

## CHAPTER 5

### RELATING RESEARCH FINDINGS TO EXISTING LITERATURE

---

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4, I presented the results of the study in terms of identified themes and subthemes. In this chapter, I integrate and interpret the results in terms of existing literature. I discuss correlations as well as discrepancies between the findings of this study and those reflected in existing literature. I also indicate silences that I noticed when comparing the results of this study to existing literature. Throughout, I highlight potential contributions of this study to the existing knowledge base. I structure my discussion in accordance with the emerged themes from the previous chapter. In chapter 6, I reflect on the research questions as formulated in chapter 1.

#### 5.2 LITERATURE CONTROL: TOWARDS FINDINGS

In this section, I determine (i) how results that emerged from my analysis contribute to relevant existing bodies of knowledge (Section 5.2.1 and Table 5.1); (ii) instances where emerged themes contradict existing knowledge (Section 5.2.2 and Table 5.2); (iii) aspects which are prominent in existing knowledge, yet were silent in the data in this study (Section 5.2.3 and Table 5.3); and (iv) new insights flowing from this study for understandings on power and participatory methodology (Section 5.2.4 and Table 5.4).

##### 5.2.1 RESULTS THAT CORRELATE WITH EXISTING LITERATURE ON POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the subthemes that support existing knowledge. Throughout, I provide an interpretive discussion of my findings in support of existing knowledge.

Existing knowledge in power strongly represents power as capability for leadership, which is based on the capability of actors to express and act on desires. This trend of power as capability for leadership is supported by findings in this study that view power as empowerment, decision-making, trust, leadership and appropriating power.

Literature on partnerships indicates that challenges and barriers are embedded in partnerships. Existing knowledge on partnerships show that time is a scarce resource that could hamper the establishment of partnerships. Findings in this study corroborate existing knowledge of partnerships in terms of factors that could impede power and partnership in PR.

Existing knowledge on partnership also indicates that partnership relationships evolve over time. Findings of this study confirm that power and partnership are dynamic as they involve issues of trust and confidence. Additionally, literature indicates that power and partnership are enhanced when there is a mutual collaboration among partners and when the spaces of participation are open and visible. As corroborated by findings in this study, partners became a community of practice when they were regarded as leaders who are capable and empowered in partnerships.

**Table 5.1: Results that support existing knowledge**

<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Author and year</b>	<b>Existing knowledge</b>	<b>Interpretive discussion: How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
Characteristics of power: Leadership	Lukes, 2005; Rappaport, 1987; Gaventa, 1998.	Power is the ability to express and act on one's desires.	In this study power was related to the capacity to provide leadership.
		Power is capacity or agency that can be shared or used for positive action.	Teachers in this study provided tutelage as facilitators who advanced the needs of the community.
Characteristic of power: Empowerment	Narayan, 2005; Smulovitz and Walton, 2003; Freire, 1970; Foucault, 1979; Giddens, 1979; Minkler and Wallerstein, 2005; Cornwall, 2002, 2004, 2007.	The ability to make choices, transform choices into actions, and facilitate processes of change.	Teachers in this study had a voice, set the agenda and guided others.
		The ability of an individual to be aware and take the lead.	Teachers in this study took the initiative by coming together and taking charge by seeking solutions to challenges that faced the community, thereby acting in order to transform and develop the community.
		People in the community taking the lead to transform their world through collective action.	Teachers were able to lead the community, because of the enlightenment they gained from university researchers.



Subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	<b>Interpretive discussion: How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
		Empowerment gained through participation, allow participants to expand their power from within to create needed changes.	Teachers viewed themselves as being empowered by university researchers through knowledge sharing.
		Opportunities for empowerment are created through invited spaces of participation and capacity building of others.	Other stakeholders were involved to become part of the project and freely participate.
Characteristic of power: Decision-making	Rowlands, 1997; Foucault, 1980; Gaventa, 2006.	Power as ‘power to’ and ‘power within’ with emphasis on access to decision-making and a focus on building self-esteem.	Teachers having agency to act, the ability to voice and openly discuss issues in terms of deciding on what they wanted to do in the project.
		There is freedom within discourses to interpret and regulate the world.	Teachers transferred the knowledge they had gained and shared with the rest of the community and even invited other schools to join the project.
		Visible form of power is concerned with observable decision-making.	Teachers felt that every action was done in the open, where there was transparency.
Characteristic of power: Appropriating power	Lukes, 2005.	Power is the ability to shape and control desires and beliefs.	Teachers indicated that they were the ones who decided on what they wanted and subsequently executed their plans of action.
Characteristic of power: Trust	Dalal <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Lister, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Wolff and Maurana, 2001; Lantz <i>et al.</i> , 2001; Eisinger and Senturia, 2001.	Factors related to the success of community–academia partnerships entail trust.	Being able to rely on others and count on them, teachers in this study emphasised that trust was based in their defining and prioritising needs and goals of the project and receiving feedback from partners.
		Establishing and maintaining relationships based on building trust is important for power-sharing partnerships.	Teachers related trust as the core to creating power-sharing relationships.

Subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	<b>Interpretive discussion: How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
		Mutual support and long-term commitment are key factors in successful partnerships that would lead to participants having a sense of power.	Teachers counted on others and knew that they would be available to attend to the needs of the project.
Factors impeding power and partnerships	Ferman & Hill, 2004; Lantz <i>et al.</i> , 2001; Foster-Fishman <i>et al.</i> , 2001.	There are barriers and challenges to partnerships.	Teachers in this study indicated that time and trust was a challenge to commitment to participate effectively.
		Partnership is a resource-expensive endeavour, and the most consumed resource is time.	They had to take time from their already tight schedule to accommodate activities of the project.
		Community partners often express frustration with researchers leaving them in the middle of the project.	Teachers indicated that some teachers were not always honouring appointments and meetings.
		Lack of adequate capacity on either side of the partners to deliver on the commitment.	Teachers in this study indicated that initially, there was a time when they doubted their capability, skills and confidence to undertake work in the project.
Dynamics of power: Trust and confidence	Cargo and Mercer, 2008; Green, 2005; Rabaia and Gillham, 2010.	Challenges of academic and community partnerships such as unequal power relations, lack of respect and lack of trust towards community partners.	Teachers in this study indicated that trust and confidence evolved over time. Initially they lacked the confidence to take the lead.
		Space of trust will develop when risk-taking in learning occurs, which eventually lead to trust being inevitable.	As time progressed and relationships were built in mutual respect, teachers in this study indicated that deep trust developed.
		After addressing power issues, trust develops between partners. That integrity of partnerships is achieved through mutual respect and trust.	As time progressed, teachers realised that the university researchers had respect and trust for them as equals in the participatory project.

Subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	<b>Interpretive discussion:</b> <b>How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
Dynamics of power: Knowledge brings ability	Rubin, 2004; Lantz <i>et al.</i> 2001; Schenzul, 1999.	Research partnerships imply an opportunity for co-learning and discovering the self, as well as an opportunity for community-based researchers to acquire and develop research skills.	The more teachers participated and made decisions, the more they learnt, gained knowledge and discovered themselves.
		Community members can be empowered by gaining knowledge and skills.	Teachers gained research skills, by learning how to analyse situations, as well as facilitation skills
		Community members can gain knowledge and skills to facilitate social change in their communities.	Teachers learnt research skills that they initially did not possess, which translated into recognising that they had assets and resources which were not fully utilised and tapped into. They brought about change in the community.
Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	Dalal <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Vasconcellos and Vasconcellos, 2009; Buys and Bursnell, 2007; Ferman and Hill, 2004; Gaventa, 2003b; Castello, Watson and White, 2002; Mitchell, 2005; Citrin, 2001; Eisinger and Senturia, 2001; Hodgett and Johnson, 2001; Wolff and Maurana, 2001; Green and Mercer, 2001; Minkler, 2004; Chataway, 1997; Butterfoss <i>et al.</i> , 1996.	Partnership is about power-sharing based on trust and respect.	Teachers perceived partnerships to be two people or more working together and making decisions together, thereby sharing power.
		Partnerships between community and university researchers are strengthened by benefits gained by both partners.	Teachers indicated that they learnt research skills and developed networking potential.
		Equitable and mutual partnerships will be enhanced by shared vision with strong mutual commitment, and shared decision-making. Both partners have equal power.	Teachers developed goals of what they wanted to achieve and they were treated as equals, making decisions and taking power.



Subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	<b>Interpretive discussion:</b> <b>How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
		<p>Power and partnership is the ability to be allowed to participate freely, thereby creating a platform for voices to be heard. Inclusion of others provides an opportunity to increase the knowledge base.</p>	<p>Teachers in this study engaged fellow teachers (peers) to learn and work with them in the STAR project.</p>
		<p>Mutual engagement of community and researchers in all possible steps of the research is important.</p>	<p>Teachers indicated that they worked together with university researchers in all phases.</p>
		<p>Partnership is viewed as a mechanism that facilitates and promotes the empowerment of others.</p>	<p>Teachers invited other schools and taught them about STAR.</p>
<p>Establishing an enabling environment</p>	<p>Taylor, 2008; Gaventa, 2003b; Cornwall, 2002; Foucault, 1980; Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963; Arnestein, 1969.</p>	<p>Power relations shape the boundaries of participatory spaces, in terms of what is possible within them, and who may enter.</p>	<p>Participating teachers indicated that partnerships and power were about a conducive environment that allowed freedom to do whatever they wanted and interact with whomever they deemed appropriate to add value to the partnership.</p>
		<p>Participatory practice begin locally, as it is in the arenas of everyday life in which people are able to construct their own voice.</p>	<p>Teachers were able to plan, make decisions, implement and build their capacity within their communities, hence at local level.</p>
		<p>The dynamics of power depend on the type of space in which it is found, the level at which it operates and the form it takes. Participation that is empowering and promotes equal power distribution is a result of an enabling environment.</p>	<p>Teachers worked like a ‘three-legged pot’, whereby they involved parents, learners, and the community to participate in the various activities that they initiated.</p>



Subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	<b>Interpretive discussion: How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
		Initiatives that are brought about by local community partners can make change more embedded and thoroughgoing, thus retaining the potential of participation to be transformative.	Teachers reported that they were given the opportunity to network with the business community and thus improve the lives of the learners and beyond.
Agency	Dalal <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Department of Health, South Australia, 2007; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005; Narayan 2005; Foster-Fishman <i>et al.</i> , 2005; Rubin 2004; Mathie and Cunningham, 2002; Tembo, 2003; Schulz <i>et al.</i> , 2002; James, 2004; Bush and Folger, 1994; Farrington and Bebbington, 1993.	Agency and development begins with capacity building at various levels.	Participating teachers identified the opportunity to act on their action plans within their community.
		An actor's ability to make meaningful choices – that is, the actor is able to envisage and decide on options.	Teachers in this study were able to shape the course of lives and the communities they lived in, they experienced 'power with'.
		In a community-based PR initiative that involves lay health advisors, participants can become confident when allowed to set the agenda, thus facilitate empowerment.	Teachers in this study indicated that they became the 'sun' that transmitted its rays to nourish other plants, because they were able to pursue their agenda as planned.
		Community members can be empowered through community organising, resulting in communities being able to advocate for change, formulate and implement strategies.	Teachers in this study brought together parents to equip them with life skills such as doing craft work and producing vegetable gardens.
		Participants can be social change agents.	Teachers perceived themselves as having the power to act, thus creating social transformation.
Participants as agents of social transformation	Dalal <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Ferreira, 2006; Foster-Fishman, 2005 <i>et al.</i> , Ferman and Hill, 2004; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Bennett, 2002;	Capacity building results in bringing about social change in a community.	Teachers perceived themselves to be agents of social transformation for their communities, for they brought development into the lives of people.

Subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	<b>Interpretive discussion: How similar do my results lend support to what is already known</b>
	Chapman, 2002; Hill and Dougherty, 2002; Lawson, 2002; Wolff and Maurana, 2001; Benson and Harkavy, 2001; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000; Fawcett <i>et al.</i> , 1996; Argyris and Schon, 1991.	Individual empowerment is a process called ‘mobilisation empowerment’, which builds on the skills, information and linkages needed for livelihood empowerment.	Teachers in this study applied the knowledge they had gained to address community psychosocial problems. Teachers indicated that learners and communities were relying on them.
		The ability of participants to bring about change is an important component of community capacity building.	Teachers in this study taught the community to be self-reliant, utilising resources that they already had.
		Transforming perspective as change that goes beyond adaptation, being change that reframes attitudes, beliefs and cultural values.	Teachers were able to analyse their situation from a positive angle where they perceived themselves to have the assets and resources within them to bring about change.
		Evidence suggests that numerous resources, strengths and skills are present within communities.	Teachers placed strong emphasis on themselves as potential resources that could build the community.
		Being agents of knowledge transfer for social change implies the capacity to mobilise resources and thus create a platform for joint and equitable allocation of resources.	Teachers in this study collaborated with the business community to donate various resources and further engaged other stakeholders like department of social services to avail such services closer to both parents and learners.

### 5.2.1.1 Power as capability for leadership

As supported by the findings of this study, power is viewed as leadership, referring to the consciousness of individuals and the power to express and act on one’s desires (Rappaport, 1987). In line with Gaventa’s (1998) view that power as leadership entails the ability to represent others and act in their best interests, teachers in this study similarly indicated that by being able to mentor others and decide on the projects they wanted to execute, they



experienced power as leadership. I regard the capability to mentor others as proof of showing that one possesses the skill to be in charge and act, thus displaying characteristics of empowerment.

In line with the findings of this study, power as capability of leadership is typically regarded from the perspective of empowerment. Narayan (2005) for example, defines power in terms of empowerment, highlighting that empowerment refers to the ability to make choices, transform choices into actions, and facilitate processes of change. In this study, teachers expressed that their voices were heard and further guided others on what to do in the project.

Empowerment is regarded as the capacity for agency, to make choices that will in turn influence development outcomes (Smulovitz & Walton, 2003). Agency is about power within that enables awareness and taking the lead (Rowlands, 1997). Power within proposes that power as capacity for leadership must start with the individual and requires a change in perceptions about capacities and potential. In this study, teachers indicated that building a positive self-esteem was important, resulting in them becoming leaders who had gained power. Additionally, in line with this view, teachers took the initiative by coming together and taking charge of seeking solutions to challenges that the community faced. In this manner, teachers contributed to transforming and developing the community, which in turn resulted in enhanced living.

The work of Freire (1970) and Foucault (1979) support the findings of this study. The capacity to act is about demonstrating leadership as power. It is through power as capacity for leadership that people in a community can take the lead to transform the world through collective action (Foucault, 1979; Freire, 1970). The work of Minkler and Wallerstein (2005) further correlates with the findings I obtained, indicating that empowerment gained through participation will allow participants to expand their power from within to create change. In this regard, power as empowerment enabled teachers participating in the current study to lead the community, because of the enlightenment they gained from university researchers. Baum (2006) emphasises that empowerment recognises that if some people are empowered, others will share their existing power. In line with the work of Cornwall (2002, 2004, 2007), opportunities for empowerment are created through invited spaces of participation and capacity building of others.

Teachers in this study described power as capability for leadership through the ability to have a voice to openly discuss ideas and decide on what they wanted to do in the project. I regard power as leadership to imply a freedom to discuss issues and ultimately make decisions and influence the course of action in participatory partnership. In this regard, Foucault (1980) argues that power is evident when there is freedom within discourses to interpret and regulate the world. The ability to allow freedom as a definition of power correlates with the results of this study, as teachers were able to independently plan, organise and take responsibility of their actions. Lukes (2005) further supports this view by regarding power as the ability to shape and control desires and beliefs. Being allowed to provide input in discourse and ultimately act on your input provides an indication that one has power to influence and act. In this study, teachers indicated that they were the ones who decided on what they wanted and subsequently executed their plans of action, thus showing that they had gained power. Gaventa's (2006) visible form of power is concerned with observable decision-making, thus supporting the findings of this study. Within the context of this study, teachers openly decided on what they wanted to do, for instance deciding to transfer the knowledge they had gained and share this with the rest of the community. They furthermore invited other schools to join the project, and seemingly knew how to administer and manage the programme.

Existing literature indicate that appropriating power is viewed as the capacity of individuals to access and control the process by which decisions are made (Clark, 1991; Friedman, 1992). Owning power as indicated by teachers in this study meant being able to make decisions and act upon them, thus demonstrating power as capability for leadership. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) support the results of this study, affirming that a shift in power means being able to manage and control all aspects of development. This shift in appropriating power is what Chambers (1994a) refers to as 'handing over the stick'. In this study, teachers indicated that they became facilitators of the project, which resulted in them experiencing power. The shift in appropriating power therefore means that the participatory partnership achieved equal power relationships, particularly with teachers viewing themselves as having ownership of the programme.

In further support of the results of this study, Tarrow (1989) views collective action as a means of exerting power and influencing change. Tarrow (1989) asserts that collective action may activate the process of exercising power. For teachers in this study, their coming together, having a vision, deciding what they wanted to do and act on this, meant that they appropriated power. Creating spaces of participation and making decisions meant that

teachers experienced their voice to be heard, which corroborates with the work of both Gaventa (2006) and Kabeer (1999) on participation.

The capability for leadership as a means of power was seemingly achieved by experiencing trust in the project. Various studies identify factors related to the success of community–academia partnerships, including trust as a means of displaying power (Dalal *et al.*, 2002; Eisinger & Senturia, 2001; Lantz *et al.*, 2001; Lister, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Wolff & Maurana, 2001). Teachers in this study emphasised their experience of trust when they defined and prioritised needs and goals of the project and received feedback from partners, which is in line with existing literature (Wolff & Maurana, 2001). In further support of Wolf and Maurana (2001), teachers related trust as the core of creating power-sharing relationships. In order to achieve trust, strong working relationships are generally required among partners, as also evident in this study.

In further support, Lantz *et al.* (2001:495) reveal a couple of factors for facilitating strong partnership growth and achievements such as ‘building trust among partners, making decisions and contributing knowledge, garnering committed and active leadership from community partners’. Additionally, Lister (2000) emphasises that mutual trust, mutual support, and long-term commitment are key factors in successful partnerships that would lead to participants’ experiencing a sense of power. Teachers in this study indicated that people and relationships were important as they ultimately created and sustained the project. Building trust thus seems to have added to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships. I subsequently relate good relationships based on trust and commitment as critical element to experiencing power in a participatory project. As such, trust as an attribute for power will result in successful power-sharing partnerships. As trust may increase a sense of ownership and commitment, it has to be continuously nurtured.

### **5.2.1.2 Challenges of partnerships**

Existing literature shows that, while partnerships could be insightful and beneficial, there are also barriers and challenges to partnerships (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). Teachers participating in this study revealed that participatory partnerships have challenges which can make partnerships a difficult endeavour to undertake. They indicated time as a challenge to participating effectively. In support of these findings, Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2001) found that partnership is a resource-expensive endeavour, with time being the most

consumed resource. Teachers in this study indicated that they had to take time from their already tight schedules to participate in activities of the projects. In line with the findings of this study, research on the Detroit community academic partnership by Urban Research Centre highlights the challenges of time pressures and balancing community interests in interventions and academic research needs (Lantz *et al.*, 2001).

In addition to managing tight teaching schedules with committing to the partnership, time pressures may include the length of time required for results to be realised, balancing community interests in interventions and academic research needs (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Lantz *et al.*, 2001). When available time is already committed to professional or personal responsibilities, it may result in less willingness to participate. Teachers in this study indicated that they often had to take family time to attend to the project. Periodically, some teachers in the study displayed less commitment to the project due to time pressures. In support of the results of this study, challenges with time may result in partners being frustrated and abandoning a project (Ferman & Hill, 2004). In this regard, teachers in this study indicated that some colleagues were not always honouring appointments and meetings because they were trying to strike a balance between the project and school workload. This finding aligns with that of Ferman and Hill (2004), indicating frustrations, resulting in projects being abandoned.

Another potential barrier to partnerships is the lack of capacity perhaps more on the side of participants' contribution to deliver on the commitment and ultimately realise the full potential of the partnership (Ferman & Hill, 2004). Teachers in this study indicated that at the beginning of the project, there was a time when they doubted their capability and lacked the confidence and skills to undertake any work in the project. The lack of confidence based on a lack of skills, competencies and experience to participate could contribute to poor execution of the project. Additionally, a lack of adequate capacity may result in not achieving the objectives of a programme as envisaged at the beginning.

### **5.2.1.3 Partnership relationships evolving over time**

In line with the results of this study, Rabaia and Gillham (2010) confirm that challenges of academic and community partnerships may include unequal power relations and lack of trust towards community partners. Teachers in this study indicated that trust and confidence evolved over time. They reported that, at the beginning, they did not trust the university

researchers and did not understand what they were expected to do. Lack of trust and respect at the beginning of a project is generally a possibility based on both partners being sceptical of each other's motives, as also identified in this study (Arnestein, 1969; Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001; Gaventa, 2003b). Lack of trust might be due to fear of the unknown and not being sure of what is expected. Additionally, lack of respect might be related to academics traditionally being known for having the authority and power of knowledge. In this study, teachers indicated that at first they doubted their skills, knowledge and confidence because they could not see how they could match the knowledge of university researchers. Findings of this study corroborate that of Rabaia and Gillham (2010) who found that participants tend to initially doubt their capability and knowledge.

However, as time progressed and relationships were built in mutual respect, teachers in this study indicated that deep trust developed, as the spaces of power were open for them to freely participate as project owners. The more the partners interacted and discussed issues in an open and inviting manner with respect, the more trust developed. Green (2005) supports this finding by emphasising that a space of trust will develop when risk taking with respect to learning occurs, which will eventually make trust inevitable. These findings are further supported by Rabaia and Gillham (2010), who found that when power issues are addressed by both partners, mutual trust will develop (Rabaia & Gillham, 2010). This shows that trust is a relationship that evolves as a project progresses, based on visible forms of power and invited spaces of power (Gaventa, 2003a). Based on the findings I obtained, it seems apparent that by creating rapport and spaces of participation, trust and confidence may develop. Rapport can be seen when an influential other hands over the key role and trust the other partner (as identified by the teachers in the study). In my view, trust and confidence might mean that there is commitment to the partnership, resulting in equal powers of owning the project. Experiencing a sense of ownership is influenced by having the same vision.

In line with these findings, Cargo and Mercer (2008) emphasise that integrity of partnerships is achieved through mutual respect and trust. Teachers in this study indicated that as time progressed, they realised that the university researchers had respect for them as equals in the participatory project. In support of the findings I obtained, once trust is established, participants will not again feel a sense of being taken for granted (Cargo & Mercer, 2008). I thus believe that trust and mutual respect were fostered through an enabling environment that allowed the participating teachers to have their voice heard and make decisions based on the firm relationships that had been built.

Existing literature shows that research partnerships imply building a relationship through co-learning and discovering the self, as well as through an opportunity to acquire and develop research skills (Schenzul, 1999). Teachers in this study indicated that the more they participated and made decisions, the more they learnt, gaining knowledge and discovering and unleashing their potential within. Teachers indicated that they gained research skills, by learning how to analyse situations, inquiring and seeking answers. In support of the results of this study, Rubin (2004) found that community members were empowered in his COPC partnership project, gaining knowledge and skills. These findings are also similar to a Detroit community academia partnership, where community members gained knowledge and skills that they used to facilitate social change in their communities (Lantz *et al.*, 2001).

Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2005) further emphasise that community capacity building is about empowerment of the community through the development of skills, knowledge, resources and strengthened social relations. In further support, findings by Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2005) indicate that participants will typically be significantly affected by an increased sense of competence and awareness of the environment, where partners become more knowledgeable about their community, transfer knowledge to others and act as community change agents. This finding relates to the findings I obtained, as teachers used the knowledge they gained to facilitate social change in their community. Knowledge in this study also related to teachers' capacity to generate and implement new ideas, deciding on activities they wanted to do and becoming facilitators to other schools. The use of knowledge gained to facilitate social change is viewed as creating spaces of learning (Green, 2005). When spaces of learning are created, teachers can act on the knowledge they gain and become agents of change (Green, 2005). Furthermore, more spaces of learning means that teachers may experience an increase in self-confidence, which could in turn enable them to execute a project.

#### **5.2.1.4 Mutual collaboration in partnerships**

The work of Hodgett and Johnson (2001) emphasises that partnership is about power-sharing based on people working together towards a common good. In corroboration of the work of Hodgett and Johnson (2001), teachers in this study indicated that partnership and power was about forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with university researchers. To them, the rationale for forging an equitable partnership was based on the premise that both partners regarded themselves as equals when decisions were made. Additionally, both partners became highly committed in achieving the vision of the project. I regard this coming

together and working as a system as a result of mutual respect, commitment and regard for each other's unique strengths. Existing literature agrees that partnerships between community and university researchers are based on trust and respect, and strengthened by benefits gained by both partners (Minkler, 2004; Dalal *et al.*, 2002; Wolff & Maurana, 2001). A study done by Mitchell (2005) emphasises that equitable and mutual partnerships will be enhanced by a shared vision with strong mutual commitment, shared decision-making and trust among partners. These findings are supported by the work of Dalal *et al.* (2002), Eisinger and Senturia (2001) as well as Butterfoss *et al.* (1996). Existing research shows that academics often engage communities to do research for social change, thereby integrating teaching, research and service in a participatory approach (Hall *et al.*, 2009; Buys & Bursnell, 2007; Moseley, 2007; Strand *et al.*, 2003; Lantz *et al.*, 2001; Israel *et al.*, 1998). I view such collaboration in PR between community and university researchers as creating an opportunity for equal involvement that could result in collective development for both parties.

Cornwall (2002) elaborates by emphasising that power relations will help to shape the boundaries of participatory spaces, in terms of what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests. This approach correlates with the emerged theme that power and partnership implies that partners will be allowed to participate freely, thereby creating a platform for voices to be heard. This finding is further supported by the work of Citrin (2001), Green and Mercer, (2001) as well as Chataway (1997), who emphasise that partnerships in PR occur through the mutual engagement of community and researchers in all possible steps of the research. The ability to work with university researchers during all stages of research made the teachers feel valued in the current study and thus created a sense of ownership of the project. Subsequently, teachers perceived themselves as being in an equal partnership where there were open networks for participation. In support of these findings, a study by MacAulay *et al.* (1998) emphasises that shared decision-making is the norm and may result in participants feeling comfortable, in turn leading to a sense of ownership and empowerment. In this regard, Lopes and Rakodi (2002:12) assert that empowerment is about 'enabling people to take control of their day to day lives and to make decisions about their surroundings'.

Additionally, mutual collaboration is premised on the notion of university researchers valuing participants' skills, knowledge and experience, and thus drawing on these assets for facilitating change. Existing literature confirms that the role of teachers as community practitioners is to draw from their experiential skills and knowledge, connect the skills and

knowledge of group members, and help harness those skills and knowledge for community change (Horton & Freire, 1990). The results that I obtained with regard to recognising existing knowledge corroborates the work of the Policy Research Action Group in Chicago, where academics work hand in hand with community members, recognising that each brings unique talents to the table (Lerner *et al.*, 2000).

Teachers in the current study indicated that the ability to value each other's skills was based on the common vision of the objectives of the project. Teachers also indicated that partnerships were about working closely together, and sharing ideas and information. These results are consistent with literature that focuses on the meaning of partnerships and emphasises that partnerships are about attaining small and concrete achievements, cooperation between parties and having mutual goals, fostering co-learning and building capacity (Buys & Bursnell, 2007; Dalal *et al.*, 2002; Eisinger & Senturia, 2001; Maxwell & Riddell, 1998). In this regard, Mompati and Prinsen (2000) emphasise that PR seeks to maximise the equal involvement of all members of a community in planning their collective development. Maximising equal involvement means bringing together a wide range of skills and experiences that could facilitate social change as indicated by teachers in this study. I regard equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships between the community and university researchers as an indication of 'power with', within the context of this study. In line with the results I obtained, Rowlands (1997) indicates that power with is about strengthening the power of others to be equally engaged.

Forging equitable relationships meant that teachers in this study engaged fellow teachers (peers) to learn and work with them in the STAR project. In support of the results of this study, existing literature indicates that partnership is viewed as a mechanism that could facilitate and promote the empowerment of others, with the understanding that 'it enables the powerless to contribute their information, knowledge and skills to the elaboration and implementation of programmes, projects or actions that affect them' (Vasconcellos & Vasconcellos, 2009:136). In the current study, allowing peers to join implied an opportunity to tap into the potential of others, thereby harnessing their skills. Teachers further engaged their peers to participate by sharing information with them. This in turn allowed teachers to transfer knowledge and thus increase resources and assets that could benefit the community. Castello *et al.* (2002) emphasise that mutual partnership occurs when practitioners bring others on board and facilitate meetings to be part of a project. In this regard, Gaventa (2003b)



indicates that inclusion of others may create an opportunity to increase the knowledge base and moments where relationships can affect lives and interests.

Mutual dependency as a way of forging partnerships with the wider community was also established in this study. Ferman and Hill (2004) reveal that community partners value the benefits of meeting other people who have the same interest in issues and in dealing with challenges. Building and expanding relationships to include the wider community is important for mutual partnerships. Teachers in the current study indicated that they worked harmoniously with the business community, social services providers, parents and the community at large. Teachers reported that they were able to build lasting relationships with the wider community, thus allowing for greater participation at different levels. Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2001) concur, indicating that the ultimate goal and benefit of partnerships is to create and increase opportunities for empowerment and improve programme effectiveness.

I believe that power is about providing leadership that recognises the use of multisectoral efforts to solve problems. Involving and engaging a community may result in drawing on existing knowledge of the community to assist with bringing about change that could benefit the community. As a result, the expertise of community members and those of participants will become a pool of a community of practice. Kirk and Shutte (2004) view partnership as the interdependence of different people with different roles engaged in the pursuit of a shared goal, which can be related to the findings of this study. Teachers in this study indicated that engaging the community resulted in access to services and resources, thus making the partnership beneficial. A study on building community strength by Tesoriero *et al.* (2006) also reveals that community participants are able to transfer knowledge by developing and maintaining learning to the rest of fellow community members on barriers to health and well-being. Literature supports the results of this study by referring to partnerships that may produce knowledge that could inform community members and lead to more efficient service delivery, more effective interventions, and enhanced community development (Currie *et al.*, 2005). Transfer of knowledge furthermore correlates with the findings of this study, where teachers shared and exchanged information with the community, thus making the partnership beneficial to both partners.

### 5.2.1.5 Visible spaces of participation

According to Cornwall (2002), power relations shape the boundaries of participatory spaces in terms of what is possible within them and who may enter. Within this study, participating teachers indicated that partnerships and power was about a conducive environment that allowed the freedom to do what they wanted to and interact with whom they deemed appropriate to add value to the partnership. Teachers in the study were thus able to engage other stakeholders within their communities to participate in the project at a local level. There was ample opportunity for including other stakeholders in the partnership, resulting in relationships that could add value by contributing meaningfully to the partnership. In further support of the study, Cornwall (2002) asserts that when participatory practice begins locally, as in the arenas of everyday life, people will be able to construct their own voice. The need for participation to begin locally is supported by the findings of this study, where teachers indicated that they created an enabling environment, thus allowing for increased capacity in collective action. This view of power values local people and groups, building their capacity at a local level (Taylor, 2008).

In this study, teachers were able to plan, make decisions, implement and build their capacity within their communities, hence on a local level. I view the ability to build capacity as neighbourhood empowerment, which values and acknowledges the contribution of local resources, involvement and ownership. In line with Taylor's (2008) view the dynamics of power depend on the type of space in which it is found, the level at which it operates and the form it takes. For instance, teachers in this study indicated that they worked like a 'three-legged pot', whereby they involved parents, learners, and the community to participate in the various activities that they had initiated. White (1996) confirms that initiatives that are started by local community partners will result in change being embedded and thoroughgoing, thus retaining the potential of participation to be transformative. In support of the idea of working as a 'three-legged pot' by including everyone, Foucault's (1980) writings explain the significance of agency, as a component of an enabling environment. Existing literature further agrees that power can be seen as something which is created by people when they transform their world through collective action, reflecting communities of interests' social struggles (Freire, 1970; Gramsci, 1957).

It seems clear that locality is what matters to people. According to Dahl (1961) and Polsby (1963), power is about who participates and who gains, as this will influence relationships

built at a local level. This idea correlates with the current study's findings, where teachers indicated that an enabled environment at the local level allowed for the building of relationships based on trust. Engaging communities is about creating opportunities for greater community empowerment and creating trust at a local level. Engaging the whole community (as indicated by teachers in the three-legged pot scenario) has the potential to build social capital, where the community may feel that it has a voice in facilitating social change at a local level. In my view, building social capital will create spaces of influence, as supported by Gaventa (2003b).

An enabling environment can potentially go beyond local level boundaries, to include a conducive environment at a national level (Gaventa, 2003b). The findings of this study indicate that opportunities for building social capital and more spaces of influence were also created at the national level. Teachers were able to expand their boundaries of participation to the national level, where they had the opportunity to share experiences with other participants and exchange ideas. Gaventa (2003b) emphasises the fact that there is a need to create invited spaces in order to allow stakeholders to participate at a national level. In this study, teachers reported that they benefited by interacting with others outside their environment and in other provinces, allowing them to learn best practices and share ideas. I regard the opportunity to engage with others beyond the local level as a way of creating participatory partnerships that value voice and recognise that learning and network do occur beyond one's community. Additionally, to engage others implies that learning is lifelong and that as one evolves, one interacts with others to learn from one another. Participants in this study increased their scope of networks to include partners outside the country to collaborate with them.

#### **5.2.1.6 Community capacity building in partnerships**

Having the liberty to act according to the desires of participants' aspirations is an important component of capacity building and community leadership in power-sharing partnerships (Kirk & Shutte, 2004). Experiencing agency as a form of gaining power and establishing synergy in partnership was identified by participating teachers as a mechanism for realising desired social change. I found that the role of agency refers to the capacity to empower others, the capacity for leadership, the ability to take action and participants being agents of social transformation. As such, the emerged theme on the role of agency conforms to the model on community capacity building (Kirk & Shutte, 2004; Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003; Dunlop Report, 2002).

In this study, teachers identified agency as an opportunity for community capacity building on different levels. In support of these findings, James (2004) states that agency and development begins with capacity building at various levels through initiatives such as helping people, organisations and societies to improve and adapt to changes around them. The findings of this study indicate that teachers gained power because of the capability to shape their own lives through acting on issues, empowering others and providing leadership. In line with the findings of this study, community capacity building can be regarded as the agency and ability to solve local problems, and build leadership by stimulating active and reflective participation which will result in effective services (Department of Health, South Australia, 2007). Furthermore, I view community capacity building as supporting empowerment, through the development of skills, knowledge and resources as well as strengthened social relations.

At an individual level (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005), participants seemingly made meaningful choices – that is, they were able to envisage outcomes and decide on options. Similarly, Schulz *et al.* (2002) found that in a community-based participatory research initiative that involved lay health advisors, participants were able to become confident because they could set the agenda and thereby facilitate empowerment. These findings are further supported by the Messengers for Health Project in the Apsaalooke Reservation conducted by (Christopher *et al.*, 2005), indicating that confidence to set an agenda begins with the individual. The findings are also in line with those by Narayan (2005), Mathie and Cunningham (2002), as well as Bush and Folger (1994), as the teachers in this study were able to shape the course of lives and the communities they lived in. They thus had the ‘power with’, which in turn enabled them to be empowered. In this regard, teachers in this study indicated that it was through agency that they had the capacity to empower others.

In terms of agency being viewed as the capacity to empower others, I found that teachers in this study perceived themselves as ‘the sun’ that transmitted its rays to nourish other plants. For example, it emerged that the teachers brought together parents to equip them with life skills such as doing craft work and maintaining vegetable gardens. In other instances, teachers provided informational material on diseases such as HIV and AIDS through a resource centre. Imparting and equipping others with life skills may be regarded as an important role of agency and the capacity to empower others, according to various researchers (Deutchman, 1991; Farrington & Bebbington, 1993; Rowlands, 1997; Tembo, 2003). In addition, I view ‘power with’ as the ability to give others the tools they need for meaningful participation as well as capacitating others to facilitate social change. In this line of argumentation, Dalal *et*

*al.* (2002) indicate that knowledge sharing may result in social change in a community in the sense that co-learning and capacity building will be fostered within the group.

Teachers in this study related the capacity to influence and empower others to the human capital they experienced. To my mind, shaping others' behaviour is a source of power with, that can be translated to other arenas for positive outcomes. The capability to empower others is a skill and asset, which is harnessed when one realises that the environment may encourage the agency to tap into potential. When a skill is tapped into, this might mean that teachers will continue to empower more people in their respective communities. The capacity to empower others is in turn an indication of community leadership.

### **5.2.1.7 Community of practice in partnerships**

Lepofsky and Fraser (2003) state that community leaders may establish a set of guiding principles that will allow others to be empowered and share ownership, thereby empowering the wider community so that successes can become greater. In the current study, leaders were capable of developing and communicating a vision and could create platforms where others could listen. Leaders also created an enabling environment where others could apply their talents and were able to work together. These findings are similar with those of a Detroit community-academia partnership (Lantz *et al.*, 2001), where participants became a community of practice that provided leadership in their course of action. Similarly, Mathie and Cunningham (2002) emphasise that community leaders may be catalysts who further recognise available opportunities through making connections and linkages with agencies interested in investing in communities that demonstrate potential. In community leadership, members of a community of practice will collectively work as a team by providing guidance to the community as they seek local solutions. Participating teachers placed strong emphasis on agency as opportunity to provide for leadership, in terms of taking the lead on the agenda, providing guidance and deciding on activities to embark on.

I regard leadership as part of community capacity building and support Mathie and Cunningham's (2002) view on the role of particular individuals who will catalyse a process of development in communities, and the strong base of associations or social networks that are mobilised during such a process. I found that teachers worked as catalysts, facilitating the role of mobilising resources. For instance, teachers mobilised community members to develop projects such as vegetable gardens and craftwork (beading) projects, thereby providing

guidance to others on becoming self-sustaining. As leaders, teachers stimulated a sense of pride and possibility in communities. The ethos of participatory processes is in line with the finding I obtained where teachers viewed themselves as resources on which the community could rely. This understanding of leadership correlates with the findings that teachers saw themselves as catalyst who could transform their communities.

The opportunity to act and implement proposed activities seemed to indicate that participating teachers felt powerful and equal in the partnership. When an envisaged idea is implemented, it typically results in a sense of achievement and confidence. In line with James' (2004) view, the benefits of community capacity building is to ensure that communities take control of their own learning in such a way that it enables them to effectively address existing needs and issues, and translate them into tangible outcomes. In a partnership, participants have the potential to break new ground and discover innovative solutions to problems. I thus argue that the ability to break new ground could be perceived as spaces of action where participants take control for social change.

In support of this finding, Rubin (2004) found that community members may be empowered through community organising activities, resulting in communities being able to advocate for change, and then formulate and implement strategies. Teachers participating in this study perceived themselves as having the power to act. This finding correlates with Giddens' (1979) view of power as a resource drawn upon by agents in the production and reproduction of interaction, thus power as an enabler of action. I view the ability to reconstruct spaces of participation as an opportunity for participants to make their own change and promote self empowerment.

Teachers participating in this study felt empowered because they capitalised on their voice to articulate pressing issues, and harnessed their existing skills and knowledge to create positive community change. In support, Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2005) assert the notion of participatory competencies in their study, which indicates that participants can be social change agents. During the current study, participating teachers indeed perceived themselves as agents of social transformation for their communities. I thus refer to teachers as agents of change as participants were transferring knowledge to the larger community, providing resources as well as building community networks to enhance the envisaged community transformation. This theme of being agents of change correlates with the work of Dalal *et al.* (2002), who relate capacity building to social change in the community.

At the level of agents of change who transfer and share knowledge, teachers in this study applied the knowledge they had gained to address community psychosocial problems. The power of education can only be fully utilised when the reservoir of knowledge is shared with others so that it can bring enlightenment to those who are powerless. By relying on their knowledge and skills, teachers in this study experienced agency to empower others. Bennett (2002:23) describes individual empowerment as a process called ‘mobilisation empowerment’, which builds on the skills, information and linkages needed for livelihood empowerment. Mobilisation empowerment can lead to ‘new self-understanding, solidarity and capacity for collective action’ (Bennett, 2002:23).

In this study for example, teachers shared their knowledge on HIV and AIDS with parents and learners. Additionally, teachers shared their knowledge on the asset-based approach with other schools, for these schools to experience the benefits of this approach in their communities. Because of relying on such sources of services, the community could be transformed for the better. Foster-Fishman (2005) regards the ability of participants to bring about change as a very important component of community capacity building. In support of these findings, Fawcett *et al.* (1996) found that collaborative partnerships may promote societal change, which is based on the principle that community participants will enhance their power to transform the environment through actions that may affect the behaviour of others.

The idea of mobilisation empowerment further correlates with the findings of this study as teachers indicated that learners and the community were ‘sucking from their big udders’. A key element in most social mobilisation approaches is helping poor and socially excluded individuals realise the power they gain from collective action. These mobilisation approaches often operate from below, creating voice and demand for change among socially excluded citizens (Bennett, 2002). Besides teachers applying their knowledge for social change, the community at large was undergoing a process of learning. Teachers namely taught the community to be self-reliant, by relying on existing resources to cope with challenges.

Chapman (2002) views such a transforming perspective as change that goes beyond adaptation – that is, change that reframes attitudes, beliefs and cultural values. Learning that results in fundamental change is what Argyris and Schon (1991:21) refer to as ‘double loop learning’. I regard such change as a consequence of people being able to occupy their roles in a system in a different, more authoritative way. In this way, learning presents an opportunity

for system change. It is through such a system change in an enabling environment that teachers had the agency to take advantage of their skills and knowledge and thus become agents of transformation in the current study. In support of these findings, Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) view the opportunity for system change as restoring agency to active subjects and influencing participation. Tesoriero *et al.* (2006) further indicate that community participants are generally able to transfer knowledge by developing and maintaining learning to the rest of fellow community members on barriers to health and well being. As the wider community get involved and is enlightened, there will be a better understanding of problems, which will pull in multiple sources of knowledge to bring about social change and access even more resources that the community could rely on in improving lives.

In addition to transferring knowledge, this study's findings reveal that teachers acted as agents of change at the level of providing additional resources that the community could rely on and use for the improvement of their lives. Teachers placed strong emphasis on the capability to bring about social change by mobilising resources, such as donations in the form of food hampers and accessibility to social services. In support of these findings, the work of Ferreira (2006), Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), as well as Israel and Schurman (1990) emphasise that numerous resources, strengths and skills are present within communities (e.g. supportive interpersonal relationships, and community-based organisations) that can be engaged in addressing problems and promoting health and well-being. In my view, even though these resources were present in this study, it was not easy for parents and learners to access these. Teachers thus facilitated social change by being agents who could access and distribute resources. In this regard, Wolff and Maurana (2001) found that being agents of knowledge transfer for social change implies the capacity to mobilise resources and thus create a platform for joint and equitable allocation of resources. The ability of teachers to network allowed community partners to share information and build common cause, which is critical for transforming communities to enhance a better quality of life.

The results of this study further correlate with findings that economic empowerment seeks to ensure that people have the appropriate skills, capabilities, resources and access to secure sustainable incomes and livelihoods (Rowlands, 1997). Teachers in the current study facilitated social change by being agents through whom others could access resources. In line with Freire's (1970) interpretation of power, teachers perceived themselves as having visible power whereby they could transform their world through collective action, reflecting communities of interests' social struggles.



The findings of this study thus indicate that teachers act as agents of change at the level of creating community networks so that there could be more partners involved in the quest to assist and for ease of mobilising various resources. In line with the results of this study, existing literature indicates that, besides concrete access to institutional resources, partnerships benefit communities in the form of opportunities for broader networks and possibilities (Benson & Harkavy, 2001; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Hill & Dougherty, 2002; Lawson, 2002; Nyden *et al.*, 1997b); Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000). Teachers in the current study collaborated with the business community to donate various resources and further engaged other stakeholders such as the department of social services to bring such services closer to both parents and learners (e.g. Ferman & Hill, 2004; Ferreira, 2006; Nye & Schramm, 1999; Strand, 2000).

### 5.2.2 RESULTS THAT CONTRADICT EXISTING KNOWLEDGE ON POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS

In this section, I present summarised findings of contradictory evidence to existing knowledge and attempt to explain possible reasons for such contradictions. Table 5.2 provides an overview of contradictions between the results I obtained and those captured in existing literature.

**Table 5.2: Comparing results to existing knowledge: contradictory evidence**

Categories/ subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	How does what you found contradict what is known	Interpretive discussion: why do you think this is the case?
Characteristics of power	Lukes, 2005; Rowlands, 1997; Dahl, 1957; Weber, 1978; Mills, 1959.	Power is about dominance and is only held by certain people who impose themselves on others and gain from it.	Power is not about imposing oneself on others, but rather a way to provide leadership.	A possible explanation of these differences in findings may lie in the traditional view of power as being a finite resource that is used and held by certain people within a social relationship. Teachers perceived power as a positive good that could bring about development.

Categories/ subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	How does what you found contradict what is known	Interpretive discussion: why do you think this is the case?
		Participants are seen as people who have nothing to offer in PR.	Participants are in the lead with transformation and mobilising assets.	It could be that this study attempted to apply the principles of PRA, which strongly emphasises research being led by participants.
Factors impeding power and partnerships	Ferman and Hill, 2004.	Lack of respect towards community partners, particularly when university researchers perceive themselves to be experts.	Teachers in this study highlighted respect for one another as a factor for an enabling environment.	A possible explanation for this difference in findings relates to traditional social science research, where participants are regarded as subjects from whom information has to be extracted; and that they are not sufficiently knowledgeable to possess any contribution that might benefit research.
Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	Hall <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Metzler <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Mackintosh, 1992.	Partnerships as a token of political negotiations. In political negotiations, the costs of collaboration far outweighs the benefits.	Teachers did not view partnerships as a kind of political negotiation, but rather as a brotherhood platform that embraces everyone and shares ideas.	Teachers were possibly pleased with the benefits of being part of the partnership and the incentives derived from the partnership.
		The benefits of partnership with academics are that the goal is to produce policy outcomes that are applicable to local community development and that benefits of PR are sharing intellectual property.	Participants in this study viewed partnerships as an opportunity to regard their experiences and voices as legitimate sources of knowledge.	Participants were seemingly not concerned about scholarship arising from this partnership, as the focus was more on resources that they could use to uplift their communities.



Categories/ subthemes	Author and year	Existing knowledge	How does what you found contradict what is known	Interpretive discussion: why do you think this is the case?
Establishing an enabling environment	Eisinger and Senturia, 2001; Nye and Shramm, 1997.	Agenda and incentive conflict as a hindering factor to establishing an enabling environment.	Participants indicated that an equitable and enabling environment in partnerships implied the opportunity to make equal decisions and to have a voice so that experiences and knowledge could be regarded as legitimate source of knowledge.	It could be that teachers in this study were not concerned about gaining monetary incentives and that since there was mutual respect, conflict did not arise.
		A mutual partnership has to include partners being equally represented in the composition of the community board or committee.	Participants did not refer to the establishment of committees.	Teachers in this study could have favoured the status quo of their functions with no need for establishing a committee.
Agency	Mercer, 2002; Cornwall and Gaventa, 2000; Goebel, 1998.	Participation in PR is not always good when participants lack the power to be heard. In such cases, participation merely reinforces exclusion.	Teachers did not report any lack of power for agency.	It could be that participating teachers were from the onset recognised and respected as participants who have what it takes to be agents of change.
		Women in local organisations often participate with the view to use their social status and gain financially. Women do not have agency to control the power relations that are at a fore.	Teachers were participating as agents of change that would bring about community development.	It could be that teachers in this study were not concerned about gaining any societal status and also that this study was not focused on the effects of gender equality.

### **5.2.2.1 Power as dominance**

Teachers in this study explained and defined the concept of power in terms of various attributes and the nature of power in PR. Rowlands (1997), however, views power as ‘power over’, which emphasises that power is dominant, only held by certain people who impose themselves onto others and gain out of it. In this view, power is seen as the ability to coerce and influence the actions and thoughts of the powerless. In line with this reasoning, Dahl (1957) views power as the ability of actor A to have power over actor B so that actor B can do things that B would not otherwise do. In this understanding of power by Rowlands (1997) and Dahl (1957), participants are seen as people who have nothing to offer in PR, and as mere spectators who rely on the expert knowledge of researchers.

These views on power contradict the results of the current study, where teachers did not view power as dominance and as being wielded by certain people only. A possible explanation of these differences in findings may lie in the traditional view of power as being a finite resource that is used and held by certain people within a social relationship. Furthermore, the concept of power in social relations has in the past often been understood in terms of a patriarchal position, where the dominant class enforced its will despite resistance (Weber, 1978). Furthermore, Mills (1959) focuses on the structure that one finds oneself in which could make one powerless. Structures and conditions could thus lead to participants feeling powerless to an extent that they become spectators and do not have a say in their lives.

On the contrary, teachers in this study did not experience great power dominance in the structures of participating in a participatory project. In light of these potential explanations for the seemingly contradictory findings I obtained, I hypothesise that such differences could be related to the nature of the participatory project in which teachers in this study participated. More specifically, I relate a possible explanation to the principles of PRA, that strongly emphasises research being led by participants instead of researchers, which may have resulted in the participants experiencing shared power and not dominance in the power relationship they formed part of.

### **5.2.2.2 Partnerships as platform for political negotiations**

A second contradictory finding relates to factors that may impede partnership and power where conflict in partnerships is perceived as a lack of respect towards community partners,

particularly when university researchers perceive themselves as experts and ignore the fact that expertise comes in many forms, with one being knowledge of the community (Ferman & Hill, 2004). On the contrary, teachers in this study highlighted respect for one another as contributing factor to an enabling environment. A possible explanation for this difference in findings may lie in traditional social science research, where participants are regarded as subjects, from whom information has to be extracted and who are not sufficiently knowledgeable to possess any contribution that might benefit research.

With regard to teachers' meaning making of partnership as related to a common goal and vision, where both parties gain, I found some discrepancies between the results of the current study and existing literature. Mackintosh (1992) describes partnerships as a token of political negotiations. In these political negotiations, Mackintosh (1992) argues that the costs of collaboration far outweigh the benefits. However, this view contradicts the findings of this study as teachers did not view partnerships as political negotiation, but rather as a brotherhood platform that embraces everyone and shares ideas. Furthermore, participants in this study regarded partnerships as an opportunity to view their experiences and voices as legitimate sources of knowledge. I hypothesise that this difference could be attributed to the fact that reflexivity was one of the core guides for this study and that the study promoted the voice, experience and knowledge of the participants, in line with the basic principles of PRA.

Furthermore, Hall *et al.* (2009) highlight that a benefit of partnerships with academics is that the goal is to produce policy outcomes that may be applicable to local community development. However, this finding contradicts the benefits espoused by teachers in this study. I assume that at the time of conducting the current study, teachers did not yet realise how their engagement in the project could potentially influence policy. The STAR intervention project is based on participatory approaches which could be used in informing education policy analysis and formulation process. Participants could thus explore the possibility of discussing intervention findings with policy makers or colleagues in the Department of Education, in order to construct new knowledge and develop policies that may better respond to the educational development needs of the country, more particularly vulnerable communities (Rosekrans, 2006). While teachers thus indicated that they had facilitated social change in their communities, it is not yet clear if they could take advantage of their impact and advocate for avenues to effect change at a macro level of society. One of the benefits of participatory partnership is sharing intellectual authority, as found by Metzler *et al.* (2003). This benefit is contrary to the meaning of forging equitable and mutually

beneficial partnerships as indicated by teachers in this study. I surmise that teachers were satisfied with the benefits of access to services for the community, and had possibly not yet thought of exploring additional contributions they could make through scholarship. This hypothesis, however, requires further exploration.

Within the context of this study, I did not obtain any results relating to agenda and incentive conflict as a hindering factor to achieving partnerships. This could perhaps stem from approaches and definitions, role clarity and expectations of specific research partnerships. For example, in their study, Nye and Shramm (1997) found that most universities enter into partnership as a way of seeking grants that they have applied for, yet once the grant has been secured, the university partners may not return and share the grant fund with the community. Both partners thus may enter a research partnership with varying expectations (Nye & Shramm, 1997). I surmise that the teachers participating in this study did not focus on monetary incentives as part of forging mutually beneficial partnerships. I propose that this area of agenda and incentive conflict could be researched in future.

### **5.2.2.3 Hierarchy system based on creation of decision-making bodies**

Teachers in this study indicated that an equitable and enabling environment in partnerships implied the opportunity to make equal decisions and have a voice so that their experiences and knowledge could be regarded as legitimate sources of knowledge. On the contrary, Eisinger and Senturia (2001) indicate that a mutual partnership implies partners being equally represented in the composition of a community board or committee. In this study, no hierarchy in terms of the reporting system or consultation was identified, thus the issue of equal composition in the board could not apply.

With regard to the teachers' role of agency, I found some discrepancies between the results of the current study and existing literature. Existing literature indicates that participation in PR may not be positive when participants lack the power to be heard (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000). In such cases, participation will merely reinforce exclusion. While the goal of participation in PR is emancipation, Goebel (1998) found in her PR partnership that women did not have agency to control the power relations that were at the fore. Participants therefore did not have the agency for leadership or empowerment. This finding contradicts the findings of the current study, as no teachers reported lack of power. They indicated that their voices

were listened to and respected, and that they were thus being treated as equal partners with the same status as the university researchers.

Argyris and Schon (1991) state that a sense of agency and ultimately facilitating social change will lead to reframed attitudes, beliefs and cultural values. Teachers in the current study did not mention anything to the effect of change in cultural values. This may be because they were already living out the values of the community where they facilitated change. However, they did indeed display a change in attitudes, in terms of a more positive approach to challenges, following the principles of the asset-based approach.

### 5.2.3 SILENCES IN THE DATA OF THIS STUDY

In comparing the findings I obtained to existing knowledge, I identified some silences in the data I obtained. Table 5.3 provides a summary of these silences.

**Table 5.3: Comparing results to existing knowledge: silences in data**

Trend	Author and year	Interpretive discussion
Characteristics of power: Invisible power is the most insidious form of power that deals with the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation.	Gaventa, 2006; Dahl, 1957.	Teachers probably did not politicise their engagement in the STAR project nor view their participation as politics of liberation. Furthermore, university researchers' motives for the partnership were not dubious. Everything was done in the open, hence potential power structures were visible.
Power is seen as dominance and power over.	Gaventa, 2006; Dahl, 1957.	Teachers did not view power as dominion over others. It could be due to the study being principled on participatory methodology that regards participants as equal partners, whose knowledge and experience is regarded as legitimate.
Factors impeding power and partnerships: History of patriarchy in a community exists, thus decisions are held by certain privilege members of the community.	Goebel, 1998; Foster-Fishman <i>et al.</i> , 2001.	This could be because spaces of participation were created so that all teachers could have a voice regardless of gender. Additionally, the majority of teachers were female.
Establishing an enabling environment: Developing governance structures for administration and management of partnerships.	Gaventa, 2006; Lasker, Weiss and Miller, 2001.	Teachers probably did not view logistical support as a way for managing partnerships both at the local and national levels. This could be attributed to the fact that the forms, spaces and levels of power exhibited themselves for an environment

Trend	Author and year	Interpretive discussion
		that valued and recognised the expertise of each member. Each partner may therefore have felt like an equal co-researcher.
Agency: Participants as agents of change have the multilayered task of challenging power relations.	Taylor and Fransman, 2004.	Since STAR followed the asset-based approach and PRA principles, enabling spaces and forms of power were created.

### 5.2.3.1 Psychological manipulation of power

Existing literature highlights comprehensive definitions of power – more than merely that of invisible power being the most insidious form of power that deals with the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation (Gaventa, 2006). Accordingly, power is seen as being about influencing how people think, therefore about shaping people’s beliefs. It could be that teachers in the current study did not report on psychological and ideological boundaries of power because they did not regard power as forced relations that might become institutionally crystallised.

Additionally, I assume that participating teachers did not focus on the ideological boundaries of participation because of the politics of liberation. My assumption is based on teachers in this study admitting that they were sensitised in terms of their existing skills, knowledge and assets when using the asset-based approach. Teachers in this study reported that they were engaged in open discourses that allowed their voices to be heard and could subsequently act on their decisions. As a result, participating teachers reportedly used this opportunity to transform their situations. These are, however, mere hypotheses, which require further exploration. Further research could for example focus on whether or not teachers using the asset-based approach applying PRA principles, could be psychologically influenced to merely report on positive experiences of their participation.

### 5.2.3.2 Power based on patriarchy

Existing literature indicate some ways that could impede power and partnerships that were not reported in the current study. Many studies indicate that a history of patriarchy in the community where decisions are held by certain members can be a stumbling block to achieving equal power and partnership (Goebel, 1998; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). In this



study, teachers did not mention any issues related to patriarchy or being privileged in terms of seniority in teaching. This could perhaps be attributed to the fact that the majority of teachers in this study are female, with patriarchy not being truly applicable. Additionally, teachers in this study perceived themselves as a community that had to provide guidance and leadership as a whole. I therefore hypothesise that in a community of practice, it is likely that leadership is not central to one figure but to a collective effort. This hypothesis requires further investigation.

### **5.2.3.3 Governance in partnership structures**

I did not find results in this study that refer to the administration and management of a partnership as factor for an enabling environment in partnerships. Lasker *et al.* (2001) argue that in creating partnership synergy, there is a need to have proper administration and management of multiple organisations that work together. Lasker *et al.* (2001) further argue that logistical support would enable a broad range of partners to participate in a more meaningful way. This argument contradicts the findings of this study, as teachers did not mention any challenges in managing their different partners at local or national levels. I surmise that teachers in this study did not see the need to create communication strategies and mechanisms to coordinate partners' activities, since the status quo of coordinating the partnerships seemed to work well for all partners. The area of efficient administration and management of partners could be a possible avenue for future research.

With regard to an enabling environment as teachers' understanding of partnership and power, existing literature highlights additional reasons for forging equitable partnerships and power. Lasker *et al.* (2001) cite issues of governance as central to power-sharing partnerships, focusing on how to optimally capitalise on all partners' perspectives, resources and skills when combined (Center for Study of Social Policy, 1998). In partnerships, governance relates to the person holding the power to make decisions, policies that guide the partnerships and the need for boards or committees to validate the decisions of partners. When certain partners hold the power to make decisions, the voices and standpoints of other partners are not fully recognised and regarded as legitimate. Additionally, when policies and frameworks exist to guide the scope of a partnership, it is likely that such power structures may oppress those who were initially intended to be empowered in terms of creating a conducive environment for co-empowering participation (Arnestein, 1969). The spaces of participation will become restrictive with only certain partners being invited to be part of the agenda (Gaventa, 2006).

Teachers in this study possibly did not report on governance because the status quo was working well for them. The need to call a forum where all partners could share experiences and deliberate on issues of governance probably never arose, based on the dynamic functioning and relationships between the teachers who participated.

In terms of agency in relation to power, existing literature highlights that participants as agents of change have the multilayered task of challenging power relations (Taylor & Fransman, 2004). This idea is based on the rationale that existing structures view participants as subjects, from whom they ‘extract’ information. Other challenges might be related to the notion that participants’ voices and knowledge is not valued as legitimate knowledge that could be tapped in to solve local problems. Teachers in this study did not report on challenging power relations. While participants initially viewed university researchers with scepticism, participants later learnt that they were valued as sources of legitimate knowledge and that they were the people who knew their situation best and were well equipped with assets, strengths and resources to bring about social transformation in their communities. This may be a result of the asset-based approach, which propagates that participants be facilitators of social transformation, given their assets and skills. In addition, the PRA approach pre-determined a view of participants as being the experts in the collaborative relationship.

#### **5.2.4 NEW INSIGHTS FLOWING FROM THIS STUDY FOR KNOWLEDGE ON POWER, PARTNERSHIPS AND PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY**

The final section of this chapter relates to new insights revealed by this study. In Table 5.4, I present a summary of the novel insights together with an interpretive discussion of these insights.

**Table 5.4: Comparing results to existing knowledge: new insights**

Themes	Description	Interpretive discussion
--------	-------------	-------------------------

Themes	Description	Interpretive discussion
<p>The nature of power in participatory partnerships: Power as capacity to provide leadership.</p>	<p>The view of power as leadership was based on the rationale that participants perceived themselves to be a community of practice that was tasked with the responsibility for capacity building in their communities, thus facilitating transformation. They had to provide guidance and were required to have a vision, mission and objectives of the project to be undertaken in participatory partnership.</p>	<p>The ability to come up with a vision, mission and purpose of participating in a participatory partnership is only achievable when there is power as leadership, derived through open discourse that values the voice of participants.</p>
	<p>Power as leadership may result in achieving high levels of synergy in partnerships.</p>	<p>Power as leadership in participatory partnership encompasses collective efforts, collaboration and transformative change. Power as leadership is shared by all partners so that it encourages supportive behaviour and shared experience.</p>
<p>Participants' understanding and meaning making of power and partnerships: Clear vision and mission, which are tools that will direct the course of the partnership to achieve its goals and the interdependent role of each partner.</p>	<p>A clearly defined vision and mission are tools of power that can create a sense of anticipation of what is to be achieved as a result of working together.</p>	<p>In power-sharing partnerships, partners work collectively together to produce results that are guided by an established vision and mission. The vision and mission of a power-sharing partnership is developed by all voices thus creating a sense of ownership which result in synergy in partnership. A clearly defined vision and mission are an indication of spaces of participation created and the visible forms of power that show inclusion.</p>
	<p>The co-creation of a vision and mission for partnerships is established on the principle of interdependence of roles of partners.</p>	<p>Synergy in power-sharing partnerships relies on the recognition, appreciation and mutual respect of the interdependent role of each partner. Synergy in partnership is an indication that forms and spaces of power enable an environment that values voice and the capability of leadership provided by a community of practice.</p>
<p>The role of agency in relation to power and partnership: Synergy in power-sharing partnerships, being about determination.</p>	<p>Determined as having the capacity to chart their own course, thus asserting control of community capacity building.</p>	<p>Determination is about building community capacity which is achieved by means of a community of practice who provide leadership to work <i>with</i> as well as <i>for</i> the community with the view of social change.</p>

**A power sharing partnership framework** (refer to Chapter 6) stemmed from the three themes that emerged. The framework has five interrelated elements: leadership as power, identifying vision and mission, synergy, interdependent role of partners, and determination.

This study explored experiences of teachers as co-researchers who have partnered with university researchers in an asset-based intervention project known as STAR. The syntax of the underlying framework for this study, based on the various constructs of analysis of social transformation efforts such as PR, partnerships, empowerment, community capacity building and leadership, power and power relations, and Gaventa's power cube theory (2003a, 2006) were used to understand the phenomenon of power and its cognate concepts. The power cube framework understands power 'in relation to how spaces for engagement are created, the levels of power (from local to global), as well as different forms of power across them' (Gaventa, 2003a:127). Therefore, the current study contributes to the existing knowledge base of the Gaventa power cube theory by highlighting a framework for power-sharing partnerships. The findings suggest that a framework of power-sharing partnerships could be promoted in PR (refer to chapter 6 for a discussion). This framework and its five interrelated elements (leadership as power, identifying vision and mission, synergy, interdependent role of partners, and determination) provide insight into the way teachers shared their experiences of PR. In particular, this study explored how power relations among participants (co-researchers and university researchers) are both revealed and concealed in PRA, focusing specifically on forming partnerships.

The experiences of participating teachers in a power-sharing partnership revealed several insights into the nature of power in PR partnerships. Teachers in the study utilised paradigms based on contexts that could frame their understanding of how power operates, and recognised that power is dynamic. New insight in terms of power in a participatory partnership is based on power as leadership and achieving high levels of synergy in partnerships.

In this study, teachers defined power gained as the capacity to provide leadership. Power as leadership in participatory partnership encompasses collective efforts, collaboration and

transformative change. Power as leadership is shared by all partners to encourage supportive behaviour and shared experience that value the standpoint of each voice. Power as leadership is an interactive and cascading process through which partners work together to enhance the capacity of all engaged. The view of power as leadership was based on the rationale that one needs a vision, mission and objectives for a project to be undertaken in participatory partnership. I therefore contribute towards the definition of power to include the aspect of leadership as explained above. Existing literature emphasises that power entails the ability to represent others and act in their best interest (Gaventa, 1998), and the capacity to act. Literature on power also does not address the need for achieving positive synergy in participatory partnerships as a result of leadership. I contribute additional insight in this area by indicating that power as leadership may result in achieving higher levels of synergy. Through synergistic leadership, participants could be comfortable to share ideas, resources and power that would result in transformative change. This aspect of power as leadership and achieving high levels of synergy is not evident in existing literature, but was strongly emphasised in the study. The participating teachers indicated that through gained leadership, they were able to reach out, have a voice and benefit from participating in the project.

The new insight that emerged thus relates to an emphasise on viewing partnerships as platform that has to be guided by a clear vision and mission, which are tools of power that will direct the course of a partnership to achieve its goals. A clear vision and mission can create a sense of anticipation of what is to be achieved by working together. Achieving a vision and mission thus relies on visible forms of power, based on the ‘who, how, what, where, why’ strategies of decision-making (Gaventa, 2006). In this regard, the current study emphasises the importance of an interdependent role of participant stakeholders in an environment that may compel all partners to work towards fundamental change.

In power-sharing partnerships, partners will therefore work collectively to produce results that are guided by an established vision and mission. The vision and mission of a power-sharing partnership is developed by all relevant voices, thereby creating a sense of ownership which will in turn result in synergy in partnership. I therefore argue that, in this study, teachers reported that power-sharing partnerships are based on ‘imbiza ye IsiXhosa iya nyamezela<sup>8</sup>’, meaning that for them, synergy in partnerships is about different people coming together to reflect and dialogue on how best to achieve a partnership, through the development of a well-

---

<sup>8</sup>Working together in a symbiotic synergetic relationship.

crafted vision and mission that will guide the partnership towards achieving its objectives. The co-creation of a vision and mission for partnerships is established on the principle of interdependent roles of partners. As revealed in the findings of the study, being able to craft a well-conceived vision and mission for the partnership is conceived in an enabling environment based on equity and mutual co-existence of partners. When spaces of participation are created, they can help identify entry points for change and may encourage self-reflection on the power that different actors exercise (Gaventa, 2003a, 2006).

Participating teachers stressed that synergy in power-sharing partnerships relies on the recognition, appreciation and mutual respect of the interdependent role of each partner. Each partner contributes unique strengths, assets, skills and knowledge. It is through the interdependent role of partners that partners reconcile their different needs, thereby promoting stakeholder satisfaction. Therefore, this study has shed insight on the idea that power-sharing is about the interdependence of all stakeholders, whose needs are reconciled to strengthen sustainability of the partnership, thereby creating synergy in partnerships.

Furthermore, the study adds insight into power and partnership based on synergy as determination. In this study, teachers as a group were determined, having the capacity to decide on their own course, thus asserting control of community capacity building. Determination was manifested in actions to empower others, to advocate for coalitions and achieve success in facilitating the provision of services to the community. Determination gives way to agency that results in social change. In other words, determination creates a certain structure of an agency with its own social rules and mechanisms by which power is gained, thus affecting change and building community capacity. Determination is thus the result of empowerment achieved in terms of change through partners' position in relation to different degrees of visibility, place and space of power (Gaventa, 2006).

In this regard, existing literature mentions that power is the capacity to act through a process of exercising 'agency' with a reasonable prospect of this having an influence on development outcomes (Smulovitz & Walton, 2003). This idea is further supported by Rowlands (1997), who explains agency as 'power within', which is the ability of an individual to have awareness and take a lead. However, I argue that in synergistic leadership, participants are determined because of the latitude of the agency that manifests itself in a power-sharing partnership.

Community capacity building was achieved in this study by means of teachers working *with* as well as *for* the community. Working with and for the community resulted in social transformation. This transformative change can be achieved in power-sharing partnerships that are capable of embracing diversity, equality, mutual respect, co-learning and providing leadership power. As further indicated by the findings, at its core, the synergy of determination is about the capacity to be in charge, mobilise resources, advocate and collectively act to influence behaviour, thereby resulting in transformative change.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicated silences in terms of issues of power viewed in the traditional sense as control and dominance by an upper group over a lower group. Additionally, participants were not regarded as subjects from whom information had to be extracted. Data was also silent on partnerships as a platform for political negotiations, where academics may use community partners to gain scholarship mileage or funding.

The findings of the study relate to existing knowledge on power as capability to make decisions and act. Partnerships that did well were based on mutual collaboration and respect for each partner's voice and knowledge.

The study contributes to existing literature by challenging existing knowledge that power is about the leadership to be empowered and to take charge as a community, thus creating spaces of participation where everyone is treated as an equal. I indicate that new insights could be that, if community members are allowed the space to first establish a vision and mission for a partnership, power issues will be determined and synergy in the partnership established with both partners knowing their interdependent roles.

In the next chapter, I come to conclusions. I subsequently make recommendations for future research, practice and training.

