachers applied facilitation skills to involve community members, parents, learners, colleagues and organisations to implement their asset-based initiatives successfully. While they facilitated participation, they assigned tasks and responsibilities with regard to the asset-based initiatives to parents, learners, community members, staff members and community organisations.

**b) Subcategory 4.2: Motivation skills**

Participating teachers demonstrated the ability to motivate, encourage and inspire individuals to realise possible advantages for themselves and others in participating in asset-based initiatives. The following verbatim quotation of one of the teachers in School 2 acts as evidence of his view of participating teachers' motivation skills:

*He talked about the teacher, he says "a great teacher inspires" but I wouldn't use the teacher here, you are teachers and you are inspiring but I will say you are great women who are inspiring and I think South Africa needs more and more women like you (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 473-480).*

Teachers seemingly managed to motivate their colleagues in different domains:

*Not to forget, I will encourage the teachers who are here to make use of those books, we've got them in all the levels, Grade 1-3, from the department, so we must make use of those books (School 1, Participant 3, Line 935-937).*

*So we have put our heads together and we have said in 2009 we need to bring more of our colleagues in, we have been trying, in the meetings when the university came in, they must have seen some improvement ... So that is what we are trying, we are trying to say to our educators, let it not be for us, let it be for all of us because we all benefit at the end of the day (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 951-958).*

Teachers reportedly motivated parents and community members to stay involved in asset-based initiatives, benefiting them and the school-community context, as illustrated by the following verbatim quotations:

*What is happening with the vegetable garden, what I've seen so far, it helps a lot with the community because what is happening now, the parents are taking care of the school, they don't want the gate to remain open, they don't want any animals to come in because they are keen, they are looking out for the vegetable garden (School 1, Participant 2, Line 713-717).*

*Also this project brought the parents together – you know sometimes it's difficult for them just to come to the school but with this project we saw them coming when we started (School 2, Participant 9, Line 133-135).*

*They used to come to the school and want to find out what is everything all about (School*

2, Participant 9, Line 140-141).

*They all came, positively and it means that they were interested in doing the work (School 2, Participant 9, Line 223-224).*

*The lady was with us for two days, the whole day they were here, they brought their own food, they ate during break time, they only went home at 4 in the afternoon. So it shows really that they were interested (School 2, Participant 9, Line 225-228).*

*Their willingness, their positive attitude towards the project, they responded positively and they indicated and they showed that they were really interested in the project (School 2, Participant 10, Line 240-244).*

*I must indicate that the parents were very active, even though we were stuck with our curriculum, they would come on their own ... (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 723-725).*

Teachers also appeared to motivate each other to stay involved to the benefit of themselves and others:

*Sometimes you don't really feel up to it but once you're with the team they encourage you and you understand, it is better to work as a team than as an individual (School 4, Participant 16, Line 314-316).*

It seems as if participating teachers demonstrated the ability to motivate human resources (including colleagues, parents and community members) to participate in the implementation of their asset-based initiatives.

#### **6.4.5 Category 5: Agency towards pastoral support and care**

---

Participating teachers reflected an increased awareness of the multiple roles of teachers as stipulated within the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Department of Education, 2000a), as evident in the following verbatim quotation:

*And we are also aware of the fact that one's roles as educators is to make a conduct and difference in our communities of which to think one of the seven roles ... where an educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other persons and*



*organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental ... The one critical dimension of this role is HIV and AIDS education* (School 1 - PE Seminar, Participant 20, Line 36-40).

Teachers were not only aware of their different roles as teachers; they also seemed able and willing to try alternative ways of being a teacher. In the limited scope of the current study, the participating teachers' awareness and application regarding the *community, citizenship and pastoral role* (Department of Education, 2000a), seemed to show an increase. Teachers reported that they felt competent and equipped in adapting to their community, citizenship and pastoral role based on their involvement in the project, amongst other reasons:

*It brought us light, we are now capable of assisting people, before we never had the skill, so you empowered us with the skill of assisting the kids, or assisting the community in all the things that not even all because we didn't afford to achieve all the goals but some of them we achieved through the skills that you empowered us with* (School 3, Participant 14, Line 359-363).

*The workshops, as I've already mentioned it, had to do with the question of empowerment and being made aware of what is happening around the community because sometimes you maybe just in limbo, just going through life but because you came and you talked about how we can improve or make this calf to become a cow and then skilled us, we became skilled on how to help our communities, I should think we gained a lot and then one thing again, teamwork, team work, it does play a role because even when we were just brain storming if I was alone maybe the points that we shared as a group I would not have been in a position to think about them. But because we were a group and then some other things just came up and then you become aware of it and how to make our calf to become bigger and bigger* (School 3, Participant 13, Line 382-394).

Within their classrooms, teachers reported on the importance of not only teaching children on an academic level, but also building closer relationships with children in their classrooms. In this way, the teachers' understanding of the children's worlds was enhanced, helping them to become better equipped to support them on a psychosocial level:

*First thing our focus was our learners at school, we were focused on only the learners around us but we said let's us extend this to the broader community* (School 1 - PE

Seminar, Participant 20, Line 140-150).

*And also what we have gained working with the team here, as I've indicated is to be closer to our learners, not only to concentrate on teaching them (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 670-672).*

*As educators at high school, we need to get closer to our learners, that is one thing they taught us when they came to us, with a knobkierie (sagila in our language) ... so it told us that it must cut across so that you understand these learners, you know what they need so that you are able to execute your roles correctly as expected, as the seven roles you are expected to carry out as educators (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 615-617; 623-626).*

*So now, it happened then, our eyes were open, I mean we started to expand now, to check on how can we care for our learners, we asked ourselves whether we actually know our learners (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 628-630).*

*So we now know our learners and what we learnt as educators is that we learnt that it is not only knowing the learners that will help us, but we also have to expand and know their backgrounds (School 2 - PE Seminar, Participant 24, Line 634-637).*

*Exactly, because we didn't have the knowledge of how can we assist those kids and where to start doing this and then how to plan doing it. So ever since you came over and helped us with the networking and the necessary skills we realised that we are capable and did it (School 3, Participant 14, Line 369-373).*

*I want to add on that, personally I think as teachers, it brings us closer to the kids, not just come here and work, you become part of the community when we come to this block, they don't just see you as a teacher they see you as a parent because when you speak with them they listen to you but when you push them aside and say that I am their teacher I'm just here to work, then they will treat you like a teacher, not as part of their community (School 3, Participant 15, Line 393-399).*

Teachers also seemingly provided guidance to parents, with the aim that parents would transfer their knowledge to their children:

*We are dealing specifically with parents because we know if parents, if you can support the parents, it is easy for the parent to take it over to the young ones (School 1, Participant 7, Line 862-864).*

Participating teachers seemed to increasingly develop and sustain supportive relations with parents and community members. They seemingly managed to build supportive school-based community relationships, as reflected in the following transcripts:

*We are a support group, to pray, to give them hope, to give them courage so that they must know that there are some people who care for them, to give relevant sources, how to keep the relevant sources, sometimes when you came to the house, they are very sick, to tell them that “okay I’m going to phone so and so”* (School 1, Participant 7, Line 841-845).

*As a teacher you think that you are only there for academic purposes, but what I learnt is that there are people out there who need help, just to go out and find out what you can do for these people, so that maybe at the end they can also benefit from whatever* (School 2, Participant 10, Line 247-250).

Participants further reported on some challenges in fulfilling their pastoral role, as demonstrated in the following verbatim quotations:

*Sometimes it calls for you as a teacher, at the same time you have to be with the learners and at the same time you have to look at the group there because they used to come here during the day when we are teaching* (School 2, Participant 9, 268-270).

*... it will maybe be a burden to an educator to look at the two books, I want to see my learners, and at the same time I want to change the way they are living in the community ...* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 296-299).

*Ja, we supported them so much that some of the teachers like E did go to the matches to attend those matches and ...* (School 3, Participant 15, Line 417-418).

However, teachers seemed to stay committed to persevering in fulfilling their pastoral role:

*What I noticed when you were busy with those people, you know it’s just perseverance, you know to teach an adult is not the same as teaching a learner* (School 2, Participant 9, Line 254-256).

*I think it’s a question of ... it made us to persevere in whatever we are doing, it also made us have the passion of helping especially the poverty stricken families that we are working with here in this community. So it is really paining to see a child not wearing*

*shoes in winter and so on – some coming here you can see they are from poverty, you can see that they are not properly fed because of their physique, their uniform is in tatters and that pains you and gives you the motivation to help* (School 3, Participant 12, Line 343-350).

*One other thing I've learnt is that as educators is that it is possible that we can go an extra mile helping other people out there as long as we have ideas and as long as we communicate and as long as we form groups, working as individuals* (School 2, Participant 11, Line 123-127).

To conclude, teachers seemingly acted as agents for pastoral care and support in their schools and communities. They provided psychosocial support to children, provided parent guidance and established school-based community relationships. Although teachers reported some challenges in their community, citizen and pastoral role, they were able to persevere and stayed committed to fulfil their role.

## **6.5 LITERATURE CONTROL: POSITIONING THE FINDINGS WITHIN EXISTING LITERATURE**

---

In the previous section of this chapter, I presented results with regard to teachers' reported and demonstrated asset-based competencies. In this section, I formulate arguments for each theme and position my thesis within existing and relevant literature. I generate findings and make possible predictions in relation to findings. I firstly discuss the results about confirming literature; secondly, I discuss and reflect on contradictory literature and lastly search for silences in relation to existing literature.

### **6.5.1 Confirmation of existing knowledge on teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies**

---

Teachers' demonstrated competencies, signified as asset-based competencies, show similarities with the three categories (personal characteristics, social competence and cognitive competencies) of internal protective resources for resilience (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Howard *et al.*, 1999). Firstly, teachers' asset-based characteristics that assisted them in the process of forming a positive identity relates to personal characteristics as internal protective resources for resilience, including self-efficacy, sense of own competence and sense of achievement, together with internal locus of control, optimism, hopefulness, and flexibility (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Dent & Cameron, 2003; Hines *et al.*, 2005; Howard *et al.*, 1999; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Winfield, 1994). Secondly, teachers' demonstrated group effectiveness skills relate with internal protective resources involving social competence such as effective communication skills, effective social behaviour, social responsiveness and social connectedness (Howard *et al.*, 1999; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Spence *et al.*, 2005; Winfield, 1994). Lastly, teachers' demonstrated management skills relate to cognitive competencies such as planning, decision-making, problem-solving and goal-setting skills (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Spence *et al.*, 2005; Winfield, 1994).

This theme confirms existing knowledge, namely that participants in a community intervention project will generally demonstrate certain characteristics (positive identity formation, group effectiveness skills and management skills), which to my mind could be viewed as asset-based competencies. In the following section, I present studies in this regard. I structure this section according to the subthemes identified in the previous section.

### **6.5.1.1 Positive identity formation**

According to the results of the current study, it seems that participating teachers displayed asset-based characteristics that assisted them in the process of forming a positive identity. I next discuss the five asset-based competencies (personal growth and reflective thinking, commitment, optimism, accomplishment and pride, as well as feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence) underlying to positive identity formation in terms of studies that also highlight the emergence of positive identity from intervention.

#### **a) Personal growth and reflective thinking**

In the context of the teachers' openness to new learning experiences, reflective thinking and subsequent personal growth, Keyes and Lopez (2005) refer to personal growth as a fundamental dimension of a person's psychological well-being, being a continuous process of being open to new learning experiences, development and change. In the same way, Lambert (1991) advocates that teachers should become lifelong learners, actively involved in their own learning and development.

The results of the current study further correlate with the study of Kim *et al.* (2009) on the assessment of health promotion workers' ability to promote community capacity building. Participating health promotion workers were given a questionnaire that was based on the *Community Capacity Building Tool*. The researchers found that the highest community capacity-driving factor amongst participants was the ability to be aware of assets and know where to obtain resources in their community. In the same way, teachers in the current study seemingly showed increased insight in assets amongst themselves and their groups, which contributed to their personal growth.

Just as the teachers in the current study reported on personal growth and subsequent psychosocial support in their school-community contexts, existing literature agrees that the process of capacity building can lead to individual development and growth, which in

turn may enhance social change on a broader level (Ferreira, 2008; Saidi *et al.*, 2003; Bartle *et al.*, 2002).

## **b) Commitment**

The teachers' demonstrated commitment and perseverance to follow through on their goals are reflected in existing literature on collaborative research partnerships that emphasises the importance of group members' commitment to shared goals and visions as an important element for successful partnerships (Harper *et al.*, 2004; Roussel, Fan & Fulmer, 2002; Green, Daniel & Novick, 2001; Sanstad *et al.*, 1999; Israel *et al.*, 1998; Mays, Halverson & Kaluzny, 1998). Teachers in the current study demonstrated similar fundamental components of commitment, as identified by Locke (2005). The first component relates to the belief that a goal is valuable and worthwhile to accomplish, and the second to the belief that one is capable of achieving a goal. This correlates with Mickan and Rodger's (2000) finding that commitment to a shared goal could enhance direction and motivation for group members.

In correlation with the results of the current study, Bhana *et al.* (2006) found that teachers in their study stayed committed, taking ownership for providing pastoral care and support to children in their school who were affected by psychosocial challenges. The teachers in the current study needed to make some sacrifices to persevere and follow through on their commitments. Likewise, Bhana *et al.* (2006) report that teachers in their study needed to make sacrifices to fulfil a pastoral role. In the same way in which teachers in the current study seemed committed to making a positive contribution in their schools and communities, Fullan (1993) found in his random sampling of 20 percent of 1,1000 student teachers in Toronto that the most frequent theme was that participants wanted to make a difference in children's lives. This moral purpose of teachers reflects their aspiration toward improvements beyond the traditional sense of teaching. This finding correlates with Locke's (2005) view that the ultimate proof of commitment can be seen in people's actions; a statement reflected by the participating teachers' role as active agents directing asset-based initiatives.

### **c) Optimism**

Current studies agree on the positive effects of an optimistic outlook in dealing with barriers (see Carver & Scheier, 2005; Fritz & Smit, 2008; MacFarlane, 1998). Teachers' ability to seemingly cope in a solution-focused way, by positively reframing problems into alternative and workable solutions, can be related to Fritz and Smit's (2008) findings, indicating that teachers were optimistic about the future and able to cope despite the educational adversities they encountered. Theron (2004, 2008a) conducted an intervention study exploring possible reasons why adolescents with learning difficulties were able to thrive despite the adversity they confronted. She concluded that adolescents demonstrated enhanced optimism and self-confidence after an intervention based on the resilience of youth (Theron, 2008a).

### **d) Accomplishment and pride**

Participating teachers' seemingly sense of accomplishment on providing care and support correlates with Bennell's (2004) study on teacher motivation in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Bennell (2004) found that the rewards of being a teacher are the fundamental determinant of teacher job satisfaction. Howard and Johnson (2004) also found that teachers' sense of pride and achievement can be regarded as a protective factor of teachers' resilience in dealing with adversity and stressors.

In a similar way, Swanepoel (2005) conducted a study that focused on memory box making techniques as a tool to contribute to community care and support. The participating volunteers in her study reported that they experienced a sense of pride because they could apply the newly acquired technique and skills in their communities and contribute to care and support (Swanepoel, 2005). Similar to the results of the current study, Howard and Johnson (2000a, 2000b) identified a sense of achievement as a fundamental protective factor in the ability to cope with resilience with adversities and challenges.

In line with participating teachers' feedback sessions on their progress and accomplishments, existing literature agrees on the importance of regular feedback and celebrations of successes and achievements, regardless of their size or importance, as a determinant of promoting commitment to a project (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2002; Micken & Rodger, 2000; Cottrell & Ciaramitaro, 1993).

#### **e) Feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence**

Where the teachers in the current study reported that their self-confidence had grown, other intervention-based research studies also found that participants' self-worth and competence had increased following the intervention. In Swanepoel's (2008) study on memory box making as a technique for community care and support, she found that participants' self-confidence was enhanced, in line with their skills and competencies. Similarly, Mnguni (2006) conducted a study on teachers' pastoral support competencies following an introduction to the use of a memory box. Her findings suggest that teachers felt more confident in providing pastoral care in their schools based on the intervention (Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Mnguni, 2006).

Within the context of intervention-based studies that focused on school-community partnerships, findings suggest enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem of participating individuals (Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2002; Miller, 1995). In Ferreira's (2006, 2008) study on using intervention research to facilitate community-based coping with HIV/AIDS, she found that participants increasingly reported higher levels of self-confidence in their strengths and their potential to cope with challenges. Similarly, studies confirm that self-esteem and a sense of one's own competence is one of the fundamental protective factors against dealing with stressors and challenges (Howard & Johnson, 2004; MacFarlane, 1998; Rutter, 2000; Theron, 2008a).

### **6.5.1.2 Group effectiveness skills**

The results of the current study with regard to teachers' group effectiveness skills are similar to those in literature in the field of community psychology. The categories underlying group effectiveness skills identified in the current study relate well to key features of competent communities (Roos & Temane, 2007) and community well-being (Visser, 2007). Furthermore, participating teachers' demonstrated group effectiveness skills show similarities with the underlying values and practices that Grogan and Proscio (2000) regard necessary for asset-based community development, namely community connectivity, relationship building, collaboration and partnerships. I next discuss the different components of group effectiveness skills (group communication skills, group roles and responsibilities, as well as positive group relations).

#### **a) Group communication skills**

In correlation with the results of the current study, open and ongoing communication as fundamental element for effective group work and successful partnerships is widely documented (Israel *et al.*, 2006; Mickan & Rodger, 2000; Roos & Temane, 2007; Sullivan *et al.*, 2001; Wood, 2007). Similar to the current study, Krieger, Allen, Cheandle, Ciske, Schier, Senturia and Sullivan (2002) conducted community-based participatory research to address social determinants of health. These researchers highlight the importance of open communication channels between members and warn that differences in opinions should not be swept under the carpet. In this way, parties can reach mutually agreeable solutions. Green *et al.* (2001) confirm the importance of investing time in sharing information about challenges, dynamics and opinions.

Existing literature confirms the results of the current study by referring to the importance of sharing knowledge and expertise as a fundamental building block of successful and dynamic group work (Eisinger & Senturia, 2001; Liberman & Wood, 2002; Swanepoel, 2008; Wood, 2007). Lasker and Weiss (2003) refer to collaborative processes that enable

diverse group members to talk to each other, learn from each other and work together towards shared goals.

In correlation with the results of the current study, Eisinger and Senturia (2001) found that participants in their research on community partnerships became progressively more open in sharing knowledge and ideas and contributing towards shared decision-making. In addition, the results of the current study are in line with Swanepoel's (2008) and Mnguni's (2006) finding that participants reported the need to enable others by sharing their skills and knowledge acquired from the workshops on memory boxes. Findings in Ferreira's (2006, 2008) study also suggest that participating teachers shared their knowledge, provided advice and served as role models in their schools and communities. Lieberman and Wood (2002) conducted a study on professional development approaches for teachers. They found that one of the best ways to coach teachers is through other teachers. In correlation with the current study's results, teachers in their study successfully shared their expertise and knowledge about ways in which student learning could be enhanced (Wood, 2007; Lieberman & Wood, 2002).

Participating teachers reportedly shared personal experiences within their groups, which seemingly resulted in supportive asset-based groups. Similar, Boyd and Eckert's (2002) work on building resilient teachers shows that sharing personal stories could assist teachers to get in touch with their inner wisdom and connect to one another, which may result in enhanced resilience. Howard and Johnson (2004) report that teachers in their study turned to colleagues for debriefing on daily incidents that occurred and sharing experiences. In this regard, Berg, Landreth and Fall (1998) emphasise that support groups can create an atmosphere of belonging and acceptance, guide individuals towards greater self-awareness and confirm beliefs, values, reality and opinions via feedback received from other members. Van Dyk (2007) agrees that sharing experiences and problems may assist one in dealing with personal emotions. On the other hand, Ross and Deverell (2004) found that health-care professionals who experience a sense of isolation and lack the opportunity to express their emotionally charged feelings, are more likely to develop burnout.

## **b) Group roles and responsibilities**

The results obtained with regard to teachers' shared roles and responsibilities in a group corroborate with existing literature's findings that group collaboration and shared responsibility are fundamental building blocks of effective group work and successful community-based participatory research partnerships (Ferreira, 2008; Israel *et al.*, 1998, 2006; Sanstad *et al.*, 1999; Wood, 2007). Visser (2007) identified key characteristics and working principles of community interventions within the framework of the social ecological theory and emphasises a strong focus on partnerships as well as shared goals and values.

The teachers in the current study seemingly took ownership in working together as a group and included community members as partners in their asset-based initiatives. Similarly, existing literature in the field of community-based interventions often refers to the capacity of group members for working together and the importance of taking ownership as a group. Literature highlights that when community members build the capacity for working together and addressing community challenges, they generally take ownership in becoming agents of their own change (Richter *et al.*, 2004b; Sewpaul, 2001; Snow, 2001a, 2001b; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Mathie and Cunningham (2003) also emphasise the importance of taking ownership and state that the process of driving development has a direct link with taking credit for the outcomes achieved. Similarly, participants in Koné *et al.*'s (2000) study emphasised that community members' contributions, in the sense of them being involved in different phases of the research, are essential for the success of research partnerships and the enhanced ownership of different role-players. In the same way, Grogan and Proscio (2000) regard a sense of ownership as a necessary underlying value of asset-based community development.

Furthermore, the results of the current study with regard to teachers' individual roles and responsibilities within their teams in order to provide school-based community support correlate with Kretzman and McKnight's (1997) view that individuals are the engine that makes a community grow. Toseland and Rivas (2005) refer to roles as the shared

expectations of individuals in a group. In this regard, existing literature supports the importance of recognising and promoting individuals' unique contributions, skills and knowledge in their community-based participatory research partnerships (Israel *et al.*, 2006; Roussel *et al.*, 2002). In Koné *et al.*'s (2000) study on improving collaboration between researchers and communities, participants indicated that it was important to create tangible roles for community members. The participating teachers and community members in the current study adopted specific roles, for example teachers assigned themselves to different roles in specific projects that could complement their strengths.

The importance for different role-players of assessing their areas of expertise, clearly define roles and responsibilities and respect individual differences are widely documented in existing literature (Austin, 2003; Green *et al.*, 2001; Harper *et al.*, 2004; Koné *et al.*, 2000; Mickan & Rodger, 2000; Schensul, 1999). Teachers in the current study naturally adapted to their roles and consequently each member reportedly played a valuable role that complemented his/her strengths in order to contribute to team success. Participating teachers were also seemingly flexible in their roles and were willing to assist each other in the various roles. In this regard, existing literature agrees on the importance of addressing role definition and being flexible in providing the necessary space and flexibility for changing roles (Blechert, Christiansen & Kari cited in Mickan & Rodger, 2000; Roussel *et al.*, 2002). Similar to the way in which participating teachers' roles developed during the course of the research process, Toseland and Rivas (2005) agree that roles continue to emerge and evolve as a group changes over time.

Israel *et al.* (1998) refer to roles and responsibilities in community-based research partnerships, stating that an effective community-based researcher is a facilitator in this process. In their view, researchers need to contribute their own expertise, but should at the same time recognise the expertise of others. In the current study, I identified teachers as key role-players and aimed to facilitate teachers to drive the process by bringing their own expertise into the research field and taking ownership for their asset-based initiatives.

**c) Positive group relations**

The results obtained on participating teachers' reported ability to build positive interpersonal relationships within their own groups, but also amongst teachers in other participating schools, correlate with existing literature's view that relationship building and quality interpersonal relations are central to any partnership and fundamental to optimal living (Green *et al.*, 2001; Harper *et al.*, 2004; Kretzmann, 1992; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Sanstad *et al.*, 1999). In this manner, the relationships that teachers in the current study built potentially added to positive group dynamics.

Teachers' reported enhanced sense of group cohesion is supported by the findings of the Eisinger and Senturia (2001) study on community partnerships, indicating that greater group cohesion was evident over time, which improved trust amongst individual members. In the context of HIV/AIDS pastoral care, Bhana *et al.* (2006) found that care structured relations between teachers and learners. Lasker and Weiss (2003) also found that positive group dynamics and cohesion are often established by meaningful engagement of group members over an extended period. In the same way, Fritz and Smit (2008) explored ethnographic narratives of teachers' drives and perseverance. These authors found that teachers experienced their school community as a family, where they felt acknowledged and could rely on people, and people could rely on them. Their findings relate to the reported group cohesion of teachers in the current study in the form of a sense of belongingness, unity and security in their groups. Existing literature agrees that cohesive groups may result in group members feeling valued, and can provide a sense of security and a sense of belonging (Mickan & Rodger, 2000; Toseland & Rivas, 2005). In this regard, McKenna and Green (2003) state that a fundamental interpersonal need is to belong to a group that shares similar interests and goals.

Participating teachers' demonstrated sense of group cohesion further correlates with the view of Keys and Lopez (2005) that positive relations with others are a fundamental dimension of a person's psychological well-being. These authors identified some indicators for positive relations that fundamentally relate to the demonstrated

competencies of teachers in the current study, which include: “warm, satisfying, trusting relationships; to be concerned about other’s welfare; to be capable of strong empathy, affection and intimacy; and to understand give-and-take of human relationships” (Keys & Lopez, 2005:49).

Moreover, Toseland and Rivas (2005) identified the potential beneficial effects of group cohesion that correlates with the results of the current study. The first effect evident in Toseland and Rivas’s (2005) study is feelings of self-confidence and personal adjustment (Yalom cited in Toseland & Rivas, 2005), which correlates to the ability of the teachers in the current study to reflect on their personal growth and enhanced self-confidence. A second effect identified is perseverance and attainment with regard to goals (Spink & Carron cited in Toseland & Rivas, 2005), which relates to teachers’ ability to set and monitor their goals. Thirdly, group cohesion was found to have a positive effect on membership management and the duration of participation as a group (Prapavessis & Carron cited in Toseland & Rivas, 2005). Although the attrition of some group members was reported as a challenge in the current study, teachers seemed to remain committed to their group throughout the intervention.

In correlation with the current study, Eisinger and Senturia (2001) found that collaboration and group cohesion in their research community partnership were fostered through the inclusion of dinner as a routine part of their monthly meetings. In the current study, our research team provided teachers with lunch before the start of workshops or focus group sessions. In School 3, one of the teachers adopted the role as a “chef”, who managed some catering before every meeting. The results of the current study confirm that informal discussions and time spent together during lunchtime contributed to enhanced group relations and group cohesion within each group. In this regard, Sanstad *et al.*, (1999) emphasise the importance of investing time in building and maintaining group relationships and partnerships amongst different role-players.

### 6.5.1.3 Management skills

I next discuss literature that confirms the results of the current study with regard to teachers' demonstrated management skills (goal-setting and monitoring skills, problem-solving skills, networking skills, leadership skills, as well as agency towards pastoral support and care). Again, I make use of the same structure as in the preceding section of this chapter.

#### a) Goal-setting and monitoring skills

Results with regard to teachers' demonstrated goal-setting and monitoring skills are in line with existing literature's findings on fundamental components related to goals, namely setting goals, continuously planning goals, directing behaviour towards reaching goals and re-assessing goals (Bruner, 1991; Israel *et al.*, 2006; Locke, 2005; Snyder *et al.*, 2005). Teachers' reported involvement in generating, monitoring, implementing and revising goals is further supported by findings of a study on employing community-based participatory research to address social determinants of health conducted by Krieger *et al.* (2002). In their findings, the authors highlight the importance of community members being involved in the various phases of community projects, including the planning and implementation of goals. Similarly, Green *et al.* (2001) refer to the formulation and achievement of shared goals as an indicator for effective partnerships.

With regard to participating teachers' formulated action plans as part of their goal-setting process, Bender (2004) confirms the importance of developing action plans during community development and support. She highlights that concrete steps in action plans can assist people to focus on what is important for reaching one's goals. The way in which teachers demonstrated the ability to revisit their goals, evaluate the progress made and consequently revise their goals shows similarities with Visser's (2007) view that the ability to monitor ongoing interventions is one of the key working principles of community interventions. The results of the current study are further in line with the Israel *et al.* (2006) study on community-based participatory research partnership. They report that their engagement in continuous planning and re-assessment processes assisted them in re-establishing commitment, objectives and actions. Likewise, Sanstad *et al.*,

(1999) emphasise the ability to remain flexible in dealing with goals as an important aspect for effective and successful partnerships and collaborations.

Furthermore, I found similarities between participating teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies and existing literature's references to components fundamental to setting and achieving goals. Locke (2005) and Israel *et al.* (2006) link goal setting with commitment. In this regard, Locke (2005:304-305) states that goals determine the "direction, intensity and duration of action" and therefore, in order for goals to be effective, people must be committed to accomplishing them. This proposal relates to participating teachers' seemed commitment to working toward their formulated goals. Locke (2005) further refers to two fundamental components that underlie commitment. The first component is the belief that a goal is valuable and worthwhile and, secondly, that one is capable of achieving it (Locke, 2005). These components correlate with participating teachers' reported self-confidence and feelings of competence in meeting their goals and their commitment to making a positive difference in their school-community contexts. Furthermore, teachers' demonstrated ability to adapt to individual roles of expertise, but also to act collaboratively in a group towards reaching goals, correlates with Bruner's (1991) connection between collaboration and achievement of goals. According to Bruner (1991), collaboration comprises the ability to collaboratively formulate goals, share responsibility of formulated goals and utilise each member's unique expertise to reach shared goals.

#### **b) Problem-solving skills**

Teachers' demonstrated problem-solving skills are in line with Snyder *et al.*'s (2005) definition of problem-solving skills, namely the ability to generate alternative ways of reaching formulated goals when obstacles are encountered. The results on participating teachers' ability to identify and address problems in their unique school-community contexts correlate with the Lasker and Weiss (2003) study on the importance of collaborative problem solving for improving community health. These authors found that "community competence" is fundamental to effective problem solving, which refers to

community members' ability to collaborate effectively to identify problems and needs, and to find ways of addressing these problems. Furthermore, teachers' ability to take ownership in dealing with setbacks and challenges in their school-community contexts is in line with Ferreira's (2008) and Karnpisit's (2000) views that empowering people entails encouraging them to deal with their challenges by generating their own solutions. It implies that they should accept agency and ownership over their own lives, in mobilising assets and resources.

**c) Networking skills**

Teachers' demonstrated ability to establish networks and partnerships with various individuals and organisations to provide psychosocial care and support to the school-community contexts is in agreement with existing literature that confirms the importance of involving community members to actively engage in establishing and maintaining relationships between local residents, associations and organisations (Ammerman & Parks, 1998; Bender, 2004; Bouwer, 2005; Cordes, 2002; Diale & Fritz, 2007; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming; Eloff, 2006a; Ferreira, 2008; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1997; Loots, 2005; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, 2003; McNulty, 2005; Odell, 2002; Pinkett, 2000; Roos & Temane, 2007; Siegel, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Tibaijuka, 2003).

In this regard, Israel *et al.* (1998) identified the ability to build on community resources as a key principle of community-based research, which includes building networks of relationships and facilitating collaborative partnerships. Similarly, Campbell *et al.* (2007) found that the ability to establish networks with external actors on a local, national and international level is a key strategy in building contexts that support positive community responses to HIV/AIDS.

**d) Leadership skills**

In line with the results of the current study, York-Barr and Duke (2004) agree that teachers are progressively taking on more leadership functions on both instructional and organisational levels of practice. The participating teachers portrayed leadership skills

and capacities in the way they were steering their asset-based initiatives. They seemed able to facilitate action and involve individuals; motivate, encourage and inspire individuals with regard to the asset-based initiatives; and delegate responsibilities. These underlying constructs of leadership identified in the current study relate to Hacket and Martin's (1993) work with regard to facilitation skills for team leaders to improve productivity. These authors view effective leaders as people who can facilitate change through team empowerment and enable the team to share in decision-making. They also highlight the role of leaders to encourage positive team behaviour and participation (Hacket & Martin, 1993).

In further confirmation of the results of the current study, existing literature considers leadership to be a key factor in facilitating member participation and successful partnerships (Alexander, Comfort, Weiner, & Bogue, 2001; Calleson, Seifer & Maurana, 2002; Lantz *et al.*, 2001); motivating team members (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Maton & Salem, 1995); delegating responsibility appropriately (Husting, 1996; Mickan & Rodger, 2000) and facilitating community empowerment (Fawcett, Paine-Andrews, Francisco, Schultz, Richter, Lewis, Williams, Harris, Berkley, Fisher & Lopez, 1995; Goodman, Speers, McLeroy, Fawcett, Kegler & Parker, 1998; Maton & Salem, 1995; Yoo *et al.*, 2009).

Where the teachers in the current study showed the ability to drive asset-based initiatives and contribute to psychosocial support in their school-community contexts, similar studies found that leadership of key individuals who facilitate and drive the process of community support can play a fundamental role in the success of community initiatives (Alexander *et al.*, 2001; Flowers & Waddell, 2004; Grogan & Proscio, 2000; Lantz *et al.*, 2001; Lasker & Weiss, 2005; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, 2003; Turner & Pinkett, s.a.; Yoo *et al.*, 2009).

Furthermore, existing literature links leadership to various underlying constructs that are similar to the participating teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies. Flowers and Waddell (2004:8-9) identified certain qualities for effective leadership. Some of the

characteristics include the following: “humbleness, energetic, enthusiastic, passionate, determined, courageous, resilient, loyal, reflective, sense of social justice, self-knowledge, selfless, good listener, able to inspire, decision-maker, strategic thinker, expertise of some kind, takes responsibility and catalyst for positive change”. These authors summarise the said qualities into three main traits for community leadership. The first quality is the ability to influence people and to bring about change, in line with participating teachers’ demonstrated ability to motivate and inspire others. The second quality relates to being familiar with the goal of required change, which can be linked to participating teachers’ reported ability to set, monitor and revise goals. The third quality is to mobilise other people to become active participants in the process of change, which correlates with participating teachers’ demonstrated ability to mobilise individuals’ capacities and skills to contribute to psychosocial support in their school-community contexts.

Furthermore, Lasker and Weiss (2003) found that leadership skills can be linked to effective problem-solving skills and the ability to be comfortable with sharing knowledge and resources, which were also evident in the current study. Another link that is supported by the results of the current study is between leadership and the ability to retain a strategic focus and facilitate goal setting (Mickan & Rodger, 2000). In further support of the results of the current study, Israel *et al.* (1998) found that the success and effectiveness of collaborative research partnerships are partly determined by the extent to which leaders are supportive, diplomatic and able to facilitate shared goals and collaboration. Lastly, the results of the current study are in line with Cook’s (1998) connection between leadership skills and the ability to take ownership. In her manual for community members to facilitate community support to AIDS orphans, she focuses on the importance of community members’ management skills in taking ownership and responsibility for this process (Cook, 1998).

**e) Agency towards pastoral support and care**

The way in which teachers in the current study demonstrated agency towards pastoral support and care, agrees with existing studies on the valuable role that teachers can play

in acting as agents for change for psychosocial support in the school context (Ferreira, 2006; Giese *et al.*, 2003b; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Mnguni, 2006; Richter, 2003a). In correlation with the teachers' demonstrated agency towards pastoral care and increased involvement in school-based support in their communities, several studies advocate the collaboration and partnership between schools and communities as starting point for support initiatives (LaPoint & Jackson, 2004; Thompson & Uyeda, 2004; Cagampang *et al.*, 2002; Wilson *et al.*, 2002; Ostrom *et al.*, 1995, Lambert, 1991). In this regard, the results of the current study are in line with Flowers and Wandell's (2004) findings. These authors employed teachers as project participants and found that they were good supporters, motivators and mentors, as well as resourceful coordinators and inventive strategic thinkers, who displayed the ability to build sustainable community structures (Flowers & Wandell, 2004).

#### **6.5.2 Contradictions in existing knowledge with regard to teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies**

---

I identified some contradictions with regard to the results obtained in the current study on asset-based competencies and existing studies. These contradictions relate to leadership skills, networking skills, problem-solving skills and agency towards pastoral care and support.

Kim *et al.* (2009) conducted a study to assess the ability of health promotion workers in order to promote community capacity building. The researchers found that the lowest community capacity driving factors were leadership and community structure. Participants in their study indicated that leaders did not provide the necessary support, did not give them the necessary acknowledgement and did not facilitate effective networks. They also reported a lack of community groups that fostered a sense of belonging and provided them with an opportunity to exchange information. A possible explanation for the dissimilarity between Kim *et al.*'s (2009) findings and the results of the current study could be that the teachers in the current study took ownership and showed commitment in

facilitating successful implementation of asset-based initiatives. Therefore, these teachers supported each other and facilitated networks to assist them in reaching goals. This is, however, a mere working assumption that requires further investigation.

Another contradiction with the results of the current study was found in a study conducted by Calleson *et al.* (2002) on forces that could influence community involvement of academic health centres, thus networking. These authors found that a lack of collaboration across health professions schools and inadequate faculty roles were the most significant potential barriers to community involvement. In their research report, the authors made some recommendations about future community involvement and included the importance of community involvement in the planning and implementation of partnerships. A possible explanation for the contradictory findings between Calleson *et al.*'s (2002) study and the results obtained in the current study could be that the teachers in the current study were involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring of goals and therefore demonstrated group collaboration and interaction, which correlates with the participatory nature of my choice of methodology.

In contrast with the results of the current study, where participating teachers' and community members were able to solve problems and create networks for community psychosocial support, O'Conner and Gates (2000) indicate that there is a growing concern in literature about the ability of community members to effectively work together towards solving community problems. Similarly, Smart (2003) is of the opinion that communities' ability to cope with challenges like HIV/AIDS are already exhausted. In addition, Fowler (2000) states that communities often become further weakened when they depend on external organisations to solve their problems and needs, which could result in dependency on external institutions.

In contrast to these views, the results obtained in the current study indicate that teachers seemingly took initiative in building networks with external resources and therefore took ownership for established partnerships. The networks and partnerships evident in the current study were therefore not initiated by external parties, but identified, mobilised and

managed by the teachers themselves. Thus, participating teachers reportedly took ownership for asset-based projects and followed through on reaching their goals of school-based psychosocial support. This relates to the asset-based framework, which uses networks as a way of mobilising identified assets and resources.

However, many South African studies disagree with the results obtained in the current study that teachers could act as agents for pastoral care and support (Jansen, 2001; Sachs, 2001; Matheson & Harley, 2001; Jansen & Christie, 1999). Jansen (2001) argues that teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral role is a picture of an ideal teacher for policy makers and not always practical in a South African classroom. Matheson and Harley (2001) agree that a pastoral role is often out of line with teachers' professional, personal and cultural identities. Jansen and Christie (1999) found that teachers view a pastoral role as overly ambitious, out of reach, complex and demanding. Similarly, Smit and Fritz (2008) suggest that teachers often need to deal with challenges and adversities for which they are not sufficiently trained. Bhana *et al.* (2006) also found that teachers are often out of their depth in providing pastoral care.

A possible explanation for these contradictory findings with regard to teachers' agency towards pastoral care could be found in findings by Giese *et al.*, (2003b). These authors firstly found that schools have the potential to act as powerful vehicles for psychosocial support to children. However, it was apparent from their research that schools often lacked the human resource capacity to undertake additional responsibilities without significant support and mutual partnerships with relevant service providers (Giese *et al.*, 2003b). Therefore, this contradiction could be explained by the fact that participating teachers in the current study were involved in the asset-based intervention and assistance and facilitation provided by the research team. I therefore posit that teachers' demonstrated agency towards pastoral care could be because of the asset-based intervention in which they participated (see 3.3.3). However, this is a mere working assumption that requires further exploration in future research.

### **6.5.3 Silences in existing knowledge with regard to teachers' demonstrated asset-based competencies**

---

In my review of the literature, I also came across silences between the results of the current study and existing literature. These silences will now be explored. The results of the current study on effective group communication skills focus on communication patterns between teachers in their asset-based groups. Existing literature increasingly focuses on another angle of open communication, namely between research partners and not necessarily only between group members (Adams, Miller-Korth, & Brown, 2004; Krieger *et al.*, 2002; Wood, 2007; Yoo *et al.*, 2009). These authors refer to the importance of clear and frequent communication between participants and researchers. They highlight the sharing of knowledge and research results as an important principle for successful community-based participatory projects. In this regard, Koné *et al.*, (2000) conducted a study on improving collaboration between researchers and communities. They found that the active participation and communication of the various role-players increased their level of ownership and commitment to community initiatives. Although I informed participating teachers regarding the research processes and also conducted member checks to ensure that participants agreed with the results of the study, the results of the current study focus more on the communication between participants in their specific groups. Therefore, the data generated in the current study did not include communication between research partners.

Another silence I encountered between the results of the current study and existing literature relates to conflict management skills as fundamental for effective group work and community participation (Israel *et al.*, 1998; Mickan & Rodger, 2000; Warner, 2000). Israel *et al.* (1998) refer to conflicts associated with different viewpoints, priorities, assumptions and beliefs in a group. In this regard, Warner (2000) advocates the importance of conducting an evaluation of potential for conflict and managing it in relation to a project intervention. Teachers in the current study made minimal reference to conflict in their groups. One possible reason for this silence could be that the teachers' use of communication skills limited conflict. They reportedly engaged in regular

discussions to share opinions and viewpoints; therefore they seemingly diffused potential confrontation before it resulted in conflict situation. As such, teachers' engagement in group consultations could be seen as a form of conflict management, as regular consultations possibly prevented conflict from arising.

## **6.6 INSIGHT IN TEACHERS' DEMONSTRATED ASSET-BASED COMPETENCIES**

---

I posit that the characteristics presented in this theme could be viewed as asset-based competencies. My assumption is that these characteristics observed are outcomes or by-products of the asset-based intervention. However, this working assumption needs further investigation, as these demonstrated characteristics could also be because of contextual factors, personality traits and/or the participatory method applied in the current study. I present three interrelated levels of asset-based competencies, namely positive identity formation, group effectiveness skills and management skills. The identified levels of asset-based competencies relates well with the fundamental characteristics and advantages of the asset-based approach, which include ownership, shared responsibility, flexibility, creation of a caring environment, capacity building, enablement and self-determination, building shared partnerships and networks, belief in and focus on internal control and a strong focus on assets and resources (Eloff, 2006a). I next discuss insight in positive psychological states as building blocks for positive identity formation. Secondly, I argue the dynamic interplay between asset-based competencies within the framework of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002).

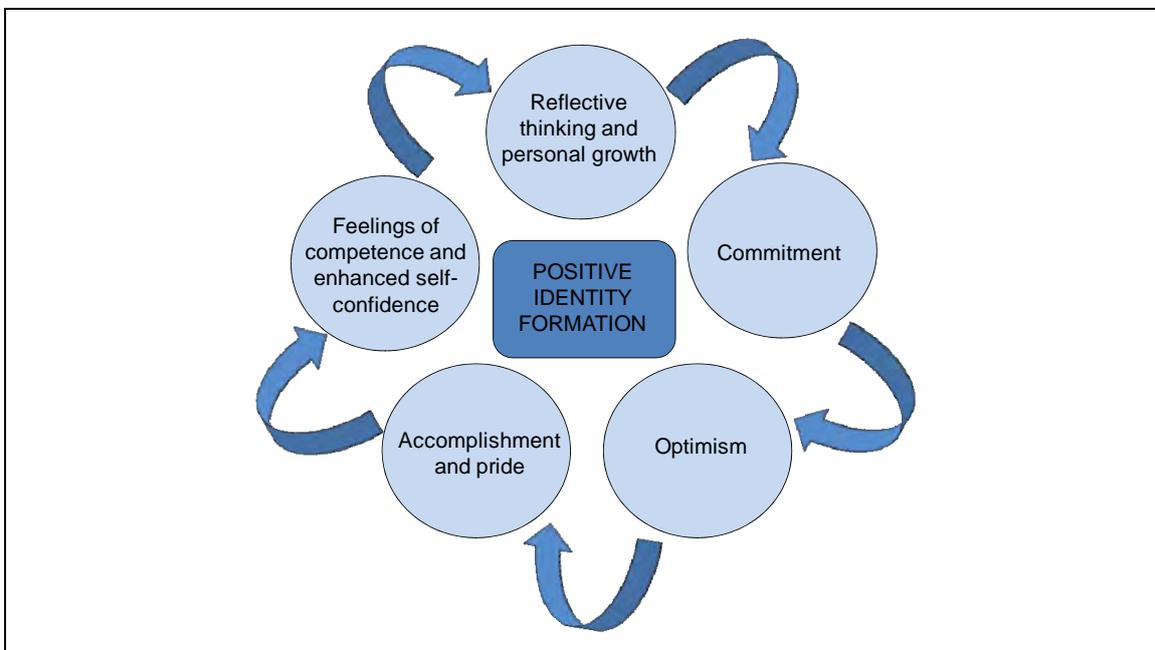
### **6.6.1 Positive psychological states as building blocks of positive identity formation**

---

For the purpose of this study, I define positive psychological states as any intrapersonal positive characteristic (Ebersöhn, 2006c), condition or state of an individual. I found that teachers' positive identity formation was underpinned by dynamic and interconnected

positive psychological states (personal growth and reflective thinking; commitment; optimism; accomplishment and pride as well as feelings of competence and enhanced self-esteem), and acted as building blocks for positive identity formation. I argue that dynamic and interconnected positive psychological states could lead to enhanced positive identity formation.

I posit that in order to develop a positive identity, it is necessary to have insight in one's strengths and developmental areas, to be open to new learning experiences and to reflect on one's growth and development. I postulate that commitment to new challenges, motivation for meeting goals and optimism despite challenges to goals function significantly as asset-based competencies in identity formation. Similarly, a sense of accomplishment and pride in meeting goals may result in feelings of competence and enhanced self-confidence. In turn, feelings of competence and confidence may again result in personal growth and renewed openness to take on new challenges. This dynamic interplay between positive psychological states forms a cyclical and interconnected process that can arguably result in enhanced positive identity formation. I present the dynamic and interrelated relationship between these psychological states in Figure 6.2.



*Figure 6.3:* The dynamic relationship between positive psychological states as building blocks of positive identity formation.

Positive psychological states can further be understood within the framework of the broaden-and-build theory of Fredrickson (2004). This theory argues that positive emotions appear to broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoires and assist in building personal resources on the long term, which can in turn stimulate upward spirals towards enhanced emotional well-being, psychological resistance and the ability to thrive and flourish (Fredrikson, 2004; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). In the current study, I did not measure these competencies and therefore I recommend future research to determine if enhanced emotional well-being, psychological resistance and the ability to thrive and flourish could be a result of asset-based intervention.

#### **6.6.2 Dynamic interplay between asset-based competencies within the framework of the self-determination theory**

---

By using the lens of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002), I argue that a dynamic and interconnected relationship exists between three levels of asset-based competencies, which regards human beings as dynamic and active in inherently searching for and engaging in challenges in their environments in an attempt to actualise their potential, capacities and sensibilities. The theory of self-determination posits three fundamental psychological needs, namely competence, relatedness and autonomy. I propose that in the process of implementing the asset-based approach and therefore demonstrating core asset-based competencies, one can also fulfil these underlying psychological needs.

The first psychological need is competence, which refers to a feeling of efficiency and effectiveness in one's interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities to apply one's capabilities (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The basic need for competence, generally guides people to search for challenges that are optimal for their capabilities and to continually attempt to maintain and develop their skills and abilities through activity (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The need for competence relates to a person's

positive psychological states that could lead to positive identity formation. Relatedness refers to feeling connected to others, to support and care for others and being supported and cared for by others. Relatedness implies a sense of belongingness and unity with others and with one's community (Ryan & Deci, 2002). This view is supported by McKenna and Green (2003), who classify the need to belong as one of the most basic needs on an interpersonal level. This psychological need is further confirmed by Toseland and Rivas (2005) in their work on understanding group dynamics. These authors state reasons for people's attraction to groups, which include the need for relatedness, recognition and security. The psychological need for relatedness correlates with the asset-based competency of effectively functioning in a group. Autonomy refers to being the perceived source of one's own behaviour and an expression of the self. When individuals are autonomous, they experience their behaviour as an expression of the self and feel in control of situations (Ryan & Deci, 2002). This relates to the ability to take ownership of one's life and demonstrating asset-based competencies of managing one's circumstances through goal-setting and monitoring skills, and problem-solving, leadership and networking skills.

According to the self-determination theory, optimal well-being results when these basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy are fulfilled (Patrick, Knee, Canevello & Lonsbary, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2002). Subjective well-being is defined as one's cognitive and emotional evaluation of satisfaction and fulfilment in life (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2005; Keyes and Lopez; 2005). Teachers in the current study demonstrated an enhanced sense of well-being and reported a positive evaluation and satisfaction with life. I argue that basic psychological needs can be fulfilled in the asset-based approach, which could lead to increased levels of well-being. However, this working assumption needs further investigation in future studies.

Positive identity formation may facilitate group and management skills. Positive identity formation, underpinned by positive psychological states, can therefore also be seen as important building blocks for group management and subsequently management skills. Bebbington (1999) argues that assets and positive states may provide people with the

capacity to engage in meaningful relationships with the world. Thus, from this view, if one does not feel competent and optimistic about one's capacities and strengths, one would find it difficult to make a valuable contribution with regards to one's role and responsibility within a group. Similarly, it is important to be open to individual learning experiences in order to be able to benefit from group members' input, insights and knowledge. In the same way, one needs to value one's own contributions in a group.

Furthermore, it seems important to be committed as an individual in order to demonstrate commitment towards group goals. Individual group members also need to possess a positive identity in order to be able to engage in positive group dynamics. In the same way, both positive identity formation and group effectiveness skills may act as fundamental building blocks for effective management skills. If people feel competent and optimistic about their capacities and about making a valuable contribution in a group, they would probably be better equipped to demonstrate management skills like goal-setting and monitoring skills, problem-solving skills, networking skills and leadership skills. Figure 6.3 illustrates my supposition of positive identity formation as facilitating construct for group effectiveness skills and management skills.

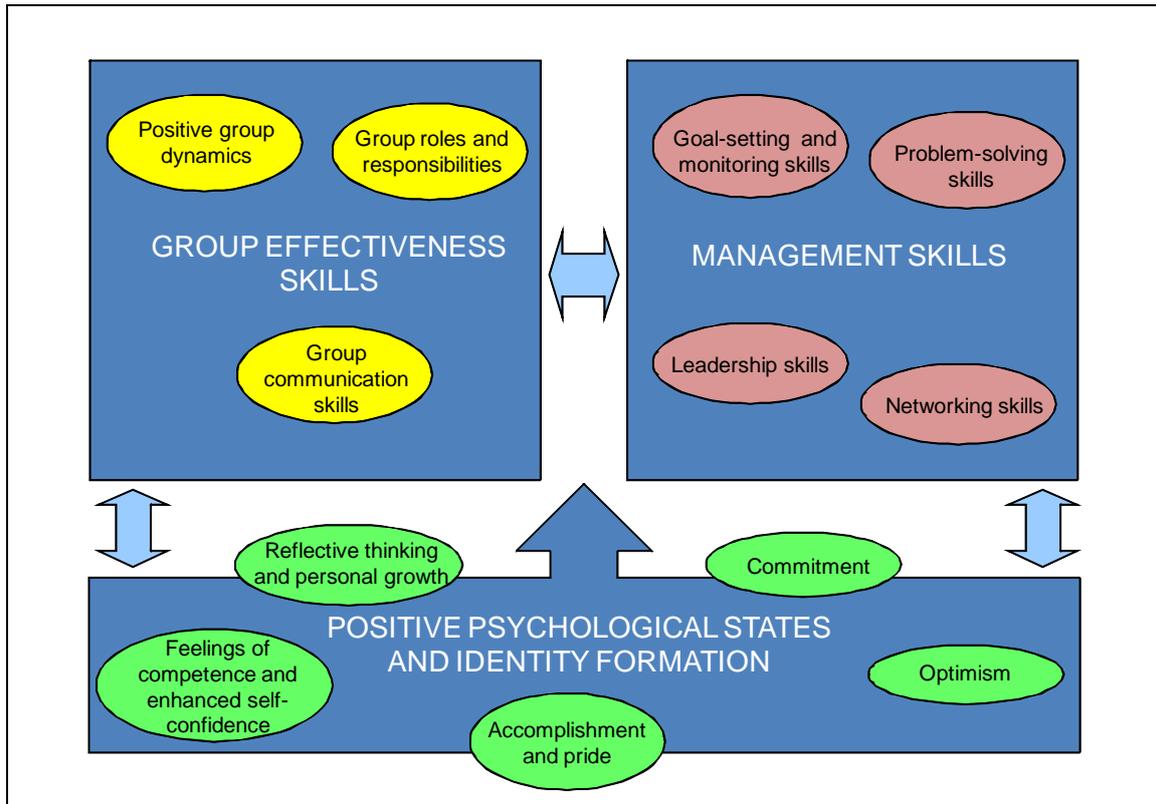


Figure 6.4: Building blocks of asset-based competencies.

The dynamic and interrelated relationship between people’s positive identity formation and subsequent interpersonal communication and management skills is widely confirmed by existing literature. Erez and Isen (2002) found that positive emotional states in people may facilitate flexible and efficient problem-solving and decision-making. Similarly, Yalom (cited in Toseland and Rivas, 2005) found a positive correlation between feelings of self-confidence and group cohesion. Toseland and Rivas (2005) found that pride, meeting group goals and a sense of accomplishment could increase group cohesion. Lasker and Weiss (2003) found that group collaboration is fundamental to the development of effective problem-solving strategies. Lasker and Weiss (2003) also argue that leadership and management can influence the success of community collaboration.

Literature relates constructs such as well-being, empowerment, self-actualisation, resilience and empowerment to positive psychological states. Nelson and Simmons (2001) and Simmons and Nelson (2005) found a positive correlation between eustress,

well-being and positive psychological states. Maton and Salem (1995) argue the relationship between empowerment and gaining resources for greater control over one's life and the accomplishment of goals. Ferreira (2008) agrees that empowerment implies participation and agency, with the goal of actualising strengths and mobilising assets in people and communities. Similarly, the teachers participating in the current study demonstrated ownership and responsibility in accepting agency, and developing strategies and solutions to enhance change in their schools and communities. This relates to Ferreira's (2008) finding that increased levels of well-being are based on individuals' level of self-confidence, self-worth and pride, which emphasise a fundamental component of community-based coping, namely empowerment. Existing literature agrees that empowered individuals generally feel more confident, portray enhanced self-efficacy and self-reliance, and work more collaboratively, which in turn could result in community and social change (Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda, & Staker 2002; Ferreira, 2008). In addition, Campbell (2004) found that effective partnerships and collaboration in a community could lead to social change in a community, as was also evident in the current study.

I therefore conclude that asset-based competencies can be demonstrated when implementing the asset-based approach. These asset-based competencies dynamically interact and may constitute intra- and interpersonal asset-based characteristics. From the viewpoint of self-determination theory, I posit that optimal well-being may result from these asset-based competencies. I therefore posit that when the asset-based approach is implemented and the identified asset-based competencies are present and subsequent psychological needs fulfilled, it could lead to increased levels of well-being, empowerment, resilience, flourishing and optimal functioning, and subsequently to community change and development. However, this working assumption requires further research. Figure 6.4 illustrates my supposition.

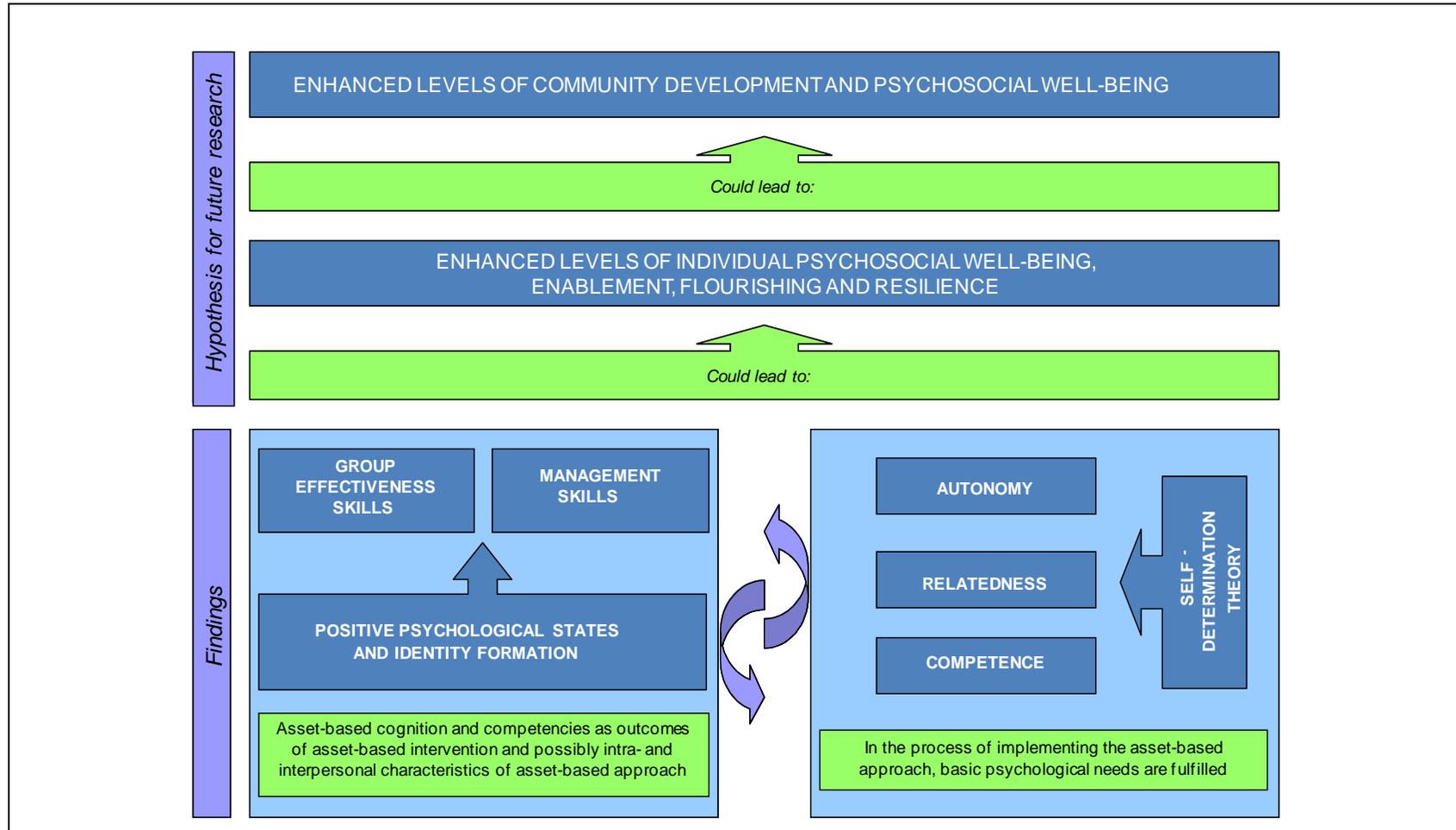


Figure 6.5: Asset-based competencies within the framework of self-determination theory.

## 6.7 CONCLUSION

---

In this chapter, I reported the results of the third theme of the current study. I made use of participants' verbatim quotations, visual data and extracts from my research journal to enrich the findings of the study. Furthermore, I expanded on congruent and contradictory findings as well as silences between the current study and existing literature. I generated insight into asset-based competencies demonstrated by teachers. In Chapter 7, I present conclusions and recommendations.

