



**Power-sharing partnerships:  
Teachers' experiences of participatory methodology**

by

**Bathsheba Basathu Mbongwe**

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Department of Educational Psychology  
Faculty of Education  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

**PROMOTOR**

Prof. Dr. Ronél Ferreira

**CO-PROMOTOR**

Prof. Dr. Liesel Ebersöhn

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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**I, Bathsheba Basathu Mbongwe, declare that –**

*Power-sharing partnerships: teachers' experiences of participatory methodology*

is my own work and that all sources and citations from literature have been acknowledged in text and referenced in full.

**Signature**.....

**Date**.....



## ABSTRACT & KEY CONCEPTS

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I investigated the experiences of teachers as co-researchers in a long-term partnership with university researchers in an asset-based intervention project known as STAR<sup>1</sup>. The goal of STAR is to investigate how teachers can promote resilience in scarce-resource and high need schools. To inform participatory research methodology, I explored and described how co-researchers (teachers) experience power relations. I conducted the participatory reflection and action (PRA) study by using feminist standpoint theory as guiding epistemological paradigm, Gaventa's power cube as theoretical framework and participatory research as methodological paradigm.

I conveniently chose two cohorts (schools) in the STAR project to partner as the unit of analysis. I thus applied convenience sampling to select information-rich cohorts. The school-cohorts included a primary school in the Eastern Cape Province and a secondary school in a remote area in the Mpumalanga Province. I then purposefully selected participating co-researchers (n=15: 14 females, 1 male) from the participating schools.

Over a two year period, I employed multiple PRA data generation techniques (observation, four focus groups and two semi-structured interviews) and documentation procedures (field notes, research journal, visual data and verbatim transcriptions). I used thematic analysis and categorical aggregation for data analysis, with three themes emerging.

In terms of **the nature of power in participatory partnerships**, co-researchers expressed factors which influenced power and partnership in a participatory project. For co-researchers, these factors enabled them to experience a sense of power-sharing. Regarding **the role of agency in relation to power and partnerships**, co-researchers indicated that agency resulted from power-sharing and partnerships they had established. The agency meant that they took action through leadership to empower others in school-communities. Co-researchers' **meaning-making of power and partnerships** culminated in their construction of power in a participatory project as both a way in which their working environment enabled them to do what they wanted to do, and also as a personal space where they felt capable and had initiative to coordinate project activities.

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<sup>1</sup> STAR (Supportive Teachers, Assets and Resilience): Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012.

Findings of this study correlate with existing literature where (i) power is seen as the ability of actors to express and act on desires, (ii) power can be redistributed as action for inclusive benefits, (iii) partnerships imply balancing time, and (iv) partnerships evolve over time, are dynamic and involve issues of trust and confidence. In contrast to existing knowledge on power in participatory research, I found that teachers did not view power as dominance or as exclusively owned.

I developed a framework of **power sharing partnerships** to extend Gaventa's power cube theory. 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 co-researchers shared their experiences of participatory research methodology. I posit an evidence-based conceptualisation of power as leadership where community partners play influential roles as co-researchers. I theorise power sharing partnerships as a complimentary platform hosting partners' shared strengths, skills and experience, creating synergy in collaborative projects. I argue that synergy in power sharing partnerships relies on recognition, appreciation and mutual respect inherent in interdependent roles of partners. Furthermore, the power sharing partnership framework explains how power and partnership depends on determination amongst partners which manifests as agency to drive social change.

### **Key Concepts**

- Change agents
- Collaborative research
- Community capacity building
- Co-researchers
- Feminist standpoint
- Participatory Reflection and Action/ Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- Participatory research
- Partnership
- Power
- Power relations



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

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#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Efforts to involve participants as research partners build on well-established participatory research (PR) methods. New spaces and opportunities are emerging for locals to engage in research partnerships PR at a variety of levels (Gaventa, 2006). Such efforts create opportunities both for promoting community development and for improving the scientific study of issues affecting the lives of people in communities. PR projects have recently addressed several international development issues (Chambers, 1997), organisational change (Greenwood & Levin, 1998), community development and advocacy needs (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001; Horton & Freire, 1990), and healthcare and community health promotion (Schulz, Israel & Senk, 2006a; Schulz, Gravlee, Williams, Israel, Mentz & Rowe 2006b; Srinivasan, O’Fallon & Dearry, 2003).

Research approaches such as PR, and community action research in particular, have challenged some of the traditional positivist approaches in social research, as PR purports that the community of interest engages in the research process as a full partner in the development and implementation of a project (Green, 2001). Traditionally, qualitative research is done in communities with human participants, in which research seeks to describe social issues as scientific research (Dickson, 2000). A conventional approach to community research generally views community members as subjects of a research project instead of as partners in research (Israel, Schulz, Parker & Becker, 1998). However, some evidence indicates dissatisfaction with the typical relationship between communities and researchers where research is conducted (Amen, 2001; Maurana & Goldberg, 1996; Rappaport, 1997; Roesch & Dion-Stout, 2003).

The philosophy of PR is that the researcher is expected to acknowledge and appreciate that participants possess the necessary knowledge and skills to be viewed as partners in the research process (Maalim, 2006). PR is meant to provide local people with the necessary space to make their voices count. This research orientation requires a style of interaction and approach that is conducive to people’s initiatives and thus opens up transformational possibilities (Cornwall, 1995).

Based on my readings on participatory methodology, I concluded that an upsurge of interest in PR and its methodological problems has been evident over the last decades, particularly in case studies that add insight into the process. To be specific, several case studies have been conducted on the experiences of researchers carrying out PR (Kniefel, 2000; Maguire, 1993). For example, the case studies conducted by Kniefel (2000) and Maguire (1993) are process studies of undertaking PR, exploring what may be learned from such experiences. Although some case studies focus on collaboration between universities and communities (Savan & Sider, 2003; Santelli, Singer & DiVenere, 1998; Benson, Reardon, 1995), these studies often emphasise the research that has been conducted rather than the process of collaboration from the perspectives of academic research partners. They do not look into power, politics and partnership issues as experienced by co-researchers. Furthermore, the need for continued research on issues of power and relationships in PR still exists (Chambers, 2004).

Power and relationships have become a pervasive theme in PR in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Chambers, 2004; Groves & Hinton, 2004; Archer & Newman, 2003; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). Some researchers have opened new ground in exploring power and how it can be transformed in PR. For example, Kakande (2007) has written on the effects of donor harmonisation and power. Therefore, power relations involved in interaction was central to the current study, treating participating teachers as co-researchers and equal partners in research. Such interaction and power relations involved in partnerships have not been examined specifically within the remit of a process of partnership with academic researchers, from the perspective and experiences of co-researchers as a potentially marginalised group. Co-researchers might be seen as partners who come from the margins, who organise and act collectively, as compared to academic researchers. Reid (2004) argues that research participants interested in social change, action research, or emancipation, regardless of theoretical frame, may be marginalised to some degree within the academy. Some academic feminists have tended to maintain control over research projects and knowledge creation as have conventional non-feminist researchers, rarely empowering the women they study (Maguire, 1987). In my study, teachers as co-researchers were not marginalised, however I did acknowledge and appreciate that teachers participated as change agents and that they are not on the same level of research capability as academic researchers.

A distinct division exists between academic research and the needs of communities beset by poverty. Researchers have generally conducted research that has been influenced by academic disciplines (Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Ansley & Gaventa, 1997) or designed within the

context of university departments (Checkoway, 2001), with the quest of adding to existing knowledge in a particular field of research. To that end, the products of research are typically of primary interest to the researchers within the discipline and not to communities who act as research participants (Sclove, Scammell & Holland, 1998). Even though some researchers conducting conventional academic research believe that the information they produce might lead to change, change is generally merely incremental (Greenwood & Levin, 2000), and may not necessarily benefit underserved communities. As Stoecker (2003:2) says: ‘Being truly useful, and being part of real social change, is something too few of us academics get to experience on a regular basis’. Nyden, Figert, Shibley and Burrows (1997a:3) introduced the idea of ‘opposing orientations to research’, specifically research that is designed for empowerment versus research that is created to further an academic discipline agenda. These seemingly opposing orientations have created a gap between academics and community leaders who otherwise might work together. Based on the insights gained from opposing orientations, researchers have reorganised their efforts into a PR process in which the community becomes a partner in research, planning and decision-making. In just two short decades, colleges and universities have begun to transform themselves, moving from isolation to becoming integrated into the community and engaging their faculties and students to collaborate with groups outside the academy (Chambers, 2004; Stoecker, 2003).

Nyden *et al.* (1997a) view collaboration in community-based research as a process that has the potential to bring together academic researchers and communities to partner in research that may be relevant to the lives of community members and bring about social change. McAllister (1999) argues that the rationale for using PR may be functional, to encourage community participation in order to improve the usefulness of research to local people. Another reason for using PR may be for empowerment or social transformation to strengthen local people’s capacity in decision-making in research, in order to improve their awareness of options and to strengthen their ability to act on and respond to local needs.

While literature describing community/university research partnerships and/or the outcomes of these research collaborations abounds, little has been done to study the actual process of collaborative research (Buckeridge, Glazier, Harvey, Escobar, Amrhein & Fran, 2002), specifically in terms of power relations as experienced by co-researchers who are viewed as equal partners. The few studies that describe community/university research partnerships have noted that, as organisations and individuals are brought together to form research partnerships, differences in their organisational cultures are often apparent (Ferman & Hill,

2004; Lerner & Simon, 1998; Stoecker, 2005). These differences relate to issues of power, expertise, and control; and are exacerbated by communication problems and discrepancies in resources (Barnsley, 1995, 1996; Bickel & Hatrup, 1991; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Peterson, 1993). Yet, the question remains as to how co-researchers (fulfilling the role of partners in research) experience their role in a seemingly different hierarchy; and secondly, how power relations might affect their experiences.

There is no reason to assume that power relations will not influence even the most carefully designed PR. Though everyone possesses and is affected by power, the meaning of power and ways of understanding it are diverse and often contentious. Theorists concerned with power can be grouped into two categories. Firstly, there are those who take a structural conflict approach, such as Gramsci (1957), Lukes (1974) and Marx (1959). This position contrasts with that of Bourdieu (1977), Foucault (1977) and Taylor (2008), who view power in more fluid terms, seeing it everywhere and as something that everyone can aspire to and grasp by deciding to participate, learning the rules of engagement and becoming empowered. These theorists include the role of agency in the overall dynamics of power relations.

Some researchers (Berger, 1974; Dahl, 1957; Foa & Foa, 1974; French & Raven, 1959; Gaventa, 2006) see power as held by actors, some of whom are powerful while others are relatively powerless. Others (Lukes, 1974, 2005) view power as more pervasive, embodied in a web of relationships and discourse which affects everyone, but is held by no single actor. PR has emphasised abdication of power and passing much of the initiative and control to local people, using a metaphor of ‘handing over the stick’ (Chambers, 2004:29) According to Chamber’s reasoning, ‘handing over the stick’ implies that the researcher will let go of the power s/he has in terms of claiming to know it all or be an ‘expert’. The researcher’s role is rather one of facilitation and allowing the co-researchers to take the lead of investigating the problem, do analysis, generate information and take ownership of the outcome of the process. The thrust of PR is to reverse domination, to empower more than to extract. The question that remains, however, is: How much ‘handing over the stick’ actually occurs as experienced by co-researchers?

## **1.2 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In this study, I set out to investigate the experiences of teachers as co-researchers who have collaborated with university researchers in an asset-based intervention project known as

STAR<sup>1</sup>. The STAR intervention is a longitudinal project that commenced in 2003. The goal of STAR is to establish collaboration and partnerships with teachers in order to promote resilience in schools by means of supportive networks. The STAR intervention further underscores the importance of capacity development to provide intervention for communities at risk (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011, 2012). The STAR intervention adopts an asset-based approach (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) using Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA) principles, where teachers use existing resources, assets, skills and abilities to address community challenges and bring about social change.

STAR rests on the belief that teachers are well positioned to understand the challenges faced by the communities they work in (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011). The STAR intervention is implemented during four sessions of two to three days each. After mapping the community and identifying challenges, assets and potential assets, teachers develop action plans that could address challenges through the identified resources and potential resources. Teachers continually provide progress reports on the implementation of the planned initiatives, serving as a strategy for monitoring and evaluation (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012).

In this study, the community partners participating were teachers (referred to as co-researchers), from two of the STAR schools, located in Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape. These teachers have been collaborating with researchers from the University of Pretoria since 2003/4, to mobilise existing assets and potential resources within the community, in order to provide school-based psychosocial support to school communities (Ebersöhn, 2006; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011, 2012; Ferreira, 2006). Through the collaborative efforts of teachers as co-researchers and academic researchers, the project has brought about social change in school communities. Against this background, I set out to explore power relations or the so-called ‘handing over the stick’ as experienced by these teachers in the role of co-researchers. The ‘handing over the stick’ idea is characterised by how co-researchers, who can be regarded as marginalised people, experience a sense of capacity to act, and how they might mobilise assets for capacity building.

The word participation may mean different things. In this study, I focused on participation with particular reference to the experiences of co-researchers (teachers) as research partners

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<sup>1</sup> STAR (Supportive Teachers, Assets and Resilience): Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012.

who have been actively engaged in the STAR intervention. I attempted to explore various facets of participation by asking questions such as: How do people participate? Who participates? Why do they participate? How much power do participants have? How do outsiders and local people view participation? How much do participants gain or lose by participating (or not)? The answers to questions like these (articulated in specific research questions, section 1.5) may add to findings related to the legitimacy, efficiency and efficacy of PR.

### **1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

In terms of my personal motivation to undertake the study, a research opportunity to explore the experiences of teachers as partners in research opened up to me during a presentation on PR methods by Ronél Ferreira in April 2008, when I attended a doctoral support session at the University of Pretoria. During this presentation, she shared with doctoral students her use of participatory methods in research, inspiring me to further explore the use of this methodology that typically results in social change. I expressed my interest in the method to her after the session. Subsequently, she invited me to join her and Liesel Ebersöhn in STAR. Ronél had done her PhD research under Liesel's supervision, exploring and describing the manner in which a South African informal settlement community coped with HIV and AIDS by relying on existing assets and local resources (Ferreira, 2006). This initial study extended to involve several postgraduate student studies (Loots, 2010; McCallaghan, 2007; Mnguni, 2006), collectively constituting the STAR intervention. Based on these interrelated research studies and the development of the broad research project, I chose to explore teachers' experiences of participating in this asset-based intervention project as partners in research, specifically in terms of power relations to engage partners in research.

PR encompasses a variety of approaches that directly engage those who are typically 'participants' of research in some aspect of developing or implementing research activities (Boser, 2006). Participatory researchers work 'with' rather than 'for' the researched, breaking down the distinction between researchers and the researched while legitimising the knowledge people are capable of producing (Fals-Borda, 2001). Consequently, participatory researchers outline and utilise explicit processes to facilitate 'ordinary' people's reflections on and analysis of their realities. They attempt to involve participants in the entire research process (Fals-Borda, 2001). Participants make decisions about the study format and data analysis.

This approach is designed to create social and individual change by altering relationships in research projects (Reinhars, 1992).

PR approaches share the practice of engaging those whose lives are affected by research into research with members of the local community, typically shaping the research questions to address locally defined concerns. PR espouse that through a dialectical process of collective reflection and action ‘conscientisation’ (Freire, 1987) the community and its constituent organisations and individuals may foster a sense of identification and shared fate. Through developing the skills and resources to engage in the cyclical process of diagnosing and analysing problems, they plan, implement, and evaluate strategies aimed at meeting identified needs (Israel, Checkoway, Schulz & Zimmerman, 1994). Community members, organisations and the community as a whole typically gain increased influence and control that can in turn be associated with improved quality of life. In this manner, participatory researchers and community members strive together to facilitate increased knowledge and understanding of a given phenomenon, and taking action to change the situation (Israel *et al.*, 1994).

PR typically operates in a complex, dynamic social milieu and seeks to share the power inherent in knowledge generation with community partners (Boser, 2006). Power relations and power dynamics in research are concepts that have been widely and extensively written about (Gaventa, 2006; Minkler, 2005; VeneKlasen, 2005). In the field of PR, power and power dynamics are highly acknowledged and actively addressed. Furthermore, in PR, it is widely recognised that a study of partnerships must always analyse the power dynamics within systems (Lister, 2005). PR projects are typically conducted with the belief that the very process of participating in constructing knowledge about one’s own context has the potential to equalise asymmetrical power relations.

Assuming that knowledge is power, PR seeks to redirect power imbalances by sharing the power inherent in the knowledge generation process. In other words, the researcher seeks to form a ‘power with’ relationship with co-researchers in the community. Because of this, PR brings a different set of social relations into the research processes. Participatory projects are unique and highly context-specific, and the social relations among those involved in a research project are naturally complex. Power is an important aspect of all relationships, especially close personal relationships, and is conceptualised based on the belief that when people are in close relationships they are likely to depend on one another to attain their goals (Burgoon & Hale, 1984). When people’s goals are in conflict, power may be exercised to

achieve one's own objectives at the expense of those of the other partner. However, power has important implications in PR even when conflicts do not occur (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005).

This study explored how power relations among participants (co-researchers and university researchers) are both revealed and concealed in participatory reflection and action, focusing specifically on forming partnerships. The framework for understanding power relations and power dynamics involved in research is predicated according to feminist standpoint theory, as this theory may provide insight into power, knowledge and social structures (Brookfield, 2001; Jacques, 1992; Ritzer, 1992). Such understanding can in turn shed light on the understanding of the 'inside' beliefs, desires, and thoughts of the co-researchers.

Terms like 'community engagement,' 'partnership' and 'collaboration' mean different things to different people. Because of this ambiguity, expectations about the purpose and nature of community involvement vary substantially among participants and are often not met (Israel, Eng, Schultz & Parker, 2005). Collaboration in PR has the promising potential to give voice to people in communities and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of achieving challenging community problems. At a practical level, many of the problems that affect the well-being of people in communities, such as substance abuse, poverty, environmental hazards and inadequate access to care, cannot be solved by any person, organisation, or sector working in isolation (Novick, 1995; Reason, 1994; Stringer, 1996). By combining the knowledge, skills, and resources of a broad array of people and organisations, communities can understand the underlying nature of these problems and develop effective and locally feasible solutions to address them (Minkler, Blackwell & Thompson, 2003; Nyden, 2003).

Different stakeholders participate in collaborative efforts to bring about social change in the community in different ways. PR involves a variety of different approaches to community participation, such as consultative participation in which researchers consult with local people in order to make decisions about community needs and to design interventions, hence actively involving communities (Minkler *et al.*, 2003).

#### **1.4 PURPOSE AND POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe (Maree, 2007; Babbie, 2005) partnership dynamics to elucidate power relations and dynamics, as experienced by teachers as co-researchers, in an attempt to inform PRA methodology. The purpose of exploratory

research is to explain a social phenomenon, to predict and describe it (Babbie, 2005). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore and provide insight into the process of partnerships in a community asset-based project by teachers as research partners in order to understand how partners' experiences may depict processes and inform methodology.

Despite an understanding of the importance of partnerships in community asset-based projects and existing knowledge on practical issues that emerges during the process of community research collaboration (Baptiste, Paikoff, McKay, Madison, Bell & Coleman, 2005; Secrest, Lassiter, Armistead, Wyckoff, Johnson, Williams & Kotchnick, 2004), limited research incorporates issues of power relations. I thus set out to explore power relations in terms of the dynamics of partnerships as experienced by non-researchers in order to inform participatory methodology.

As a descriptive study, the inquiry describes (Babbie, 2005; Jansen, 2007) partnership dynamics in PR, specifically how co-researchers have been collaborating with institutions of learning to bring about social change in the lives of marginalised people. Descriptive research is meant to describe a situation or event (Babbie, 2005). In essence, this study aimed to describe what transpired when co-researchers, who can be viewed as marginalised people, were brought together to explore the problems they face as a community, working as partners in PR with university researchers. As such, the study may add insight to the field of PR methodology, particularly within an asset-based intervention approach, by explaining power relations in partnerships. Subsequently, the findings of the study may inform best practices and future participatory projects. Central to any development process is an understanding of power relations embedded in the culture and social structure within local communities. The working assumption of the study was therefore that co-researchers could provide insight into the collaboration process of participating as partners in research that may help to make changes for the better in their communities.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The primary research question was:

*How can insight into teachers as co-researchers' experiences of power relationships broaden knowledge about partnerships in participatory methodology?*

In order to answer the primary research question, the following secondary questions were addressed:

- *How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations?*
- *How do teachers conceptualise power and partnership in participatory partnership?*
- *How can power be expressed by teachers as co-researchers within a participatory process?*
- *What are the relations of power at play in the specific activities of the STAR intervention?*
- *In which manner might teachers as co-researchers benefit from participation in an asset-based intervention?*
- *Which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in a research partnership?*

## **1.6 KEY CONSTRUCTS**

In this section, I briefly define the key concepts of this study, to represent my understanding and interpretation of the concepts.

### **1.6.1 PARTNERS IN RESEARCH**

Partners in research refers to members of a partnership, who participate in research. A range of stakeholders can be included, such as institutions, corporations and/or communities (Minkler *et al.*, 2003). In this study, partners in research refers to teachers (n=15: 14 females and 1 male) from the two mentioned participating schools in the STAR project, who have collaborated with researchers from the University of Pretoria, Educational Psychology Department, since 2003/4.

In defining ‘partnership’, I support the following definition by Sanginga (2006:115): ‘A collaborative arrangement between organisations to plan by engaging rural people and other stakeholders in a circular process of analysis, reflection, and action, in which human capacity can be built and prospects for greater innovation can be achieved’. In this definition, partners contribute their expertise and share responsibilities and ownership to increase an understanding of a given phenomenon, and incorporate the knowledge gained with action for capacity building.

Using a community development approach, partnerships imply working together towards a common goal. Partnership is equated with equal participation. Therefore, partnership is about all partners being fully and equally engaged in decision making in terms of the what, when and how work will be done. Beyond consultation, all partners share power equally (Wass, 1994).

### **1.6.2 POWER**

Literature on power is mostly concentrated on the notion of power as dominance. Among the key theorists of power, Lukes (2005) views power as an instrument wielded by one party over another to influence the latter's actions, to prevent participation, or to shape the wants, desires, and interests of the powerless. Lukes (2005) focuses on ways in which the powerful secure the compliance of those they typically dominate, with particular attention to the imposition of internal restraints. However, Taylor and Boser (2006) challenge the way Lukes (2005) views power and state that power involves the focus on power as a function of a dyadic relationship. Other theorists (Lukes, 2005; Karlberg, 2004) contend that power is not limited to a dyadic relationship, as Taylor and Boser (2006) view it, and does not even necessarily require a link between the two parties. Rather, some suggest that power can exist in multidimensional ways, such as among multiple players and in complex roles or embedded within structures (Christians, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Karlberg, 2004). For example, Hayward (1998:9) argues for an understanding of power as 'the network of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action' allowing for multiple and nuanced relational possibilities, including the view that power inequities are inherent in a given structure. Foucault's (1980) conceptualisation of power is evident in this radical departure from previous modes of conceiving power. For Foucault (1980), power is diffuse/fluid rather than concentrated. Power is embodied and enacted rather than possessed. Power is discursive rather than purely coercive, and power constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them.

Another theorist, Karlberg (2004), supports Taylor and Boser (2006) by arguing that the focus of theoretical attention on power in domination is limiting. Karlberg (2004) sees power as a capacity, neutral in itself but existing within two critical dimensions: the relational context and the degree to which an imbalance of power exists. Regarding the nature of the relationship, Karlberg (2004) argues that social relations among agents might be characterised by the degree to which those relations demonstrate either adversarial or mutualistic qualities. In adversarial relations, two or more social agents seek to adversely affect the interest of

others. Conversely, mutualistic power relations would reflect those in which two or more social agents are working in cooperation with each other (Karlberg, 2004).

Regardless of the nature of the relations, power, as capacity, may be balanced and equal among social agents (partners), or it may be asymmetrical (Karlberg, 2004). This gives rise to multiple potential sets of relations. For example, in a situation in which parties experience a power imbalance but also mutualistic relations, a cooperative set of social relations can exist in which all parties experience the capacity to act on behalf of their own interests.

Understanding the meaning of power and its implications for participation in partnership is at the core of this study. However, a specific definition of power is deeply contested; depending on which angle and context one perceives it from.

Power is regarded by different scholars as among the fundamental dimensions of human relationships (Dahl, 1957; Lukes, 2005; Gaventa, 2006; Lister, 2005). This study explored how power relations among teachers (participants) were both revealed and concealed in PR. For the purpose of this study, I thus primarily relied on the following definition: 'Power is the capacity to produce intended effects and in particular to influence the behaviour of another person' (Lukes, 2005:128). This definition emphasises the capability to make decisions, act, lead and achieve social change.

### **1.6.3 TEACHERS**

In this study, teachers refer to the teachers from the two schools who have been participating in the STAR intervention project since 2003/4, namely a primary school in the Eastern Cape and a secondary school in Mpumalanga. These teachers are referred to as co-researchers, who are then the partners in research.

### **1.6.4 EXPERIENCE**

Experience refers to a series of events participated in or lived through. It includes people's perceptions on which their own states of reality are based in interaction with the environment (Collins Dictionary, 1998). Habermas (1971) states that 'life world' as a totality of experience includes daily living and concrete value contexts. Hence, the concept of experience according to Habermas (1971) is complemented to allow one to see for whom knowledge is intended.

In this study, experience refers to the co-researchers' knowledge and experiences gained through their involvement in the STAR intervention. Co-researchers shared knowledge and information on how they experienced power relations and being partners in research, and further how they experienced being treated as experts throughout the research process.

### **1.6.5 COLLABORATION**

According to Seaburn, Lorens, Gunn, Gawinski and Mauksch (1996), to collaborate is to create conversations where people are joined together, meanings are fashioned, purposes are defined, roles are clarified, goals are established and action is taken. Together the participants create a culture in which everyone involved contributes to achieve the whole.

Furthermore, collaboration implies a shared decision-making process (Marlow & Nass-Fukai, 2000). It is a co-generative process that makes community-based research dynamic. In this study, the co-researchers as partners in research collaborated with academic researchers from the University of Pretoria, to work together, sharing decisions to bring about social change in the lives of community members.

### **1.6.6 PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH (PR) PROJECT**

PR projects refer to approaches that aim to overcome barriers that researchers face in the economically and socially disadvantaged communities they work in. It engages a variety of role players in the collaborative identification and study of local problems, with the ultimate aim of taking action to improve local conditions (Chambers, 1997). In this study, PR project refers to STAR, where co-researchers and academic researchers have been working together, using an asset-based intervention, to assess and address the needs of school communities.

## **1.7 PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS**

I conducted the study by using feminist standpoint theory as guiding epistemological paradigm, Gaventa's power cube as theoretical framework and participatory research as methodological paradigm. In the following sections, I provide a broad overview of these choices. Detailed discussions follow in chapter 3.

### 1.7.1 METATHEORETICAL PARADIGM: FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

Feminist standpoint theory is premised on the notion that individuals are socially constituted as they stand within a social location that is predominated by a particular stance of thinking. Therefore a feminist standpoint stance could reveal insights into power, knowledge and social structures (Brookfield, 2001; Jacques, 1992; Ritzer, 1992). This is further premised on the basis that the production of knowledge is political and that it emerges under conditions that are enmeshed in relations of power between knowers and knowledge itself (Ali, 2006; Campbell, 2004). As the concept of power is the bone of contention in feminist standpoint theory, I am of the opinion that it was appropriate for me to rely on feminism, in my attempt to explore and understand the experiences of teachers while unveiling issues of power relations and partnership dynamics, from participants' own perspectives and local knowledge.

The core of feminist standpoint theory focuses on local sites of power and knowledge (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The location of power discourse includes and excludes privileges and issues of knowledge (Halbert, 2006). The interest in power relations, partnership and feminist theory led me to investigate what might become visible if a feminist lens were applied to partnerships and power relations in PR. I used feminist standpoint theory as a possible avenue to obtain an understanding of power dynamics and relations in PR partnership. Feminist standpoint theory provides an approach for overcoming some of the limitations in theorising about diversity. This theory has developed from the Marxist tradition, and provides a systematic approach for theorising the complexities of the lived contexts, experiences and perspectives of women (Harding, 2004; Adam, Howcroft & Richardson, 2001; Haraway, 1991). The theory stresses the importance of acknowledging societal positioning and the ways in which it serves as a subjective vantage point from which persons interact with themselves and the world (Orbe, 1998).

Feminist standpoint theory is generally used to support two research goals. First, the theory is used to foreground the political, social, and material contexts of women's experiences and situated knowledge. Second, this situated knowledge is enlisted for social change. I was able to use the standpoint stream of feminist theory to interpret the experiences of teachers in a world where both men and women's experiences and voices can be fully represented, based on their own perspective. I believe that feminism provided me with a vehicle for gaining insight into the participants' experience of social reality in terms of power and partnerships.

I thus selected a feminist framework for the current study as it could assist me in exploring and highlighting the potential values associated with teachers as partners in research through their collaborative experiences in terms of power relations and partnership. I found it appropriate to utilise a feminist perspective as a tool to understand the complexity of teachers' experiences of partnership, and to obtain an in-depth understanding of the related issues of power relations, knowledge, authority, voice, and empowerment. In line with this, I selected PRA as research design. Both feminism and PRA emphasise relationship building based on reciprocal empowerment and the value of multiple ways of knowing.

### **1.7.2 THEORETICAL PARADIGM: GAVENTA'S POWER CUBE**

For this study, I used Gaventa's (2006) 'power cube' as analytical framework to analyse three dimensions of power: spaces, forms and levels. Gaventa (2006) states that each side of a cube's dimension may be used as the first point of power analysis. He argues that any successful change in power relations requires each of the pieces on each dimension of a cube to align with each other simultaneously (Gaventa, 2006). In order to understand power relations, one should first ask how the spaces of power for participation were created, with whose interests in mind and with what terms of engagement (Gaventa, 2006). In terms of the space dimension, three types of space exist on a continuum. First, there are 'closed spaces' in which one asks if the decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors. That is to say, do researchers make decisions and provide services 'to the people' without the need for consultation or their involvement (Gaventa, 2006)? Secondly, 'invited spaces' is concerned with the type of people invited to participate by various authorities (Gaventa, 2006). Invited spaces can either be ongoing or more transient as one form of consultation (Gaventa, 2006). Thirdly, 'claimed/created spaces' are claimed by the less powerless actors from power holders (Gaventa, 2006).

The second dimension of power (Gaventa, 2006) concerns 'forms' of power, which is also referred to as the dynamics of power that shape the inclusiveness of participation within each space. Forms of power involve three dimensions, namely 'visible power', 'hidden power' and 'invisible power'. Visible power refers to observable decision-making, viz. strategies that entail the 'who', 'how' and 'what' (Gaventa, 2006). Hidden power refers to certain powerful people and institutions that maintain their influence by controlling who makes decisions and what is included on the agenda (Gaventa, 2006). Lastly, invisible power is the most insidious form of power as it shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation

(Gaventa, 2006). In this case, certain issues are kept away from the decision-making table and the minds of the people. As a result, it might influence how people think and thus shape their beliefs (Gaventa, 2006). With invisible power, the construction of ‘voices’ in invited spaces is influenced, as participants may merely echo what the power holders who shape the places want to hear (Gaventa, 2006).

Gaventa’s (2003a) power cube lastly emphasises levels of power as a significant dimension. To understand the interaction between levels of power and the ‘places of engagement’, Gaventa particularly distinguishes between international, national and local levels or places of power (Gaventa, 2003a). The concern with how and by whom the spaces for participation are shaped intersects with debates on the places or levels where critical social, political and economic power resides.

### **1.7.3 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: PARTICIPATORY APPROACH**

I used a PR approach in this study as methodological paradigm. PR involves inquiry based on the existential concept of experience, as proposed by Ortega-Gasset (cited in Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). PR is premised on the core philosophy of inclusivity and of recognising the value of engaging in the research process those who are intended to be the beneficiaries of the research (Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Green & Mercer, 2001; Israel, 2003). Therefore, PR is generally defined as ‘systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education and taking action or effecting change’ (Cargo & Mercer, 2008:326). At the heart of PR is the inclusion of marginalised people to take responsibility for researching the problems they face, in a partnership with outsiders (researchers) and to take action for advancing their lives and ultimately reflect on their ongoing experience (Rahman, 2008). The ultimate goal of PR projects is to bring about social change, based on the belief that the process of participating in constructing knowledge about one’s own context could result in equalising the asymmetrical power relations that are often present in social science research (Rahman, 2008).

A basic principle of participatory inquiry approaches is that it reduces the ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’ distinction and the assumed unequal power relations concomitant with a traditional research stance (Tinkler, 2004). It is therefore assumed that through PR, implicit knowledge and multiple perspectives will be integrated, which might result in more authentic research. Equal participation of both partners is the ideal for many PR approaches. It has a

number of advantages: to help partnerships balance scientific excellence with social and cultural relevance; foster ownership, capacity building, and empowerment of nonacademic partners; and translate research knowledge into action (Israel *et al.*, 1998). This democratic ideal emphasises the unique strengths, complementary expertise, and shared responsibilities of academic and nonacademic partners who are engaged in a partnership whereby each contributes equally (Israel *et al.*, 1998). PR assisted me in understanding the dynamics of power relations as experienced by teachers participating in a participatory study (STAR intervention).

The concept of power relations is central in PR. Therefore, PR addresses the notion of relationships between power and knowledge. PR argues that its ‘strategies can challenge the deep rooted power inequities’ (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:172). They (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:176) further reason that in PR, the goal is to reduce ‘some of the different ways in which power is conceptualised and their implications for research’. It is the goal of this study to view power from a position aspect, where both parties benefit. Chambers (1997:45) succinctly argues that PR is a process that recognises the importance of bringing in the voice of marginalised people’s realities as a ‘basis for action and decision-making, rather than those of the ‘upper’’. In other words, PR allows the diversity of knowledge from different social groups.

## **1.8 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS**

Based on the selected paradigmatic approaches I relied on, as well as the chosen theoretical framework, I conducted the study against the background of the following assumptions:

- Some interpretations of power recognise the liberating potential of power. When linking the forms, spaces and levels of power theory with the concept of agency, power can result in a positive connotation that refers to the capacity to act, to exercise agency and to realise the potential of voice, own experience, leadership and the ability to be in charge.
- In PR that recognises the standpoint of participants and is guided by the principles of PRA (Chambers, 1994a), the forms, spaces and levels of power could result in power that finds common interests and builds collective strength based on the synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration.
- The interactions of the positive forms, levels and spaces of power in PR could enable partners to ‘realise an individual’s or group’s goals and to change the world’

(Crocker, 2008:56), so that partners recognise their interdependence and see each other as a community of practice.

- The ultimate goal of leveraging on positive forms, levels and spaces of power that are inclusive in PR is to expand collective agency and promote social change.
- Through PR, the dynamics of power in different arenas will be leveraged by actors through a collective, deliberate planning process, in an enabling environment that results in all actors finding the partnership mutually beneficial.

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES**

In the next section, I briefly introduce the methodological choices I made. Detailed discussions on these aspects follow in chapter 3.

### **1.9.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

PRA is a methodological design that allows people to come together and learn from each other. PRA is both a methodology and change of attitude technique that combines a number of approaches to enable local or indigenous people to obtain, share, and analyse their knowledge of life and living conditions (Chambers, 1994a; Chambers 1994b). PRA methodology provides a means of increasing the space for participants to express and control the knowledge being created (Goebel, 1998). In this study, I believe that a PRA design provided the participants with the necessary space to express the knowledge being created.

PRA uses a set of principles, a process of communication and a menu of methods for engaging local people to participate by putting forth their points of view (Chambers, 1994b; Mukherjee, 1993). PRA relies on visual, flexible and creative data collection methods such as Venn diagramming, direct observation, and focus groups. The use of PRA lies in pursuing selected objectives through application of its principles, processes and methods. Some of the objectives of PRA; are to attain greater and better involvement of participants by learning about their perceptions, experiences and capabilities; to generate ongoing research on the use of PRA and to suggest improvements for this methodology (Mukherjee, 1993).

The core philosophy of PRA is that the researcher is required to acknowledge and appreciate that the research participants possess the necessary knowledge and skills to be partners in the research process. I took cognisance of the fact that teachers did possess the knowledge and

skills to be partners in the study as they participated in getting answers to the research questions. In order to fully benefit from the selected PRA design, I adhered to its guiding principles as cited by Chambers (1994b), namely 1) reversal of learning, 2) following a ‘they do it’ approach and 3) sharing information and ideas between participants and outsider facilitators.

### **1.9.2 SELECTION OF RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS**

I conveniently chose (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) two sites (schools) to partner as the unit of analysis. The rationale for convenience sampling is that the study forms part of an ongoing intervention study, STAR (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011, 2012). I thus applied convenience sampling to select information-rich sites for an in-depth study. The sites that I chose were a primary school in the Eastern Cape and a secondary school in a remote area in Mpumalanga.

I purposefully selected (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) fifteen participating co-researchers (teachers) from the participating schools in the two provinces, based on the criterion that they had been participating in the STAR intervention project, and acted as STAR facilitators in the dissemination research phase of the STAR project (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). More detail on the participants and selection procedures are included in chapter 3.

### **1.9.3 DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION**

I relied on crystallisation and employed multiple data generation techniques (Creswell, 2002; Yin, 2003). Furthermore, I utilised PRA techniques with direct participation, many of which involve visual activities as an integral part of the study, correlating well with the feminist standpoint epistemology.

I utilised visual representations in the form of drawings and poster photographs as one of the sources of data collection. Additionally, I utilised observation to augment other data collection methods. I observed all the activities and interactions of teachers during data generation activities, thereby becoming a participant observer (Merriam, 1998; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). I employed participant observation, specifically observation-as-context-of-interaction (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000).

In an attempt to obtain in-depth insights into how teachers experienced power and partnerships in the STAR project, I also made use of focus groups. Focus group interviews allowed me to obtain a range of responses and activate details of experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). In addition to focus groups, I employed semi-structured interviews with teachers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002), allowing me to obtain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study ‘through the eyes of the participant’ (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87).

I relied on field notes, in order to document what I observed and transpired during PRA-based activities, by using both descriptive and reflective notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For the descriptive aspect, provided a word picture of the setting, participants, actions and conversations observed. For the reflective aspect, I captured my own ideas, concerns and thoughts. Field notes thus supplemented other data collection techniques. Additionally, field notes allowed me the possibility of documenting observations as accurately as possible, hence making it possible to establish context and meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

The entire research process of data generation was documented in both audio and video recordings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Through audio and video recordings, I was able to add the nuances of people’s voices. Additionally, I transcribed conversations verbatim in order to aid in data analysis. In chapter 3, I elaborate on the data generalisation and documentation procedures I employed.

#### **1.9.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

For data analysis, I made use of some aspects of Charmaz’s (2000) theory to conduct thematic analysis and interpretation, to interpret verbatim transcripts of focus groups, interviews, visual data and observation notes in my research journal. Thematic analysis and interpretation is a systematic inductive method for analysing and interpreting data. This process is interactive as it takes into consideration the co-creation of knowledge and meaning by both the researcher and the participants, and attempt to make an interpretive understanding of participants’ meanings. I engaged participants in the interpretation of data using member checking (see Appendix H).

I was the primary data collector and analyst. I was engaged throughout the research process, giving me the advantage of gaining further insight into the context, which helped me with

interpreting the data. I had large volumes of data to analyse, both in the form of visual data and text. I had to make sense of the raw data in order to identify core meanings in terms of patterns, themes, subthemes, categories and interrelationships, working inductively. I was able to do this by using some aspects of Charmaz's (2000) grounded theory to inform my thematic analysis and interpretation of verbatim transcripts of focus groups, interviews, visual data and observation (refer to section 3.6 for a detailed discussion on data analysis and interpretation). In addition, I regularly consulted with my research supervisors to discuss the data analysis process, particularly the codes and themes that emerged. I thus had the opportunity to go through the process of coding and re-coding with the assistance of my supervisors (Charmaz, 2000). After reaching saturation in terms of the coding process, I finalised the themes and subthemes, by relying on member checking (Charmaz, 2000).

### **1.10 QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE STUDY**

I aimed to maintain a balance between flexibility and creativity, yet conduct a study in a professionally sound manner that could ensure rigour. Rigour in qualitative research assumes that research findings accurately reflect 'an external objective world' (Essy, 2002:51). Rigorous research also implies that the values, interests and hopes of the researcher do not influence the research. I aimed to enhance trustworthiness in terms of how I interacted, facilitated and applied PRA principles. I continually observed all processes and interactions, making adjustments where needed. I strived to meet the quality criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (2005) in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity.

Polit and Beck (2008:751) define credibility as 'a criterion for evaluating integrity and quality in qualitative research'. Throughout the research process, I attempted to maintain credibility by representing the perspectives and experiences of participants as holistically as possible. I employed the strategy of prolonged and extensive engagement in the field. Peer review and debriefing, as well as an audit trail, were utilised in this study. I also relied on crystallisation, in order to obtain multiple perspectives about the phenomenon under investigation. I subsequently used member checking to enhance all accuracy of the interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Transferability is about the extent to which data may be generalised and the findings be transferred to other research settings (Polit & Hungler, 1995). The aim of this study was not to

generalise but rather to transfer the findings to other research sites and settings (Merriam, 2002). I therefore have provided a thorough, detailed, rich and thick description of the research process, which I anticipate could allow for readers to decide on the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts.

The equivalent of dependability in quantitative research is reliability. Dependability is therefore concerned with consistency of the data collected. Attempting to replicate the study and ultimately get the same results will be a challenge because the outcome of other studies will be different. In an attempt to reach dependable findings, I used an audit trail (Creswell, 2002), where I provide a detailed account of the methods, procedures and decision points in carrying out the study. All data collected from discussions were audio and video recorded and the use of verbatim transcriptions as well as a field journal added to the depth and rigour of the study.

Ladkin (2005:110) asks, 'is it possible that subjectivity can lead to knowledge which might be valid outside of one's unique subjective experience?' Therefore, confirmability is concerned with the possibility of the findings and interpretations being confirmed, reflecting the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. Crystallisation reduced the potential effect of bias and enhanced confirmability. I acknowledge the possibility of my own bias, as my values might have had an effect on the way in which I interpreted data. However, in order to guard against bias I employed reflective commentary, in a field journal. To acknowledge my own bias, I also involved others throughout my study, particularly during data analysis and interpretation.

Authenticity refers to the true description of people, events and places. Authenticity within qualitative research therefore indicates whether descriptions and explanations correlate with each other. It refers to the degree to which different points of views are fairly and equally represented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I attempted to achieve authenticity by using a range of different perspectives (realities) as well as reporting on contradictions and conflicting values, as a result addressing fairness. In order to enhance the authenticity of the research study, I asked the participating teachers to verify the identified themes for authenticity and make sure that their perceptions were understood correctly and accurately captured and reported, hence enhancing ontological authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I also included member checking and an audit trail.

## 1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding and accounting for the power dynamics involved and present in the processes of social research is necessary. Power operates at many different levels, both implicitly and explicitly (Alldred, 1998). This has particular resonance for my research which is primarily based on the theme of power.

What is understood as ethical PR has been influenced by debates around feminist methodology. Feminists often engage in debates on reflexivity, positionality, difference and representation in research (McDowell, 1994; Nast, 1994; Staeheli & Lawson, 1994). Several scholars have debated at length about undertaking reflexive research while still engaging in material and political struggles that have meaning and relevance (Mounts, 2002; Nagar, 2002; Raju, 2002; Staeheli & Nagar, 2002). Many feminist methodologies emphasise non-hierarchical interactions, understanding, and mutual learning, where close attention is paid to how the research questions and methods of data collection may be embedded in unequal power relations between the researcher and research participants (Bondi, 2003; Moss, 2002). In this study, I relied on reflexivity to obtain more complex and nuanced understandings of issues, where boundaries between process and content may otherwise get blurred (Sultana, 2007).

I abided by the ethical guidelines stipulated by the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. Principles relating to ethics include respect for the rights of the participants, participants not being exposed to harm, and voluntary participation (Welman, Cawthorne & Barraclough, 2005). In terms of informed consent, participants were requested to participate in the study of their own free will (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002). In order to respect their rights, I explained informed consent and the purpose of the study to them before requesting them to sign consent forms. I adhered to the principle of safety in participation (protection from harm) by not exposing participants to physical, psychological or legal harm. I thus ensured that participants were not subjected to unnecessary stress or embarrassment (Sarantakos, 2005).

As participants were sharing their experiences and views, confidentiality and sensitivity was important throughout the study. Mouton (2001) mentions the so-called epistemic imperative, which refers to the moral commitment of researchers in search for truth and knowledge. In order to respect the views of the participants I treated information with the utmost

confidentiality and applied limited anonymity as participants in this study agreed that their faces might be shown through PRA visual activities. The participants were assured of privacy and anonymity, and reminded of their obligation to respect the confidentiality of any information shared by others during the study. In order to maintain rapport, I applied the principle of trust throughout my research process. Participants were not misled in any manner.

## **1.12 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

This thesis comprises of six chapters.

### **CHAPTER 1: Introduction and background to the study**

Chapter 1 provides background information on the study and the origins of the idea of the study. The chapter includes information on the statement of the problem, aim of the study, research questions and potential contributions of the study. I also clarified key concepts and provided a brief introduction to the research methodology and the organisation of the study.

### **CHAPTER 2: Exploring existing literature as background to the study**

In this chapter, I explore relevant literature in an attempt to explain the theoretical conceptualisation of the study. I base my discussion on the following aspects: constructs of partnership; power and empowerment; and participation. I conclude the chapter with the theoretical framework of the study.

### **CHAPTER 3: Research methodology and strategies**

In chapter 3, I discuss the selected epistemology, research methodology, data generation and documentation, data analysis and interpretation employed in the study. I also discuss quality criteria and the ethical guidelines I considered.

### **CHAPTER 4: Results of the study**

In this chapter, I present the results of the study in terms of the themes and subthemes that emerged. I provide examples of contributions to enrich the discussions of the results.

### **CHAPTER 5: Relating research findings to existing literature**

In chapter 5, I relate the findings of the study to the literature I reviewed in chapter 2. I highlight similarities and differences between the findings of the study and the existing body of knowledge. I also highlight silences that I identified.

## **CHAPTER 6: Conclusions and recommendations**

In this chapter, I draw conclusions in terms of my research questions, based on the findings I obtained. I reflect on the study in terms of the challenges I faced and the potential value that the study holds. I conclude by making recommendations for future research, practice and training.

### **1.13 CONCLUSION**

In this introductory chapter of the study, I presented the background and problem statement of the study. Additionally, I included information on the aim of the study, research questions and potential contributions thereof. Furthermore, I presented a brief description of the research design, data generation strategies and analysis.

In chapter 2, I present the literature review that guided me in planning and conducting an empirical study (chapter 3), and interpreting the results (chapter 4 and 5) I obtained.



## CHAPTER 2

### EXPLORING EXISTING LITERATURE AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I review relevant literature illuminating issues of power relations involved in participatory knowledge creation and problem-solving for community capacity development and transformative change, which lie at the heart of this study. I first outline the concepts of power, empowerment, partnerships, and Gaventa's (2003a) theory of the 'power cube', all of which contributed to the study's theoretical framework.

#### 2.2 POWER IN PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH (PR)

In the next section, I discuss relevant literature relating to the overview and meaning of power.

##### 2.2.1 OVERVIEW AND MEANING OF POWER

Power relations and power dynamics in research are concepts that have been widely and extensively written about (Gaventa, 2006; Minkler, 2005; VeneKlasen, 2005). In the field of PR, in particular, power and power dynamics are highly acknowledged and actively addressed. In PR, it is specifically recognised that a study of partnerships should analyse the power dynamics within systems (Lister, 2005). Scholars in the fields of anthropology, communication, sociology and psychology, for example, view and regard power as among the fundamental dimensions of interpersonal relationships (Burgoon & Hale, 1984). Power can thus be viewed as an important aspect of all relationships, especially close personal relationships, based on the belief that when people are in close relationships they are likely to depend on one another to attain their goals (Burgoon & Hale, 1984).

When people's goals are in conflict, power may be exercised to achieve one's own objectives at the expense of those of the other partner. However, power has important implications in partnership research even when conflict does not occur (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005). This study explored how power relations among participants (co-researchers and university researchers) were both revealed and concealed in PRA, focusing specifically on forming partnerships. The framework for understanding power relations and power dynamics is

predicated on feminist standpoint theory as this could potentially provide insight into power, knowledge and social structures (Brookfield, 2001; Jacques, 1992; Ritzer, 1992), which in turn could shed light in the understanding of both the ‘inside’ beliefs, desires, and thoughts of the actor (co-researchers) and the context in which actions that take place are needed to interpret and comprehend experience.

Literature on power is marked by disagreement over the basic definition of power. It is widely debated in social and political theory (Lukes, 2005), and has sparked widespread and seemingly intractable disagreements amongst philosophers, social and political theorists who have devoted their careers to analysing and conceptualising power (e.g. Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Dahl, 1957; Foucault, 1982; Freire, 1987; Gaventa, 2006; Lukes, 1974, 2005). Although the concept *power* is easily used in everyday life, there is no exact definition of what it means. The concept and its definition vary, depending on contexts and situations.

Broadly, power refers to the capacity of individuals to make choices and transform these choices into development outcomes (Chambers, 1997, 2005; World Bank, 2004). Empowerment, in this sense, implies the process of increasing such capacity through people’s learning and ‘capacity building’ (Lister, 2000) allowing people to have freedom of choice and action (Sen, 1999; World Bank, 2004). Power is understood as ‘power to’; it is enhanced through gaining new skills by active practice or by gaining access to externally generated scientific information relevant to people’s objectives (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993). In addition, ‘power to’ offers an understanding that social change can be accomplished from an ‘evolutionary’ (Tembo, 2003:25) process of people learning to become aware of power dynamics.

It is imperative for power relations to be analysed as a way to assess contexts in which decisions about capacity development are made (Gaventa, 2006; Lukes, 2005). According to Lukes (2005) power is viewed by some as being held by certain people, of which some are powerful while others are relatively powerless (Lukes, 2005). Others see power existing everywhere and it is expressed in relationships and discourses which affect everyone, and yet no one hold it (Foucault, 1980). Power can also be expressed as a ‘zero-sum’ concept, whereby, for certain people to have power, implies that others must give up some power (Gaventa, 1998). However, the powerful rarely give up power, thereby resulting in conflict and ‘power struggles’ (Gaventa, 1998:17).

Power is not an absolute resource; its form can be altered by different contexts - 'it can be used, shared or created by actors and their networks in multiple ways' (Lukes, 2005:90). For example, power can be viewed from a 'negative' trait – where power can be viewed as exercising control over others; or in a positive action, where power can be regarded as capacity and agency to be wielded for positive action (Lukes, 2005). However, many researchers focus on the definition of 'power over'. Weber (1978:53), for example, defines power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance'. Dahl (1957:202-203) offers what he calls an 'intuitive idea of power' according to which 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do'.

Therefore, it seems as if scholars from different fields agree that power is the capacity to produce intended effects, and in particular to influence the behaviour of another person (Berger, 1974; Foa & Foa, 1974; French & Raven, 1959; Rollins & Bahr, 1976). It is about the degree to which actions by one person or a group can be shown to have a discernible effect on the behaviour of others (Pfeffer, 1997). For the purpose of this study, I lean towards adopting a definition of power as capacity and agency to be wielded for positive action (Gaventa, 2005). Power is the capacity of individuals or groups to access and control the process by which decisions, particularly those that affect their own lives, are made (Friedmann, 1992). Empowerment, from this perspective, stems from powerless people's access to political space (Clark, 1991; Friedmann, 1992). Powerless people assume an active part in reconstructing the public domain, helping to create a political space suitable for working out the policies that will sustain a development that involves them. Empowerment in this view focuses on 'social changes by structural transformation' (Tembo, 2003:30), meaning that rules and resources have to be achieved in order to change priorities and ensure that the powerless individuals' interests are pursued (Giddens, 1979).

## **2.2.2 OVERVIEW OF POWER THEORISTS**

Since this study is about power-sharing partnerships as experienced by teachers in a PR project, I now briefly explore some major theorists on power as background to the study. Theorists concerned with power can be grouped into two categories. The first group takes a structural conflict approach, such as Lukes (2005), Marx (1959), Giddens (1979) and Gramsci (1957). This position contrasts with that of Foucault (1980), Bourdieu (1986) and Taylor (1998), who view power to some extent in more fluid terms, seeing it everywhere and as

something that everyone can aspire to and grasp by deciding to participate, learning the rules of engagement and becoming empowered. These theorists provide analyses that generally include the role of agency in the overall dynamics of power relations. I next briefly discuss five major theorists who have conceptualised the meaning of power, and on whose theories I relied on in planning and understanding this study. I do not discuss these theories in depth in this section, but merely provide an overview of the main viewpoints of each.

### **2.2.2.1 Mills (1916-1962)**

According to Mills (1916-1962), individuals are naturally subjected to structural limitations in the everyday running of their lives. Individuals live within structural systems that determine their lifestyles. Eloquent explaining the structural limitations to running everyday lives, Mills (1959:3) states:

What ordinary men are directly aware of and what they try to do are bounded by private orbits in which they live; their visions and their power are limited to the close-up scenes of job, family, neighbourhood; in other milieu, they move vicariously and remain spectators.

In particular, Mills (1959) focuses on the idea of ‘powerlessness’. The structure in which an individual finds himself could contribute to rendering him powerless. The existence of powerlessness increases when familiarity with the structural condition is limited. In this view, power is seemingly everywhere and determined by the structures that we live in. I interpret Mill’s view as saying that a lack of power occurs when individuals do not have agency, and cannot control and make decisions about their lives because they are ‘bounded by private orbits in which they live’ (Mills, 1959:3).

### **2.2.2.2 Foucault (1926-1984)**

Foucault, a 20th-century (1926-1984) theorist, can be regarded as one of the most influential theorists on analysing power concepts. His conceptualisation of power, when compared with that of other theorists preceding him, seems to have departed radically from previous modes of conceiving power. As such, I found it rather challenging to incorporate his ideas with those of others. For Foucault, power is fluid and available everywhere and it is not held by a certain privileged, but instead, power is expressed and enacted rather than possessed (Foucault, 1980). Foucault examines power at its core by questioning the extent to which individual action is determined by structure.

Foucault shows the significance of agency to a greater extent than his predecessors (Marx, 1959; Mills, 1959; Weber, 1978). By this, he essentially argues that power is found everywhere and exists on many levels and that the way in which power exists, is therefore influenced by the time and space in which it is being studied.

On social structures and power, Foucault explains that power is not an inherent property of an individual, but should be viewed as gained from a set of forces that influence people's discourse and behaviour, and as a result makes people acquire their social positions (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000). Foucault (1980) further argues that power is only accepted within society on the condition that a substantial part of it is concealed, hence allowing some amount of freedom. Power can be seen as force relations that may become institutionally crystallised and as a result become 'embodied in the state apparatus' (Foucault, 1980:92). Therefore, power is seen as a form of agency that can take on a structured form.

Foucault's recognition of the dual existence of power, internal and external to the individual, is central to this particular study of power relations in teachers' experience of participating in a PR project. From this perspective, relations could develop from forces within a participatory intervention research project and from forces within the individual, representing the research project. Furthermore, relations are developed through interactions with people inside and outside the research project.

### **2.2.2.3 Freire (1921-1997)**

Freire describes a model of power that falls somewhere set between a Marxist model of economic power and Foucault's view of power as being pervasive. These accounts see power as having transformative properties (Freire, 1970). Freire (1970:47) builds on Gramsci's interpretation of power, 'seeing it as something, which is created by people when they transform their world through collective action, reflecting social struggles of communities of interest'. Freire (1970) encourages a questioning and critical attitude not only to education, but to life in general. It is an attitude that fosters curiosity and progresses to seeking answers. Therefore, Freire (1970) focuses on consciousness, critical awareness and the ability to transform circumstances, thus embracing the politics of liberation and altering power relationships.

#### **2.2.2.4 Bourdieu (1930-2002)**

For Bourdieu (1930-2002), ‘power is not a separate domain of study but stands at the heart of all social life’ (Swartz, 1997:6). Bourdieu focuses on the complex relationship between power and culture, specifically locating cultural reproduction of power that is rooted in class-based power and privilege (Swartz, 1997). Bourdieu identifies the reproduction of social and cultural power in individuals and groups that strengthen developed powers and norms. Bourdieu examines relations between social structures, systems of classification and language. This correlates Foucault’s idea that power exists at all levels and is everywhere and always presents, and thus cannot be related to one structure. Bourdieu goes on to argue that ‘a cultural field can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy, and which produce and authorise certain discourses and activities’ (Webb, Ackerly, McPeck & Donoghue, 2002:21).

#### **2.2.2.5 Lukes (1948–current)**

Lukes (1974) provides a classic distinction between three dimensions of power, in which I include his ‘radical view’ on power. The simplest dimension, derived from the definition by Dahl, is that power is when ‘A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do’ (Dahl, in Lukes, 1974:9:10). According to Lukes (1974:15), this is the ‘one-dimensional, pluralist view of power, involving a limited and behavioural focus on overt decision-making about political issues where there is an actual, and thus observable, conflict of interests, often expressed as differing policy preferences. Bachrach and Baratz (1962:952) offered what Lukes defined as the two-dimensional view ‘that extends the scope of power to control over the agenda of political decision-making, that is, to determining which issues can be discussed and which ones are excluded as detrimental to the interests of the powerful’. This is achieved through institutions and the ‘mobilisation of bias’ that is built into them and constitutes a sphere of ‘non decision-making’ (Bachrach & Baratz, in Lukes, 1974:18-19).

However, in Lukes' view, the two-dimensional approach is merely an extension of the one-dimensional view, restricting itself to the exercise of political power by individuals that prevents observable grievances (overt or covert) from entry into the decision-making process. Lukes criticised both the one- and two-dimensional view of power and offered another

dimension in explaining power, which he terms the three-dimensional or radical view of power. The three-dimensional view of power incorporates the first two dimensions but expands on these to include both overt and covert observable conflicts, and those that might be latent (Lukes, 1974; 2005). One of his significant arguments is that power relationships are not just individual acts but those of social forces and collectivities. The other is that power does not only operate through observable conflicts and grievances, but can also be exercised to shape and control desires and beliefs contrary to people's interests (Lukes, 1974; 2005). These could be done through the 'control of information, through the mass media and through processes of socialisation' (Lukes, 1974:23).

### **2.2.3 POWER AND PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES**

PR strives to 'produce knowledge that clarifies and seeks to change the maldistribution of power and resources and can probe the power relationship between researchers and research participants' (Wallerstein, 1999:43). It is therefore the goal of PR to create symmetrical relationships between the researcher and participants where both voices are equal. Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) furthermore contend that the issue of power is central to PR as a relationship of domination in the control and production of knowledge. Knowledge, as an important aspect of power, determines the explanation of what is conceived as crucial in research. Through access to knowledge and participation in its production, use and dissemination, actors can affect the boundaries of power. In some instances, the asymmetrical control of knowledge productions of 'others' can severely limit the possibilities of agency in the process of knowledge production (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

Since power is inherent in all human interactions, it is apparent that the issue of power will be present when people from different walks of life interact. As Prilleltensky (2005:120) argues, power pervades the way 'we think about and treat the people we work with'. Lack of attention to the inevitable power dynamics of research can easily jeopardise the research process (Chung & Lounsbury, 2006; Johnson & Mayoux, 1998). Power relations and dynamics may create challenging situations in relationships between researchers and communities (Wallerstein, 2005). Not taking cognisance of power relations and dynamics in PR may affect the implementation and utilisation of findings in the research process.

Van der Riet and Boettiger (2009) found that in rural contexts in particular, the relative difference between the knowledge, power, capacity, and access to resources of a researcher

and that of the research participants is always apparent. They further argue that under such conditions, it becomes a serious challenge to truly sustain equal participation and collaboration between researchers and participants. In extreme cases, one might find that community members have little say over the research process, with researchers having ‘power over’ the whole research process (Van der Riet & Boettiger, 2009).

PR is based on the postulation that social change is likely to be achieved and sustained if the process engages the community on which it focuses (Chambers, 1994a). On another continuum, researchers and members of a community work together to define and implement the research process, thus reflecting ‘power with’ others. In a pure PR process, power typically shifts from those who have ‘power over’ the research process to the participants themselves. The PR process emphasises a shift from a monopoly of ‘experts’ who hold ‘power over’ others by controlling the production of knowledge, to allowing co-researchers to take control of the process of knowledge production and to have ‘power with’ others (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). This shift may ultimately enable participants to have the ‘power to’ manage and control all aspects of their life and development over which they formerly did not have control (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Johnson & Mayoux, 1998; Wallerstein, 1999). The whole process of a shift in power in PR is what Chambers (1994a:80) refers to as ‘handing over the stick’ to the participants, so that they become enabled to be in control and owners of the knowledge production process.

While PR accentuates knowledge, power, capacity, and access to resources as forms of power, power may be exhibited in other forms such as gender, age, level of education, and the ability to speak in the same language as the researcher (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). It should be noted that groups of research participants are not homogenous (Campbell, 2002; Guijt & Gaventa, 1998; Woodhouse, 1998), and that hierarchies within the research community will generate power differentials. Wallerstein (1999:41) comments that ‘communities are not monolithic, nor can they be idealised’. Some ‘voices’ of the very participants in a research context may be strong and powerful and thus dominate others (Wallerstein, 1999). Within the very communities, it could be easy to relate and engage elite, educated men and articulate groups as compared to working with marginalised members of a community (who at times are not fluent in the language of the researcher). Given this situation, the power in the interaction may be in favour of the more powerful members of the participant group.

Dynamics of power within a research interaction affect who participates in the process, and thus who is active in the research process. As discussed above, power can be in favour of the researcher or those within the communities who are the elite or good at articulating themselves (Johnson & Mayoux, 1998; Wallerstein, 1999). PR creates ad hoc structures through which participants make decisions and are actively involved regardless of their background. By exploring power relations, I hoped to find out how co-researchers make decisions, become actively involved for their voices to be heard, to participate fully in the production of knowledge, and feel enabled to control and manage resources. At a community level, power is participation and participation is power. An early conceptualisation of community level power suggests that power can be studied by looking at who participates and who gains and loses from the formal decisions made within conventional systems and institutions (Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963). This idea is based on two questionable assumptions: (1) 'that formal community decision-making processes are open to anyone'; and (2) that the openness of these decision-making processes means that leaders should be viewed 'not as elites, but as representative spokesmen for a mass' (Gaventa, 1998:6).

Power as the extent to which one can control the agenda of political decision-making, that is, to determine which issues can be discussed, as well as power as the capacity to act and have agency, is also affected by participation. VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) eloquently elaborate on how power and participation are related in PR. They distinguish three ways in which 'participation' can affect power relations. First, participation can be viewed through the dimension of visible power, which is the 'ability to influence formal decision-making processes, with power as 'agency' openly held and used by people and interest groups, and empowerment as having a voice and influence in formal processes' (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002:261). Secondly, participation can be analysed from the perspective of hidden power. Hidden power is about who participates in setting the agenda (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). The third lens of participation is referred to as invisible power, which is based on culturally embedded norms (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002).

The presence of multiple, diverse voices are highly congruent with power relations in PR. When stakeholders are included and given a voice in PR for meaningful interaction and dialogue, it can equalise power relations and thus create a situation in which stakeholders have a sense of equal ownership of the project. Through equal participation of both partners, the findings will become more meaningful and useful to them (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). Equal participation challenges both partners to share power and decision-making as they

journey with each other. It is important to make sure that participation is authentic, not just rhetorical (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). Participation itself therefore challenges existing hierarchies and power relations.

In a grassroots community development project, Uphoff (1991) concluded that when participation is inclusive and recognises the diverse voice of all partners, what is learnt from the discussion and from the process of reaching consensus about questions and engaging with each other is very important. Partners thus have equal ownership of the project and feel in charge. The impact of participation rests on bringing together, on a level playing field with the same agenda, groups of people who have diverse, unique perspectives, and seeing what transpires in an effort to affect change (Uphoff, 1991).

#### **2.2.4 POWER AND PARTICIPATION**

I next discuss literature related to power and participation in PR.

##### **2.2.4.1 Participation in PR**

PR is increasingly being recognised and adopted as an innovative and effective way to build strong partnerships with communities (Flicker, Savan, McGrath, Kolenda & Mildemberger, 2007). PR aims to produce empowering outcomes such as increased community capacities and broader stakeholder participation in decision-making (Lennie, 2005). Promoting PR as a methodological collaborative approach to research with practitioners and community partners can inform practice, programmes, community development and policy, while contributing to the scientific knowledge base (Small & Uttal, 2005), and facilitating positive social change (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003). The broad concept of community is used throughout this study to describe a geographic unit, or a community of individuals with common problems, issues, interests or goals (Meyer, 2006).

Literature on PR includes sources from multiple disciplines (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Selener, 1997; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003), such as community development, psychology, health, education and anthropology. The common ethos of PR is co-learning, a desire to apply the results of research to practical problems rather than purely scholarly quests to advance the boundaries of knowledge, and a sharing of power among researchers and community members. Mompati and Prinsen (2000) emphasise that PR is a method that seeks to maximise

the equal involvement of all members of a community in planning their collective development. It is purported to overcome cultural, political, and economic barriers to meaningful participation in development planning. In line with this argument, the current study utilised and maximised the participation of teachers as co-researchers in the STAR project.

A key assumption in PR approaches is that accessing the least powerful members of a community, and engaging them in a research intervention, will enable transformation. This prioritising of the ‘last’, the more marginalised and disempowered sections of a community (Chambers, 1994b), is a characteristic of the political and social dimension of PR. Accessing ‘local knowledge’, or the knowledge participants possess based on their everyday practices and experiences, which is essential to their survival in that particular context (Kelly & Van der Riet, 2001), is central to PR processes. I agree that it is useful to highlight how this may relate to changing the dynamics of power in a research situation. Gaventa and Cornwall (2006:123), citing work by Robert Chambers (1997), reason that:

... by circumscribing the boundaries of what is knowable and treating other forms of knowledge as if they were mere ignorance, Chambers argues, professionals produce and reproduce hierarchies of knowledge and power that place them in the position of agents who know better, and to whom decisions over action, and action itself, should fall.

This has the potential effect of devaluing and eradicating the knowledge and experience of research participants.

Acknowledging research participants’ local knowledge has two functions. Firstly, ‘development processes designed to bring about social change that are based on what people know may have a higher success rate because they can enable participants to be less dependent on outside resources and knowledge, thus ensuring greater sustainability’ (Metzler, Higgins, Beeker, Freudenburg, Mantz, Sebturia, Eisinger, Fuentes, Gheisa & Palermo, 2003:64). The STAR intervention, which is based on the asset-based approach, subscribes to the principles of mobilising existing assets, strengths and resources. Research participants hold perspectives which are uniquely informed by their daily activities. Participants can express these perspectives through defining the research problem according to their criteria, and through using their own terminology and constructs. This focus on the ‘local’ voice is critical. Participatory processes which focus on contextualising participants’ experiences and on obtaining their ‘meanings’, acknowledge the complexity of human experience (Gaventa &

Cornwall, 2006). The current study subscribes to the guiding principles of acknowledging the complexity of human experience as espoused in feminist epistemology. Secondly, the mere process of researchers recognising the knowledge that research participants bring to a situation may shift power dynamics. If the knowledge that participants possess is the primary focus in a research interaction, and it is valued, participants' distinctive versions and visions are owned (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). The researcher is no longer in possession of a definitive perspective, because participants have power to impart information in the research process. This 'restores their agency as active subjects' (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006:123), and influences their participation.

Cleaver (1999) illustrates the need for a more complex understanding of issues of efficiency and empowerment in participatory approaches. Two issues in particular are examined: ideas about the nature and role of institutions, and models of individual action. Cleaver (1999) argues that heroic claims are often made about the impact of participatory approaches to development, in particular, claiming that participatory approaches results in efficiency and effectiveness of investment and of contributing to processes of democratisation and empowerment. It is assumed that the conundrum of ensuring the sustainability of development interventions can be solved by the proper involvement of beneficiaries in the supply and management of resources, services and facilities. However, Cleaver (1999), contest that there is little evidence that participation is effective over the long term for materially improving the conditions of vulnerable people or as a strategy for social change (Cleaver, 1999).

The STAR project has been in existence since 2003 and the current study seeks to gain insight into how teachers as co-researchers have experienced power during this time. Again, Cleaver (1999) claims that whilst evidence for efficiency receives some support on a small scale, evidence of empowerment and sustainability is limited, and very much based on the rightness of the approach and process, as opposed to the magnitude of the impact. Therefore, participation is much reliant on an act of faith in development; something people commonly believe in and rarely question. This act of faith is based on three main tenets: that participation is intrinsically a 'good thing' (especially for the participants); that a focus on 'getting the techniques right' is the principal way of ensuring the success of such approaches; and that considerations of power and politics on the whole should be avoided as divisive and obstructive (Cleaver, 1999).

Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) conceptualise participation in research as a continuum with various degrees of community control over the process of research and its outcomes. At one extreme, community members have little say over the research process, and researchers have ‘power over’ the process (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). At the other extreme, researchers and community members work together to define and implement the research process, reflecting ‘power with’ others (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). In the PR process, power should shift from those who have ‘power over’ the research process to the participants themselves. The PR process shifts the monopoly of ‘experts’ who hold ‘power over’ others by controlling the production of knowledge, because it enables people to take control of the process of knowledge production and to have ‘power with’ others (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). This shift may ultimately enable participants to have the ‘power to’ manage and control aspects of their lives and development over which they formerly did not have control (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Johnson & Mayoux, 1998; Wallerstein, 1999). Sharing power with community members can lead to more accurate research results (Viswanathan, Ammerman, Eng, Gartlehner, Lor & Griffith, 2004), a sense of empowerment among community members, and changes in existing power structures that shape decisions and outcomes (Green, Raeburn & Ottoson, 1995).

Participation in research and community development processes is not uncontested. For instance, questions can be posed about the degree of participation, the source of power within the research process, and the researcher’s and participants’ motivation for participation (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). Arnstein (1969) conceptualised participation as a ladder with eight levels of participation, each representing increased community power over the final product. Arnstein’s (1969) ladder has been adapted many times and appears in diverse sources, including international literature on development, health, and participatory democracy (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Connor, 1988; Rifkin, Muller & Bichmann, 1988).

Moving along the continuum from left to right on the continuum, the level of responsibility accorded to community participants increases. At the far left is the conventional research situation where the community is involved passively as recipients of the research findings and possibly as subjects. In this case, decisions about the research design are in the solemn hands of the ‘experts’ and community members are only informed of the relevant results. One step to the right, researchers consult with members of the community to improve the efficiency or validity of their work. Here, Chung and Lounsbury (2006) state that the role of the subjects may be limited to evaluate the transparency of consent forms, or suggest changes to protocols

that are more acceptable to subjects. The responsibility accorded to community members is limited, as researchers seek input on specific tasks. Researchers retain control over the research and make all final decisions.

As one moves to higher locations along the continuum, community members become increasingly involved as they assume greater influence and responsibility in the research process. What differs is not so much the tasks in which community participants are engaged, but the way in which they work with researchers. In the state of mutual consultation, community members and researchers develop a more committed, ongoing relationship with the work, using their complementary expertise as a means to enhance its quality and relevance. However, the final decision-making rests with researchers. Yet in contrast with the previous level, community members operate with a greater understanding of the entire project and its goals. Their involvement is less fleeting and is part of an ongoing dialogue with researchers. Citizens' advisory councils in which breast cancer patients and families work with researchers to address issues of mutual concern are a case in point (National Health Service, 1999). Patients may for example help to identify priority concerns for future studies or help to interpret puzzling research findings (National Health Service, 1999).

Finally, at the extreme end of the continuum, viz. empowering co-investigation, researchers and community members are viewed as equal partners in the research process. In this case, power-sharing becomes the norm for decision-making. An example includes a long-term PR project conducted with the Mohawk community in Canada which aimed to decrease Type 2 diabetes in children (MacAulay, Law, King & Steward, 1998). In this case, the community was a full partner in the research, in setting goals, target groups, implementing health nutrition policies and evaluating research results. In other cases, researchers essentially work for the community, empowering them to make final judgments about the course of the research and the use of its products (MacAulay *et al.*, 1998; Travers, 1997).

The proposed continuum provides a compact explanation for the diverse interpretations of 'community-based' and 'participatory' literature. Theoretically, PR is situated at the right-most end of the continuum where power-sharing is the norm. These research situations have the greatest potential for identifying solutions to problems as they acknowledge the power structures underlying such problems. In two case studies conducted in India and Morocco on the effects of participatory development, relative political equality was achieved and a

‘transformative type of participation that used invited spaces to ensure that visible power structures were made more democratic and accountable’ (Pellissbery & Bergh, 2007:298).

Cornwall and Gaventa (2000) point out that not all forms of institutionalised participation are in fact ‘good’, particularly when individuals lack the power to be heard. In such cases, participation can actually ‘reinforce exclusion’. Mercer (2002) affirms this in her study on how women in local organisations can use their social status and financial gains as a strategy. Mercer (2002) concludes that local social, cultural, political and economic conditions may influence people’s agendas and motivations for getting involved or participating. She further indicates that participation may result in unequal processes in which individuals that are better off are able to take the norms and values of dominant development discourses.

These findings and conclusions are similar to those of Goebel (1998) who did a study with rural community members in Zimbabwe on participatory partnership. In practice, the level of participation can vary, even among projects that aspire to more emancipatory goals (Rifkin *et al.*, 1988). Cornwall and Jewkes (1995) maintain that the quality of participation may fluctuate depending on a complex set of conditions. Participation may begin at one level, progress to another as trust builds or dissipates, and end at a completely different level. Despite much of the rhetoric surrounding the discussion of participation, experiences with new forms of participatory governance show participation to be neither straightforward nor easy (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). Nonetheless, true participation that is built on equal regard for the partners and the flattening of power relations will result in empowerment. In a later section, I discuss the concept of empowerment and how it is related to partnership.

#### **2.2.4.2 Participation and agents of change**

There is increasing global interest in PR for promoting the institutionalisation and spread of participation in society (Taylor & Fransman, 2004). Therefore, by providing space and an enabling environment in which transformative social change becomes integral and valued through participatory processes, and perceiving participation itself as a desirable outcome, community partners have the potential to become key actors or partners in promoting not only transformative change at an individual level, but also at wider social, institutional and discursive change. What stands out in participatory processes is the role of particular individuals who catalyse the process of development in their communities, and the strong base of associations or social networks that are typically mobilised during such a process

(Mathie & Cunningham, 2002). Such leaders are able to stimulate a sense of pride and possibility. They recognise the potential within the community, and share and transfer knowledge with other community members (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002). These catalysts further recognise opportunities available through making connections and linkages with agencies interested in investing in communities that can demonstrate potential (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002). The premise of this argument is therefore that, in power-sharing partnerships, communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilising existing assets, thereby responding to and creating local opportunity. As agents of change, community partners have the multi-layered task of challenging power relations at a variety of levels and with a variety of goals (Taylor & Fransman, 2004). Transformation is thus clearly a powerful and value-laden term and embraces a wide array of types of change (Taylor & Fransman, 2004).

Taylor (1998:5) cites Mezirow (2000) who asserts that at an individual level, individuals can be transformed through a process of critical reflection, and that 'learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action'. The transformative element of 'future action' refers to changes in subjective 'meaning structures' (such as making a decision, revising a point of view, posing a problem or altering behaviour) which develop through one of two Habermasian domains of learning: instrumental and communicative. While the former focuses on 'learning to do', the latter is concerned with understanding the meanings of communicated feelings, values, morals, ideals and conceptualisations. An ongoing process of critical reflection and rational dialogue can facilitate perspective transformation.

Discursive transformation and understanding of the reproduction of knowledge and power was substantially furthered through Foucault's notion of 'discourse' (Taylor & Fransman, 2004). For Foucault, power is 'a multiplicity of force relations' (Foucault 1979:92) that constitutes social relationships. It exists only through action and is available in all spheres, rather than being held and used by one individual over another. Power and knowledge are inseparable. Knowledge gives way to meaning and accordingly, through regulating conduct, exercises power. In other words, knowledge creates a certain structure of meaning or reality or way of life with its own social rules and mechanisms by which power is legitimised and reproduced (Taylor & Fransman, 2004). Thus, action is influenced by knowledge, which solidifies 'discursive practices' and reproduces discourse and knowledge. We act based on

what we know, understand, feel and value. Discourse determines and reproduces what counts as valid knowledge, how communication and participation are differently structured as well as which voices and experiences are affirmed and which are silenced (Taylor & Fransman, 2004). Therefore, in the context of community partnerships, the learning discourse which constitutes the production and transmission of knowledge is constructed by the power structures at play in a particular institution. The introduction of new knowledge into an institution can bring about transformation of a dominant discourse. In this way, genuine participation is an ideal transformer of discourse (Taylor & Fransman, 2004) and has the potential to foster empowerment at personal and collective levels.

## **2.3 EMPOWERMENT AND PR**

Whilst an appreciation of power and partnerships is central to this thesis, the role and nature of empowerment is important for understanding how different people perceive and use empowerment strategies in the context of social relationships and circumstances defined by unequal power.

### **2.3.1 A PHILOSOPHY OF EMPOWERMENT AS CENTRAL TO PR**

The various definitions of empowerment have operational implications. A lack of clarity on the meaning focused on may make partners work at cross purposes, thus undermining partnerships' efficiency and effectiveness. Luttrell, Quiroz, Scutton and Bird (2009:2) point out that 'the roots of thinking on empowerment lie in feminist theory and popular education, which stress the personal and inner dimensions of power'. They further note that Freire and his popular education as well as the feminist movement emanating from the South are the real primary philosophical influences on empowerment thought and development approaches. In both of these philosophical streams, empowerment has been denoted as a radical project of social transformation, to enable otherwise excluded social groups to define and claim their rights collectively (Luttrell *et al.*, 2009).

Empowerment is a participatory process through which individuals, organisations, and communities manage and gain control and social justice (Rappaport, 1987). Luttrell *et al.* (2009:16) conceptualise empowerment as an 'emancipation process in which the disadvantaged are empowered to exercise their rights, obtain access to resources and participate actively in the process of shaping society and making decisions'. To some,

empowerment is a political concept that involves a collective struggle against oppressive social relations. To others (Rappaport, 1987), it refers to the consciousness of individuals and the power to express and act on one's desires. However, some researchers (Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark & Mumford, 2003) have critiqued the empowerment discourse as a palliative, suggesting that the use of the term allows organisations to say they are tackling injustice without having to back any political or structural change, or the redistribution of resources.

Hjorth (2003) sees empowerment as people taking control of the development process, while Corbett and Keller (2005) regard it as a tangible increase in social influence or political power through developing confidence in their own capacities. Narayan (2005) and the World Bank (2001) defines empowerment as the opportunity of the poor and marginalised to participate, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. These definitions highlight that empowerment refers to the actors' ability to make choices, the transformation of those choices into actions, and the fact that there is a process of change which ought to result in some perceivable outcomes (Kabeer, 1999). Smulovitz and Walton (2003) recognise this process as exercising 'agency' with a reasonable prospect of having an influence on development outcomes.

Empowerment is thus a complex phenomenon that holds many dimensions and implies various elements. These dimensions include those directed at the individual, among individuals, and at the community or society level. The work of Carl Rogers and the human potential movement of the 1950s and 1960s emphasised the power of individual persons. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) conceptualise empowerment as including self-efficacy (competence), self-determination, and impact. Wallerstein and Bernstein (1988) propose that empowerment involves an individual's increased self-efficacy as well as environmental change. In support, Kanter (1977) purports that empowerment is a process that includes the context of a situation as well as what the individual brings to it. Bush and Folger (1994:12) offer similar elements in their definition: 'empowerment means the restoration to individuals of a sense of their own value and strength and their own capacity to handle life's problems'. All these viewpoints underscore the fact that empowerment is contextual and involves individuals' personal outlooks and sense of capacity to act and make a difference.

The notion of empowerment is inevitably linked to the condition of disempowerment and refers to processes of change by which 'those who have been denied the ability to make

choices acquire such ability' (Kabeer, 1999:13). Hence the ability to exercise choice is linked to three inter-related and indivisible dimensions: *agency* (processes of decision-making, negotiation, manipulation etc.), *resources* (material, human and social pre-conditions) that enables individuals to make choices and decisions about their situation, and *achievements* (well-being outcomes) (Kabeer, 1999). This understanding of choice is further qualified by referring to the conditions (the possibility of alternatives and the ability to have chosen otherwise). Findings from a study of youth and adults who participated in one year's participatory evaluations of the impact of reflection, dialogue and voice indicate that the inter-related dimensions of empowerment are threefold. The first is competence, which is referred to as the 'combination of attitudes, understandings and abilities required to play a conscious and assertive role in one's political environment' (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Deacon, Nievar & McCann, 2005:207). The second is discovering strengths and capacities within oneself and being confident in the ability to communicate; and thirdly taking control of one's life (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2005). Findings further indicate that participants were significantly affected by their experiences of having an increased sense of competence to emergence of the awareness of their environment, as they became more knowledgeable about their community and transferred knowledge to others, thereby acting as community change agents (Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, I view empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that promotes people to be in charge of their lives and be self reliant. It fosters power as it promotes people to be proactive on issues and also facilitate a spirit of political liberation.

### **2.3.2 EMPOWERMENT AND POWER**

In seeking theories that underpin and inform this study whilst drawing on aspects from different models, I identified some limitations in existing theory. The academic approaches that I examined provide limited explanations of the complex and multi-dimensional manifestations of power and empowerment. They do not yet make sense of that nuanced appreciation and experience of power. Achieving empowerment is intimately linked to addressing the causes of disempowerment and tackling disadvantage caused by the way in which power relations shape choices, opportunities and wellbeing. Rowlands's categorisation of power is of great analytical and practical use here. Rowlands (1997) categorises four types of power relations to stress the difference between power over (ability to influence and coerce) and power to (organise and change existing hierarchies), power with (power from

collective action) and power within (power from individual consciousness). Table 2.1 gives insight into the implications of different dimensions of power versus the implications for understanding empowerment.

**Table 2.1: Dimensions of power and implications for empowerment** (Source: Rowlands, 1997:142)

Type of power relation	Implications for an understanding of empowerment
<b>Power Over: ability to influence and coerce</b>	Changes in underlying resources and power to challenge constraints
<b>Power To: ability to organise and change existing hierarchies</b>	Increased individual capacity and opportunities for access
<b>Power With: increased power from collective action</b>	Increased solidarity to challenge underlying assumptions
<b>Power from Within: increased individual consciousness</b>	Increased awareness and desire for change

The various shades that Rowlands (1997) attributes to the meaning of power go beyond its traditional construction as the capacity of a social actor to dominate others. It provides an important discursive tool for orienting interventions that can bring about change in a manner that benefits people who are differentially located within a society. Especially noteworthy is the notion of ‘power with’ which integrates the individual locus of power with its social and collective locus and thus heightens the potential for social transformation through the collective effort of people with a shared sense of agency and convergent perspectives in their definition of the issues and problems confronting them. I therefore conceive that in power-sharing partnerships as in the case of the STAR project, the power should be viewed from an empowerment perspective which reveals power as ‘power to, power with and power within’, as an opportunity for empowerment that transforms and promote collective agency.

### 2.3.3 EMPOWERMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

The concept of empowerment presupposes that an individual or community that has been experiencing challenging conditions of disempowerment is gaining capacity to change its state of affairs towards a desirable state. For disempowered communities, outside forces operating with a more egalitarian vision of society, and aiming at facilitating powerless people to organise and take further action themselves may sometimes initiate the process and

activities of empowerment (Lopes & Rakodi, 2002). There is a linkage that exists between the concepts and processes of empowerment and partnerships involving insiders and outsiders. Lopes and Rakodi (2002:45) identify a key role for external agents as ‘giving powerless people access to a new body of ideas and information, and raising their consciousness and awareness that the existing network of relationships is unjust’. Developing a belief in ‘powerless’ people’s capacity to achieve desired outcomes is beneficial in enhancing people’s self-esteem, raising awareness of the forces shaping their lives and opening up new spaces for collective participation and dialogue.

PR is usually linked to attempts to assist local groups in having a greater say over decision-making, involving a shift in the balance of power. Examples of community-based PR initiatives that involve lay health advisors include the East Side Village Health Partnership in East Detroit (Schulz, Israel & Lantz, 2002) and the Messengers for Health Project in the Apsaalooke Reservation (Christoper, Burhansstipanov, Knows, McCormick & Simonds 2005). The findings of both these studies indicate that encouraging participants to ‘set the agenda’ will also facilitate empowerment (Stringer, 1996). As such, it is important for participants to collaborate throughout the research process. Koch (2002) in their Participatory Action Research (PAR) clinical studies learnt that it was also important to foster ownership of the project and encourage participants to initiate the research agenda. Breda, Huc, Granier and Dreyer (1997) furthermore concur that participants will be inclined to own a project if they have an equal share of the power. These findings are similar to those of a study conducted by Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2005) that revealed that participants will see themselves as change agents when they feel that they have an equal share of power and ownership of a project. These findings are further corroborated by Fawcett, Paine-Andrews, Franscisco, Schultz, Ritchler and Lewis (1996:694) who concluded that collaborative partnerships attempt to promote societal change which is consistent with the principle of participation where ‘participants join together to enhance their power to transform the environment through actions that affect the behaviour of others’.

The challenges of undertaking PR can occasionally be underestimated by those wishing to embark on it. The scepticism of local people and a reluctance to take part will affect the degree to which the community participates (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). They (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995) caution about researchers’ exciting a community’s interest and raising expectations of, for example, improved services and greater participation. It can be a disempowering experience if nothing subsequently happens. Therefore, a shared willingness

to negotiate open and realistic agendas from the outset of the research process is important. As Khanlou and Peter (2005) assert, researchers must consider in advance whether research protocols have the potential to be emancipatory and permit such negotiation. Allowance has to be made for the time required for this and for trust to be established (Mosavel, Simon, Van Stade & Buchbinder, 2005). This assertion is further supported by findings from Ellis (2002) in her study on empowerment through decision-making, where she cautions against being too sanguine about the likelihood of empowerment being created through participation in partnerships or shared decision-making.

Stringer (1996) further explains how meanings constructed by people to make their social situations and problems intelligible are not fixed, but rather emerge during conversations as participants make sense of their own experiences. However, he notes that such reflections may stimulate self-awareness and in the process enable participants to find a voice on issues that are important to them. The notion of empowerment through social participation is often used to characterise approaches based on social mobilisation, and stems from the recognition that effective social movements and interventions require empowerment-related processes and outcomes (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Bennett (2002:23) describes this process as ‘mobilisation empowerment’, which builds on the skills, information and linkages needed for livelihood empowerment. Mobilisation empowerment could result in self-discovery, unity and potential for collective action (Bennett, 2002). Helping poor and socially excluded individuals to realise the power they gain from collective action is a key element in most social mobilisation approaches. These mobilisation approaches often operate from below, creating voice and demand for change among socially excluded citizens.

## **2.4 PARTNERSHIPS IN PR**

Lister (2000:228) identifies the core meaning of partnership as ‘a working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate’. This definition emphasises the values and principles espoused by those in a partnership endeavour. Additionally, from a range of sources, Lister (2000:228) identifies a number of other elements necessary for a ‘successful partnership’, including mutual trust, mutual support, joint decision-making, reciprocal accountability, financial transparency and long-term commitment. Behind the rhetoric of partnership lies the continued exercise of power. Partnerships take place within a force field of power relations in which conflicts of interest are

revealed. It is the goal of PR to unsettle and change these power relations and structures within partnerships.

However, power relations in partnerships are multifaceted, ranging from redefining power to rethinking the purposes of knowledge creation to reworking the relations of the research process itself (Maguire, 2002). Partnerships in PR are about bringing together divergent values, strengths, perspectives and contributions so that there may be equal participation, decision-making and a sense of ownership. Partnerships equalise the power relations at play and thus promote community capacity for research as social change (Eisinger & Senturia, 2001). Partnerships in PR also promote joint planning for long-term benefits and long-term commitment (Eisinger & Senturia, 2001), where each partner feels valued and equally recognised. In the current study, I made an attempt to explore the nature of partnerships and the inherent power relations at play.

The manner in which partnerships are constructed, forged, and mobilised by different stakeholders, in the process of guiding development and change efforts within disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, is a matter of central concern in PR processes for sustainable development. The increased popularity of participatory methods in research and development projects in developing countries has been accompanied by a critical evaluation of the quality and reliability of knowledge created and extracted in the process (Goebel, 1998). Research for this study involved the use of PRA methodology (Chambers, 2004) to explore the experiences of teachers as co-researchers partnering with university researchers in their role of partners in research and as change agents. Conducted in two provinces in South Africa, the study explored power relations and partnerships, in particular how teachers perceived themselves as co-researchers and how they experienced being treated as partners and experts in research with academic researchers.

Existing literature on partnership does not seem to shed adequate light on how partnerships may promote synergy of the interests and priorities of university researchers and community organisations and how partnerships may reflect participation and empowerment of people who have been involved in PR. The scope of this study *inter alia* focuses on these identified limitations, more specifically on partnership and power.

This study is thus informed by concepts and themes on power relations and dynamics, partnerships in PR, empowerment and leadership in community development. Power

seemingly plays a significant role in PR, partnerships, empowerment and leadership. Partnerships in particular present a ‘relationship that involves power sharing’ (Hodgett & Johnson, 2001:324). Partnership is viewed as a mechanism that facilitates and promotes the empowerment of the powerless, 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). Partnerships can also be initiated by community residents (Minkler, 2004), non-governmental organisations (Clarke, 1999), governmental agencies (Minkler 2004; Reilly & Petersen, 1997), and funding institutions (Citrin, 2001). However, university researchers (Chataway, 1997; Reilly & Petersen, 1997) initiate the majority of partnerships. In the case of this study, both community residents (teachers) and researchers (Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2010) initiated partnerships. In some cases, researchers approached the schools, whilst in another case the researchers were initially contacted by the school (teachers) for involvement.

I believe that teachers as co-researchers possess skills, resources and strengths. Throughout the world, civil society, universities and governments are building partnerships and leaning towards participatory and community-based models of inquiry in the construction of a more equitable and sustainable future. In the STAR project specifically, teachers have been involved as partners in the research process since 2003 (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012; Loots, 2010).

A UNESCO (2009:1) brief states that partnerships and networks have the capacity ‘to co-create knowledge, mobilise it to inform practice and policy, and enhance the social, economic and environmental conditions of people, communities, nations and the world’. It is assumed that through such articulation, local citizens are capable of collective action that may in turn result in significant development outcomes such as improvements in the quality of their lives, protection of resources, and the reduction in social exclusion and inequality (Chambers, 1997). A number of definitions and meanings of partnerships can be derived from existing literature, providing useful insights into the understanding of partnerships. Lorentz (1989) describes partnerships according to the criteria of commitment, mutual dependency and being guided by a set of behaviours. According to Lorentz (1989), partnerships are further guided by a set of questions that are concerned with behaviour that is permissible. He suggests that the purpose of rules in a partnership is to facilitate an equal exchange between partners. On the other hand, Mackintosh (1992:146) has a more sceptical view and describes the concept of partnerships as ‘a partial euphemism and token of political negotiation’ resulting in ‘a very

high level of ambiguity. This ambiguity is derived from conflicting views of the benefits and disadvantages of the collaboration typically required of partnerships'. Mackintosh (1992) identifies descriptors ranging from 'synergy' in the sense that partners share aims, assets and skills to 'imbalance', meaning that the costs of collaboration far outweigh the benefits.

In this study, I relied on the definition of partnerships by Sanginga (2006:115), who defines them as 'a collaborative arrangement between organisations to plan by engaging rural people and other stakeholders in a circular process of analysis, reflection and action, in which human capacity can be built and prospects for greater innovation can be achieved'. Accordingly, partners will contribute their expertise and share responsibilities and ownership to increase understanding of a given phenomenon. Furthermore, partners can incorporate the knowledge gained with action for capacity building.

#### **2.4.1 NATURE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN PR**

A complex set of contextual social, economic and physical factors play a significant role in determining the health status of communities (Collins & Williams, 1999; Israel, Schulz, Parker & Becker, 2001). These factors may in turn contribute to the psychosocial problems often experienced by marginalised communities (Ferreira, 2006; Freudenberg, 1998). Evidence further suggests that numerous resources, strengths and skills are present within communities (e.g. supportive interpersonal relationships, community-based organisations) that can be engaged in addressing psychosocial problems in a community and promoting community development and well-being (Ferreira, 2006; Israel & Schurman, 1990; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

An understanding of the factors associated with social problems has contributed to calls for more comprehensive and participatory approaches to community research and a rise in partnership approaches, variously referred to as 'participatory action research' (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Freire, 1987), 'action research' (Lewin, 1946) 'participatory rural appraisal/participatory reflection and action (PRA)' (Ferreira, 2006; Chambers, 1994a) and PR (De Koning & Marion, 1996; Hall, 1981). For the purpose of this study, I chose the PRA approach that directed the scope and focus of the empirical study, as PRA recognises power relations within the research process, particularly in a partnership (Martin, 2007). Furthermore, PRA seeks to empower social groups who may be marginalised within society, particularly in social research (Kindon, 2005). It was the intention of this study to find out if the partnerships

between teachers and university researchers were indeed participatory, addressing the following research question: *How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations?*

PR refers to a research approach, philosophy or process, with the focus on partnership between researchers and the community (i.e. those being 'researched') (Alery, 1990; Maguire, 1987). Drevdahl (1995:68) describes PR as a 'world view about the conduct of research, rather than a linear, delineated procedure for collecting evidence'. PR does not follow a restricted and rigid research methodology. It is most easily conducted with people who have a well-developed consciousness of their community (Durch, Bailey & Stoto, 1997). Literature on PR states that there are three key fundamentals that differentiate PR from conventional social science research, namely people, power and praxis (Finn, 1994). PR is people-centred (Brown, 1985) in the sense that the process of critical inquiry is informed by, and responds to the experiences and needs of marginalised and oppressed people.

PR is thus about power relations between people and social groups. It aims to ensure that the community is an equal and active partner with other stakeholders involved in a study, e.g. universities, corporations or governments. Core to the main research question addressing power relations and partnerships, is that the knowledge and expertise of all partners are considered complementary. Such studies focus on partnerships that are created as people from different walks of life come together and investigate social problems to bring about transformation for capacity building in communities with scarce resources. In the current study, teachers have shared their experiences by participating in the STAR project as co-researchers, bringing in their own strengths and skills to facilitate transformative change in the communities they live in.

PR challenges practices that separate the researcher from the researched and thus promotes the forging of a partnership between researchers and the people under study (Freire, 1987, 1970). Both researcher and participant are viewed as actors in the investigative process, influencing the flow of research, interpreting the situation, and sharing options for action. Ideally, this collaborative process is empowering. PR thus brings isolated people together around common problems and needs, and validates their experiences as the foundation for understanding and critical reflection. In the STAR project, teachers and university researchers constantly collaborate as investigators in identifying research problems, working together to seek solutions to the social challenges faced by the communities.

Partnerships are often formed between communities and academic institutions. These partnerships can consist of teachers, university departments, graduate students, and academic institutions. Such partnerships can differ in terms of the level of community participation (Roussel, Fan & Fulmer, 2002), the setting in which university researchers work (i.e. university or community), and the objectives of the partnership (e.g. to carry out an intervention, a research programme, or to provide infrastructure for the development of research studies). Regardless of the impetus for the development of a partnership, community university alliances for research are characterised by a focus on community social issues and dissemination strategies that are meaningful to both the university and the community (Currie, King, Rosenbaum, Law, Kertoy & Specht, 2005).

Traditionally the researcher and the researched are in an ‘asymmetrical relationship’ (Chataway, 1997) in which the researcher is assumed to be in the best position to decide what a community needs and to provide this (Green & Mercer, 2001). PR seeks to break this asymmetry through the mutual engagement of community and researchers in all possible steps of the research (Chataway, 1997; Citrin, 2001; Green & Mercer, 2001). Recognising that ‘all knowledge is related to its context’ (Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg, 2000:13), the research itself is viewed as ‘a co-learning process for researchers and community members’ (Minkler, 2004:685), generating new knowledge useful to both sides of the relationship (Lerner *et al.*, 2000) and to which all participants have equal claim. In this study, I aimed to establish if the specific partnership in research was viewed as a co-learning process and whether or not new knowledge was generated by both parties in an equitable and equal manner.

#### **2.4.2 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS**

Various studies identify factors related to the success of community-university partnerships (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Lister, 2005). These include the creation and nurturing of trust among partners; respect for a community’s knowledge; community-defined and prioritised needs and goals; mutual division of roles and responsibilities; continuous flexibility, compromise, and feedback; strengthening of community capacity; joint and equitable allocation of resources; sustainability and community ownership; and sufficiency of funding periods (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Wolff & Maurana, 2001). A study conducted by Mitchell (2005:186) indicates that ‘partnerships will be enhanced if a shared vision exists with a strong, mutual commitment’. Beyond a shared vision, other attributes may contribute to effective partnerships, such as ‘compatibility between participants based on mutual trust and respect, even when from time

to time there may be legitimately different needs and expectations' (Mitchell, 2005:187). Furthermore, partnerships will be enhanced if there are benefits to all partners, equitable power for partners, clear communication channels, and the capacity to adapt so that partners can respond positively to the inevitable changes that may occur (Mitchell, 2005). Additionally, Mitchell (2005) emphasises attributes such as integrity, patience and perseverance by all partners.

Lantz, Vireull-Fuentes, Israel, Softley and Guzman (2001) suggest that clear working guidelines are the foundation for successful community–university collaborations. Academics need to work with community representatives who know and are known to the community and truly represent it. Brown-Peterside and Laraque (1997) recommend combining service to the community with a funded research protocol. Such service could help keep the community motivated to continue participating. Other factors related to the success of collaborations include community leadership of the partnership, shared decision-making (Butterfoss, Goodman & Wandersman, 1996), and small and concrete accomplishments (Eisinger & Senturia, 2001). Effective community–researcher collaborations require a paradigm shift from traditional practices to an approach that includes acknowledging community contribution, recruiting and training minority people to participate in research teams, improving communication, sharing power, and valuing respect and diversity (Kone, Sullivan, Senturia, Chrisman, Criske & Krieger, 2000). This paradigm shift is supported by a study done by Dalal, Skeete, Yeo, Lucas and Rosenthal (2002) indicating that relationships based on trust, shared interest, power-sharing and fostering co-learning and capacity building among partners are at the core of community university partnerships. In the current study, I aimed to discover whether these guidelines, which are attributes of successful partnerships as espoused by Butterfoss *et al.* (1996), also apply to the partnerships established as part of the STAR project. In the next section, I explain the functions of research partnerships.

### **2.4.3 FUNCTIONS OF RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS**

Currie *et al.* (2005) outline an impact model that shows three main functions of research partnerships, namely knowledge generation, research education and training, and knowledge sharing. They link these to outputs, mid-term impacts, and long-term impacts. Although distinctions are made between the three function-related domains within each level of the model, the outputs and impacts related to the functions are not mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, the boundaries between the three domains are permeable. A particular impact can arise through the joint influence of partnership functions.

#### **2.4.3.1 Partnerships as knowledge generation, research education and training**

The Impact Model (Currie *et al.*, 2005) captures outputs of community–university research partnerships that reflect generated knowledge, such as research projects, interventions, reports and products. Through reciprocal influence, knowledge can be gained by the members of a partnership as well as the community at large. For example, collaboration between university and community researchers can lessen the discontinuity between missions of education (knowledge development) and service delivery (providing care) on the one hand, and the resulting research agendas on the other (Dufault, 1995). University researchers can learn which research questions meet the needs of the community or are relevant to daily practice (Spear & Rawson, 2002). On the other hand, community-based researchers have opportunities to influence the use of research in daily practice (Dufault, 1995), demonstrate the effectiveness of services and enhance the credibility of research in the field (Bogo, Well & Abbey, 1992). Moreover, community-based researchers (such as the teachers in this study) may ensure that research has practical applications (Eakin & Maclean, 1992).

I agree that the output of community–university research partnerships can be knowledge generation as in the case of STAR. In another study on the experiences of physician teams in community-based PR, it was found, for example, ‘that participants wanted to develop leadership seminars that equipped them with tools to navigate relationships in a partnership’ (Dalal *et al.*, 2002:288). Furthermore, a study on building community strength by Tesoriero, Samuel and Annadurai (2006) reveal that community participants were able to transfer knowledge to the rest of fellow community members on barriers to health and wellbeing, by developing and maintaining learning.

Research partnerships typically provide training and development opportunities for university researchers, community members, and students, which are catalytic in nature. Through collaboration with community members, university researchers can gain awareness of the feasibility of research designs (Schiller, 1998) and develop curricula that better prepare students for the complexities of daily practice (Hayward, DeMarco & Lynch, 2000). Changes to research agendas may be the result (i.e. a shift to more applied or more influential areas of research).

Typically, community members (such as teachers, service providers and programme managers) have less experience with research than their university partners (Schenzul, 1999). Research partnerships may therefore provide community-based researchers with opportunities to develop research skills (Schenzul, 1999), sometimes by providing clinical relief funding to allow for dedicated research time for service providers, or by engaging community members directly in the operational aspects of research.

#### **2.4.3.2 Partnerships as knowledge sharing: communities of practice**

The research dissemination activities of partnerships typically focus on enhancing the utilisation of research concepts and evidence by community members. Research partnerships comprising university and community partners attempt to balance various agendas with respect to desired audiences, media, messages, and the comprehensiveness of information shared (Ferman & Hill, 2004). These agendas may arise due to different incentives and reward systems provided by university settings and community organisations (Ferman & Hill, 2004). In the Ferman and Hill (2004) study on benefits for a university and community partnership, for example, some community participants complained that universities did not share funds that were obtained with the community.

Although one of the core functions of community–university partnerships is the use of practical knowledge, this may not meet the needs of academics who are expected to advance theoretical knowledge in their field (Ferman & Hill, 2004). Publication in peer-reviewed journals is often considered a better indicator of the success of knowledge-sharing efforts than media which may be better suited to the community, such as newsletters or websites. When assumptions are made about the superior nature of certain outputs (e.g. peer-reviewed publications), rather than formally measuring different types of mid- and long-term impacts, as well as outputs, the potential exists to overestimate impact and undervalue other approaches to knowledge sharing that may in fact lead to greater individual, organisational, or community change with respect to knowledge, skills and the use of information (Currie *et al.*, 2005). Conversely, the findings of the study by Dalal *et al.* (2002) indicate that sharing knowledge brought about social change to the community in the sense that co-learning and capacity building were fostered within the group. As a way of building trust by creating an environment that values the diverse perspectives of low-income women, Frisby, Reid, Millar and Hoerber (2005) found that community partners' knowledge was valued and incorporated into research (Frisby *et al.*, 2005).

Horner (1997) views leadership in partnership as a process where leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers but as members of a community of practice. A community of practice is defined by Drath and Palus (1994:4) as ‘people who are united in a common enterprise, who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking and ways of doing things’. I agree with Drath and Palus, as I regard the teachers in the STAR project as a community of practice. Members of a community of practice, as articulated by Kirk and Shutte (2004), distribute leadership with the capacity for engagement, characterised by a process of dialogue, connectivity and empowerment. This is referred to as community leadership: leadership within communities of different people who come together in a collaborative endeavour (Kirk & Shutte, 2004). Community leadership development is focused on building leadership capacity in communities of difference who are seeking effective integration (Kirk & Shutte, 2004). The more people with capacity to take the reins and develop collaborative programmes that work, the greater the successes will be in a specific community or neighbourhood. Therefore, community leaders may build leadership qualities in other members of their community (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003). Furthermore, community leaders will typically establish a set of guiding principles that allows others to be empowered and share ownership, thereby empowering the wider community so that the successes become greater and the failures fewer for that area (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003).

Community leadership development begins with capacity building. James (2004:6) defines capacity building as ‘an ongoing process of helping people, organisations and societies improve and adapt to changes around them’. In support of community leadership as development based on capacity building, Rubin (2004) found in his COPC partnership project that community members were empowered to do community organising and developing leadership, resulting in communities being able to advocate for change, formulate strategies and build organisations. These findings are similar to those of a Detroit community–academia partnership illustrated in a study by Lantz *et al.* (2001).

If capacity building is a process, learning must be at the heart of that process. It is through learning that people may come to see themselves and their situations in different ways. A transforming perspective will enable people to engage reality with new eyes. This capacity to see differently holds the prospect of beneficial social change. Learning that results in fundamental change is what Argyris and Schon (1991:21) refer to as ‘double loop learning’. Such change goes beyond adaptation; it is change that reframes attitudes, beliefs and cultural values (Chapman, 2002). A consequence of ‘seeing’ differently is that one is able to play

one's role in a system in a different, more authoritative way. In this way, learning presents an opportunity for system change.

Capacity building is further defined by James (2004) as a 'helping' process. Kirk and Shutte (2004) caution about the nature of 'help' since this may challenge the relationship between participants. Kirk and Shutte (2004) therefore regard partnership as the interdependence of different people with different roles engaged in the pursuit of a shared goal. They further mention that if clarity of role, purpose and relationship is not articulated and 'lived out', then the desire for empowerment as an outcome in capacity building programmes is undermined by a process which consciously or unconsciously fosters dependency. This can become a hidden virus in capacity building, and is what Freire decries in his work and writing on development (Freire, 1970, 1987).

Capacity building is viewed as underpinned by positive 'power to' and 'power with' models in which power is considered as social and cooperative, rather than negative and related to domination and control (Deutchman, 1991). It is therefore envisaged that the following will be included among the many purposes and intentions of community capacity building: to meet 'needs and improve assets and attributes; promote responsibility for solving local problems; build local leadership; stimulate active and reflective participation in urban renewal or regeneration; empower; promote health gains; local improvements; redress disadvantage; allow for effective services and promote better risk management' (Department of Health, South Australia, 2007:18). In its many purposes and intentions, 'community capacity building' can support community-based empowerment, the development of skills, knowledge and resources, and strengthened social relations. As such, empowerment is often cited as a reason for community capacity building.

Empowerment is discussed at the level of individual empowerment (changes in skills, knowledge, consciousness and awareness, hope, action and belief in abilities to affect change) and changes in wider social structures and processes that may result in increased resources and opportunities (amongst other things). Giddens's (1969) theory of structuration is often used as a theoretical basis to interpret empowerment processes. The theory is predicated on change as a product of interactions between individual agency and structures. As such, community capacity building is based on the outcome of empowerment, implying the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, building on assets and strengths, respecting diversity, responding to change and creating the future (Luttrell & Quiroz, 2007).

Empowerment as an outcome of community capacity building implies the development of the capacity and skills of the members of a community in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet their needs, and to participate more fully in society ([www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)). For Jackson, Cleverly, Poland, Burman, Edwards and Robertson (1999), community capacity is the use of power (control of resources and decisions) to solve problems as well as the actual knowledge and skill sets that community groups require to effectively address local issues and concerns.

The overall benefits of community capacity building is to ensure that communities take control of their own learning in a way that enables them to effectively address the needs and issues on their agenda. Community capacity building is about underpinning change, which is well articulated by the Dunlop Report (2002:12), stating that ‘there is little chance of improving people's standard of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their collaborative participation in planning processes. This requires community capacity building leading to empowerment’.

#### **2.4.4 BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF PARTNERSHIPS**

Extensive literature focuses on higher education institutions and community research partnerships that address the perceived value of partnerships, mostly from the perspective of higher education partners (Ansley & Gaventa, 1997; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Ferman & Shlay, 1997). Most of the studies address the benefits of partnerships to faculty and students (Hill & Dougherty, 2002; Lawson, 2002; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000) or explore issues faced by university researchers involved in such partnerships (Benson & Harkavy, 2001; Hill & Dougherty, 2002; Lawson, 2002; Nyden, Figert, Shibley & Burrows, 1997b; Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000).

On the community side, four principal benefits of partnering with higher education researchers can be distinguished (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Hill & Dougherty, 2002). First, communities benefit from project-specific resources that higher education partners provide, particularly human capital. Rubin (2004:17) relied on community outreach partnership centres’ programmes to provide opportunities for community residents to develop skills, ‘gaining new capacities and tools that enable them to affect the public decisions that shape their neighbourhoods’. Secondly, community partners can gain access at no cost, to expertise on data collection and evaluation, to training as well as other incentives like mentoring people

in a community (Benson & Harkavy, 2001; Ferman & Hill, 2004; Lawson, 2002; Loots, 2010; Nyden *et al.*, 1997b); Stoecker, 2003; Strand, 2000). In their research, Ferman and Hill (2004) found that community partners gained free access to certain services, such as lawyers and assistance with curriculum development projects by university students. Additionally, through partnerships, the principle of sharing intellectual authority is an added benefit (Metzler *et al.*, 2003).

The third benefit of partnerships is the significance of resources leveraged by project findings (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Stoecker, 2003). Partnership project findings could result in change through interventions as well as provide access to additional equipment, facilities and events. Besides concrete access to institutional resources, partnerships may benefit communities by providing access to broader networks and possibilities (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Stoecker, 2003; Hill & Dougherty, 2002; Lawson, 2002; Benson & Harkavy, 2001; Strand, 2000; Nyden *et al.*, 1997b). For instance, findings from research on higher education partners and community conducted by Ferman and Hill (2004) revealed that community partners described the benefits of meeting other people who had the same interest in issues that they were dealing with and who were willing to assist them. Partnerships may thus create opportunities to work with similar community organisations in various neighbourhoods and even in other regions. In this study, I aimed to find out whether or not teachers shared such experiences from participating in STAR.

The fourth important benefit derived from partnerships is the legitimacy that accrues to the community partners and the intervention projects developed, by virtue of associating with tertiary institutions. Various research findings (e.g. Ferman & Hill, 2004; Strand, 2000; Nye & Schramm, 1999) reveal that communities at large, particularly business organisations, listen to community partners more closely because the university is part of the partnership. The ultimate goal and benefit of partnerships is to create and increase opportunities for empowerment and improve program effectiveness (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001).

Even though partnerships are viewed as insightful and beneficial, some barriers and challenges also exist, such as agenda and incentive conflict, lack of adequate capacity and institutional space (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Foster-Fishman *et al.*, 2001). Agenda and incentive conflict could be a major blow to partnerships. This occurs when roles and expectations of the research partners are not clearly defined. Both partners may enter the research partnership

with varying expectations (Nye & Shramm, 1997). In their study, Nye and Shramm (1997) found that most universities enter into partnerships as a way of getting the communities to approve grants that institutional researchers have applied for. Once the grant has been approved, university partners often do not return and share the grant fund with the community. Further challenges include struggles with the decision-making process, project selection, and the composition of the community board or committee (Eisinger & Senturia, 2001). Perceived lack of respect towards community partners is another potential challenge, particularly when university researchers view themselves as the only experts and ignore the fact that expertise comes in many forms, one of which is the knowledge of the community (Ferman & Hill, 2004). In their study, Rabaia and Gillham (2010:69) confirm that challenges of academic and community partnerships may exist where unequal power relations are apparent with university counterparts referring to ‘**our** funding’. Such comments indicate unequal power relations, lack of respect and lack of trust towards community partners (Rabaia & Gillham, 2010). As the current study uses a feminist standpoint epistemology, issues that have been identified as possible barriers could be reflected on.

Other challenges include organisational constraints, time pressures (including the length of time required for results to be realised), balancing community interests in interventions, academic research needs, cultural differences among the partners, competing demands for time and attention, and differences in orientation to the power structure (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Lantz *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, the challenge of mismatch of incentives exists, which is influenced by the relationships that characterise and shape each partner’s environment. In most instances, community partners join partnerships with the view of gaining access to concrete resources, to be empowered, expand their networks and gain legitimacy. Narrow role definitions may also contribute to a mismatch of incentives, as the nature of partnerships is evolving and at times ambiguous (Perkins, Ferrari, Covey & Keith, 1994). Although partnerships help participants to become decision-makers, researchers sometimes hold restrictive role definitions for the community partners and prescribe narrow roles. In a study conducted by Foster-Fishman *et al.* (2001) it was found that when working with a community with a long history of patriarchy, decisions are often made by certain privileged members within the community.

#### 2.4.5 COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Research partnerships between communities and universities are presently common (Minkler 2005; Mayfield, 2001). Universities partner with the community to engage in research that would result in social change (Waghid, 2002). University engagement supports research and teaching to address special needs of communities; it integrates the teaching, research and service functions of the university in an interdisciplinary manner and promotes partnerships with public agencies and the community for broad public affairs and civic interests (Mayfield, 2001).

The concept of an engaged university rests on literature related to a wide range of case studies (e.g. Cox, 2000; Sandmann, Foster-Fishman, Lloyd, Rauhe & Rosaen, 2000). Much of the existing literature focuses on technical issues and on special issues related to working with community groups (Mayfield, 2001). Literature typically emerges from practitioners supporting community engagement, including fields of health-related schools, the social sciences, education, and service learning (Mayfield, 2001). However, existing literature on community–university partnerships has not adequately answered how the engaged university incorporates the voices and experiences of participants, particularly when using a PRA approach. It was the intention of this study to find the voice of the participants in relation to their experiences on community–university partnerships.

In their review of community-based PR, Israel *et al.* (1998) summarise the approach as enriching the research process and outcomes, as a community development strategy and as an opportunity to improve community–university partnerships. This approach differs from traditional research methods in that it is an iterative process, integrating a cyclical process of reflection and action as a primary goal. In line with this, I argue that community–university partnerships should be an approach that results in action which will ultimately bring about social change in communities. Feminist action research scholars have also used an array of community-based research methods to integrate knowledge and action to promote the political, social, and economic status of women and marginalised populations (DeVault, 1999; Gutberlet, 2008).

From a university perspective, PR implies a collaborative enterprise between academics and community members that seeks to democratise knowledge creation by validating multiple sources of knowledge and promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and

dissemination (Strand *et al.*, 2003). As Harkavy (2006) argues, the goal of universities should be to contribute significantly to developing and sustaining democratic schools, communities and societies by effectively educating students to be democratic and constructive citizens. Moseley (2007), coming from a practitioner and academic perspective, argues for greater collaboration between communities and universities. Arguing from a feminist geography position, Moseley (2007) stresses the importance of positioning oneself as a researcher and adopting a reflexive approach when working collaboratively in PR.

This study also adopts Moseley's (2007) reflexive approach. As such, I recognise that knowledge is situated, and that researchers' views are context-bound and partial rather than detached and universal. As Moseley (2007:335) argues: 'academics inherently analyse these relationships from their own vantage point, making it all the more important to uncover the perspectives of those partnering with academics'. Increasingly, universities are engaging in PR with the goal of producing policy outcomes that are applicable and effective for local community development (Hall, Tremblay & Downing, 2009). I am of the view that engaging in PR takes into account the fact that communities often have the skills and resources within them to undertake effective and meaningful research collaboration with universities. Communities bring with them knowledge and understanding of their situation. Additionally, I believe that establishing partnerships reflects an attempt to diminish power imbalances in the social system. It is anticipated that such meaningful research collaboration will bring about social change.

Academics are often viewed as outsiders by communities, despite the fact that at times academics are members of the communities where their research is based. When academics are outsiders, they can occupy one of three roles (Metzler *et al.*, 2003): Academics could occupy the role of 'initiator' where they engage with the community from an activist perspective of the research project. In the 'consultant' role academics assume the responsibilities of a real consultant. In this case, the community commissions the research project and the consultant carries it out. In the 'collaborator' role, academics work hand in hand with community members, recognising that each brings unique talents to the table (Metzler *et al.*, 2003). In the collaborative model, community members become equal researchers whose knowledge and experience is recognised and valued while on the other hand the academics bring important theoretical knowledge. In the current study, the 'collaborator' is emphasised and pursued since the study focuses on partnerships and power in PRA, where teachers are viewed as equal co-researchers.

When community members and academic researchers collaborate, both partners benefit and work in an equal relationship (Metzler *et al.*, 2003). The collaborator role emphasises relationship building between academics and community members with researchers participating in a broader, social change project. The STAR project is based on the concept of establishing mutual relationships. A study of the community perspective identified specific critical factors that may facilitate the development, effectiveness and sustainability of community-academic partnerships (Wolff & Maurana, 2001). The following factors were regarded as important as part of the collaborative model for building effective partnerships: creation and nurturing of trust; mutual division of roles and responsibilities; respect for the community's knowledge; joint and equitable allocation of resources and sustainability; and community ownership (Wolff & Maurana, 2001).

In addition to the different stages of a partnership that can be distinguished, different models of partnerships exist (Power, Dowrick, Ginsburg-Block & Manz, 2004). The Participatory Intervention Model (PIM) (Nastasi, Varjas, Schenzul, Silva, Schenzul, & Ratnayake, 2000) which is based on principles of participatory action research (Greenwood, Whyte & Harkavy, 1993; Schenzul & Schenzul, 1992) is a partnership-based model that promotes the formation and continual development of co-hierarchical, collaborative relationships between community partners and the research team. This model acknowledges the expertise of community members and researchers in their respective domains (Nastasi *et al.*, 2000). Community partners bring to the partnership an understanding of culture and an ability to relate to the people who live in the neighbourhoods. Researchers bring to the partnership an understanding of intervention development and evaluation, as well as an ability to facilitate the formation and maintenance of collaborative relationships.

The application of PIM can be challenging in that it requires that community partners and researchers adapt their roles and change their perceptions of each other (Nastasi *et al.*, 2000). However, actively involving community partners in the process of intervention design can create approaches that appropriately reflect the realities and values of the community, enhancing their acceptability to community partners, and child and family participants (Nastasi *et al.*, 2000). In this study, a feminist standpoint epistemology was taken as a means of understanding the experiences of teachers as co-researchers in their participation in the STAR project to reveal their perspectives on issues of power and partnership. This study therefore promotes the PIM model.

## 2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: GAVENTA'S POWER CUBE

In this study, I consider the ability to influence change in power-sharing partnerships through the power cube theory of Gaventa (2003a, 2006), who has analysed the different ways that people can impact on decision-making. The theory posits that power is complex and exists in a relational context in different forms and degrees (phases of power), with different moments, opportunities or channels for its expression (spaces or arenas of power), and different levels of engagement within social relationships (places or levels of power). This dynamic framework enables an appreciation of the interplay of forms of power (in its different configurations and degrees of visibility, from visible to hidden and invisible), with its place of operation (concerning the arenas and levels of engagement of power locally, nationally and globally) and spaces of engagement (locating how the arenas of decision-making power are availed or accessed via provided or closed, invited, claimed or created spaces) (Gaventa, 2003a, 2006).

The current study is based within the broader STAR project, where teachers facilitate psychosocial support initiatives following the asset-based approach (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011; Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2010). STAR is a school-based intervention aimed at capacity building to provide support within vulnerable school-community contexts (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012; Loots, 2010). Within the framework of the current study, using Gaventa's power cube (2003a), I thus sought to gain insight into the experiences of teachers using participatory methodology in the STAR intervention project, by exploring issues of power and partnership.

Individuals and communities exist within contexts criss-crossed by various forms of power relations. Since power is immanent or present in human social relationships, it must be held as a category of analysis because it can either disable or enable the efforts undertaken to achieve redress of social injustices and oppression or marginalisation experienced by specific social groups and communities within society.

I selected Gaventa's (2003a, 2006) power cube framework with the expectation that more specific insights could emerge about the broad concerns of participation in research, learning, advocacy and community mobilisation for capacity building, by breaking down the process into three analytical dimensions or relationships of the manifestations and operation of power, namely space, forms and levels of power, and relevant interrelationships. The dynamism of power is highlighted, indicating that different interests can be marginalised if power relations

are glossed over and that they must be redressed by inclusion strategies; hence the need to generate opportunities to influence change. Indeed, power analysis is imperative for understanding both the context in which changes are envisaged and the potential for success.

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). I believe that using this lens for understanding PR processes and community capacity building efforts could help assess the possibilities of transformative action by participants. The framework offers ways to examine participatory action in development and changes in power relations by and/or on behalf of poor and marginalised people. Gaventa’s (2003a) power cube presents a dynamic understanding of how power operates, how different interests can be marginalised from decision-making, and the strategies needed to increase inclusion. It describes the powerful use of power across three continuums. Gaventa (2006) states that many sides of a cube can be the first entry point for power analysis. He argues that when any successful change in power relations takes place, each of the pieces on each dimension of a cube simultaneously has to align with the others. To understand power relations, the question must be asked how the spaces of power for participation were created, with whose interests in mind and on what terms of engagement (Gaventa, 2006).

### **2.5.1 SPACES OF POWER IN THE POWER CUBE**

According to Gaventa (2003), the term ‘space’ as a dimension of power refers to the different arenas in which decision-making takes place and in which power operates, and how these spaces are created. Space may be the starting point for action and participation. Spaces are seen as opportunities and channels where participants can act to potentially affect decisions and relationships that may affect their lives and interests (Gaventa, 2006). Cornwall’s (2002) work indicates that the spaces for participation are not silent, but are shaped by power relations at play. Cornwall (2002) further links the concepts of power and space drawing upon French social theorists (Lefebvre, Foucault, and Bourdieu). In particular, for Lefebvre (1991:24) ‘space is a social product ... it is not simply ‘there’, a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control, and hence of domination, of power’.

Since space is a social product, power relations are inherent to help scope the boundaries of participatory spaces, in terms of what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which

identities (Cornwall, 2002). In terms of the rules of engagement and the agenda of issues that can be discussed, an understanding of space can help identify entry points for change and may encourage self-reflection on the power that different actors exercise. In this study, my intention was to hear the voices of teacher participants, in order to understand their participatory experiences in the STAR project, and gain insight into how teachers as co-researchers perceived and dealt with power as they participated in the partnership research process with university researchers to address their community problems.

A useful approach for the analysis of empowerment opportunities, utilising Gaventa's (2003a) power cube concept of spaces, is proposed by Cornwall (2002, 2004, 2007), who distinguishes between 'closed spaces', top-down 'invited spaces' and bottom-up 'claimed spaces' in order to understand the interaction of power and knowledge on policy. Citing an example of the explanation of top-down and bottom-up spaces, Brock, Cornwall and Gaventa (2001:3) succinctly summarise how these spaces might work:

...two broad kinds of policy spaces – those that are found in invited forums of participation created 'from above' by powerful institutions and actors, and those more autonomous spaces created 'from below' through more independent forms of social action on poverty-related issues. By examining how different narratives of poverty and different actors interact in such spaces – as well as how they may be excluded from them – we can better understand the ways in which power and knowledge frame the policy processes.

Returning to the discussion of the three continuums of spaces, first 'closed spaces' can be identified in which one asks if the decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors; in other words, *do researchers make decisions and provide services 'to the people' without the need for consultation or their involvement?* Closed or insider spaces are typically occupied by elected representatives, bureaucrats, state actors and experts who make decisions on behalf of others without consultation or involvement. These are the closed or uninvited spaces referred to earlier (Gaventa, 2004), where barriers may prevent certain issues from being considered and actors from having a voice. Others that have examined routes to influence include Grant (1995), who analyses the political system and the way that opportunities influence policy decisions within parliament can effect change. Insider and outsider interest groups are identified, along with the different strategies employed by each. Insider groups rely on establishing good contacts, that is social capital, and work within a current power structure to influence policy (Grant, 1995). On the other hand, outsider groups without such contacts seek alternative channels such as the media and social action to put their concerns on the policy agenda. In this way, they create and claim their own spaces.

According to Grant (1995), public opinion is an important factor in pressure groups' ability to persuade and influence, since the groups are ultimately not able to make decisions and wield little effective power. Grant (1995:183) draws on Lukes' dimensions of power and highlights the 'influence of dominant interests and values that suppress challenges from outsider groups being reminiscent of how cultural and symbolic capital are mobilised in spaces of power to delimit what is considered legitimate and important in policy decision-making'. An elite group controls these spaces. Such groups may exist within many government systems, international finance institutions (IFIs) or institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Many civil society efforts focus on opening up the spaces of decision-making through greater public involvement, transparency or accountability (Gaventa, 2005).

In a case study on the effects of participatory development in India, Pellissbery and Bergh (2007) found that participation for material incentives was based on closed spaces of power which had both hidden and invisible power structures. Crawford (2003) noted similar findings in a study on partnership and governance reform in Indonesia that examined the ubiquity of partnerships in development aid for understanding decision-making structures and activities. Crawford's (2003:139) findings showed that 'decision-making bodies are constructed in a manner which ensures that reform agenda of international agencies remains relatively unchallenged both in terms of what is included and excluded'.

Secondly, invited spaces are concerned with the type of people invited to participate by various authorities (Cornwall, 2007; Gaventa, 2006). Invited spaces are a type of ongoing consultation. They exist where those with positional power and authority ask people to participate (Gaventa, 2006). These spaces are relatively open public spaces, and focus on dialogue and participation. Under external pressure or in an attempt to increase legitimacy, some policy makers may create invited spaces in which outsiders can share their opinions (Gaventa, 2006). While they serve as an opportunity to participate and influence decisions, the chances for influencing long term change are unlikely.

Thirdly, claimed or created spaces are possessed by less powerful actors, gained from the power holders (Gaventa, 2006). Created spaces afford the less powerful a chance to set up their agendas and create solidarity without control from power holders. In this arena, power is gained through action or negotiation.

In this study, I aimed to determine the type of spaces that existed among teachers as they participated in the STAR project and what their experiences have been with regard to the power at play within the context of spaces. Additionally, I focused on the question as to how the identified spaces have influenced and perceived their role in the research project.

### **2.5.2 FORMS AND DEGREES OF POWER IN THE POWER CUBE**

The second dimension of the power cube framework (Gaventa, 2006) concerns the ‘forms’ of power, or the dynamics of power that shape the inclusiveness of participation within each space. The forms of power involve three attributes of power namely visible power, hidden power and invisible power. Visible power refers to observable decision-making, that is strategies that entail the ‘who’, ‘how’ and ‘what’ of policy-making defined, for instance, by statutes, legislation or policy (Gaventa, 2006). It is the ‘embodiment of ‘power over’, viewed as legitimate authority, usually exercised by bureaucracy, people presumed to have expertise, and political representatives inhabiting various structures of governance’ (Gaventa, 2006:28). Visible power can also be explained as rationalised power, that is, the epitome of bureaucratisation of many domains of social life in the modern world.

Hidden power refers to certain powerful people and institutions maintaining their influence by controlling who makes decisions and what are included on the agenda (Gaventa, 2006). Finally, invisible power is the most ‘insidious form of power as it shapes the psychological and ideological boundaries of participation’ (Gaventa, 2006:29). In this case, not only are some issues excluded from discussions, they are also hidden from the consciousness of people, thus influencing how people think. With invisible power, the construction of ‘voices’ in invited spaces is influenced, as participants may merely echo what the power holders who shape places want to hear (Gaventa, 2006). A significant motivator for outsiders is the disparity between those with power and those without. Wright (2000) recognises the problem of top-down control, where there is little or no communication between powerful decision-makers. Wright (2000:27) values the importance of communities in decision-making and recognises that in order for solutions to be reached, they have to be present: ‘The four dimensions – personal responsibility, consensus, local currencies and community – overlap and reinforce one another, but the greatest is community’. It takes the community to be engaged in order to solve problems at neighbourhood level.

In the current study, I attempted to explore the nature of participation with regard to the forms of power that were present and thus experienced by teachers. The forms of power also consider the level and nature of enablement in PR and as such, it was my intention to reveal the nature of power environment as experienced by teachers. Furthermore, as I explored the dynamics of the forms of power experienced by teachers, I needed to keep in mind the strategies that entail the ‘who’, ‘how’ and ‘what’ revealed by the forms of power.

### **2.5.3 LEVELS OF POWER IN THE POWER CUBE**

Gaventa’s (2003a, 2006) power cube also emphasises the importance of understanding the interaction between levels of power and the ‘places of engagement’, and particularly distinguishes between the international, national and local levels or places of power (Gaventa, 2003a, 2006). The concern with how and by whom the spaces for participation are shaped intersects with debates on the places or levels where critical social, political and economic power resides. Gaventa (2006:27) acknowledges that some ‘work on power (especially that on gender and power) starts with an analysis of power in more private or intimate spaces, much of the work on public spaces for participation involves the contest between local, national and global arenas as locations of power’. It can be argued that most of participatory practice begins locally, since that is where ordinary struggles with resisting power and construction of voice begins. In some quota, the argument is that power struggles are globalised and thus deliberation on participation should begin at the global level (Gaventa, 2006). Additionally, some theorists view power struggles to be embedded in the national level context, with this being the point where power is legitimised (Gaventa, 2006).

The analysis of power and empowerment described by Taylor (2008:159) as interconnected and flowing is pertinent here: ‘If power is to flow through the system, these local circuits have to be linked into the social, political and economic circuits from which they have been cut off’. Therefore, power begins at the local level. Local people thus have to build their capacity at a local level. As such local empowerment values and acknowledges the contribution of local resources, involvement and ownership, and their potential power and energy. The dynamics of power is influenced by the space power exists in, the level and the form it takes (Gaventa, 2006).

In the current study, teachers worked with various stakeholders in the STAR project. It was therefore important to explore the dynamics of power relations as it unfolded at various levels.

I had to be mindful of the various opportunities (if any) that were availed for teachers during this study in order to experience power at various levels. In this study, I argue and suggest that transformative change will occur when power struggles are levelled so that inclusiveness of participation become visible and the levels of engagement begin at local vicinities.

Having conceptualised and articulated this theoretical framework by using Gaventa's (2003a, 2006) power cube, I was interested in the extent to which teacher participants perceived that these opportunities (interaction of power with place and space) were available to them, and how effective they believed and perceived themselves to be in bringing about involvement and change in the power-sharing partnerships of the STAR intervention, based on their experiences and from their standpoint. The power cube framework had the potential to assist me in addressing the research questions and gaining insights in terms of power and partnership in research relationships between teachers and researchers.

#### **2.5.4 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS FLOWING FROM UNDERSTANDING THE POWER CUBE AND POWER RELATIONS IN PR**

Gaventa's power cube (2003a, 2006) refers to the dynamics of power relations as manifested in different arenas. It emphasises the importance of understanding the interaction between the type of space in which it is found, the level at which it operates and the form it takes in participation in research, partnerships, learning, advocacy and community mobilisation for capacity building. Therefore, power analysis is imperative for understanding both the context in which changes are envisaged and the potential for their success. The Power Cube theory is therefore based on the multifaceted and multidimensional conception of power (Gaventa, 2005) which enables us to emphasise aspects of previous assumptions and the invisible power which impregnates PR. The Power Cube framework is further linked to the analysis of power by Bourdieu's (1984) *habitus* idea, and integrated with Cameron and Ojha's (2007) discussion of deliberative and reflexive processes in PR and development. Therefore, the Power Cube theory emphasises that agency, particularly from the social context in which it is exercised, result in change and transformation in PR. A conceptual link must thus be established between agency and social change and the transformation processes which PR and development interventions attempt to promote.

Gaventa (2003a, 2005, 2006) highlights the traditional conception of power which has often been interpreted negatively in the sense that it modulates and restricts the potential for human

agency. That is, power is traditionally conceived as domination and thereby referred to as power over or the ‘ability of the powerful to affect the actions and thoughts of the powerless’ (Gaventa, 2005:145).

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

In chapter 2, I reviewed existing literature within the context of this study by exploring concepts and empirical evidence on power, partnerships, empowerment, participation and PR. Furthermore, I provided a theoretical framework based on the Power Cube framework of Gaventa (2003a) as the guiding philosophy of the study.

In chapter 3, I provide a description of the methodological choices I made and the strategies I applied in the study. Throughout, I justify my choices in terms of the purpose of the study and the related research questions.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I provided the theoretical framework of the study, based on the review of relevant literature. This study sought to provide insight into the process and outcome of conducting PR, more specifically in terms of the power relations that occur. In order to achieve this broad purpose, I utilised a PRA approach to explore the experiences of teachers participating in a longitudinal participatory intervention, where I specifically examined issues of power and partnership.

In this chapter, I describe, explain and elaborate on the research methodology and strategies I used. I justify the choices of feminism as epistemology and participatory methodology as methodological paradigm. After providing details and justification for PRA as the selected research design, I describe the selection of participants and sites of the study, data generation and analysis as well as ethical considerations. I conclude the chapter by explaining quality criteria I aimed to adhere to. As an introduction, Table 3.1 provides an outline of the selected research methodology.

**Table 3.1: Outline of methodological choices**

<b>PARADIGIMATIC ASSUMPTIONS</b>	
<b>Methodological paradigm</b>	Participatory methodology
<b>Epistemological paradigm</b>	Feminist standpoint theory
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b>	
Participatory reflection and action	
<b>SELECTION PROCEDURES</b>	
<b>Selection of sites</b>	<b>Convenience sampling:</b> Two schools as information-rich sites
<b>Selection of participants</b>	<b>Purposeful sampling:</b> Ten female teachers (co-researchers) in school 1 and five teachers in school 2 (four female and one male). A total of 15 participants (14 females and 1 male)

<b>DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION</b>				
<b>Data generation techniques</b>		<b>Data documentation techniques</b>		
Visual PRA-based data generation techniques Focus groups Interviews Observation		Verbatim transcripts of audio recordings PRA artefacts, photographs/visual data Research journal		
<b>DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</b>				
Thematic analysis and interpretation (Charmaz, 2000) Categorical aggregation (Stakes, 2000)				
<b>QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE STUDY</b>				
<b>Credibility</b> Prolonged engagement in the field Peer debriefing Crystallisation Member checking	<b>Transferability</b> Thick descriptions Purposive sampling	<b>Dependability</b> Audit trail Code-recode strategy Crystallisation	<b>Confirmability</b> Crystallisation Reflexivity	<b>Authenticity</b> Member checking Audit trail
<b>ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>				
Expertise of the researcher, Informed consent, Safety, Confidentiality, Trust, Role of the researcher				

## 3.2 PARADIGMATIC APPROACH

For the purpose of this study, I chose the feminist standpoint paradigm, following a PRA approach.

### 3.2.1 META-THEORETICAL PARADIGM: FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY

Knowledge and knowledge creation is politically inclined as it occurs in conditions that are enmeshed in relations of power between knowers and knowledge itself (Ali, 2006; Campbell, 2004). The standpoint theory of feminism is interested in local sites of power and knowledge (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The locations of power and discourses are situated at extremities. As a result, location of power discourse includes and excludes privileges and issues of knowledge (Halbert, 2006). My interest in power relations, partnerships and feminist theory led me to investigate what might become visible if a feminist lens were applied to partnerships and power relations in PR. Feminism implies a critical understanding of women's multiple perspectives and works toward inclusion, participation, action, and social change while confronting the underlying assumptions a researcher brings into the research

process (Reid, 2004). Feminism not only focuses on a variety of particular moral and political claims, but also on ways of asking and answering questions, constructive and critical dialogue with mainstream philosophical views and methods (Haslanger, Tuana & O'Connor, 2012). Feminist inquiry thus provides a wide range of perspectives on social, cultural, economic, and political phenomena that includes topics of the body, class and work, the family, globalization, human rights, popular culture, race and racism, reproduction, science, the self, sex work, human trafficking, and sexuality (Haslanger, *et al.*, 2012). Given that multiple forms of feminism can be distinguished (Ritzer, 1992), I thus used feminist standpoint theory as a possible avenue to obtain an understanding of power dynamics and relations in PR partnership.

Feminist standpoint theory provides an approach for overcoming some of the limitations in theorising about diversity. This theory is an offshoot of the Marxist philosophy, and thus gives a systematic approach for theorising the experiences, lived contexts, and perspectives of women (Adam, Howcroft & Richardson, 2001; Harding, 2004; Haraway, 1991). Its core is premised on acknowledging societal positioning and provides a subjective standpoint from which individuals interact with themselves and perceive the world (Orbe, 1998). Feminist standpoint theory fulfils dual research objectives. As a first objective, the theory aims to premise itself on the social, political, and material contexts of women's experiences and situated knowledge (Orbe, 1998). Thereafter, the situated knowledge is used with the objective of achieving social change. However, it was possible to use the standpoint stream of feminist theory to interpret the experiences of teachers in a world where both men and women's experiences and voices can be fully represented based on their own perspectives. I should emphasise that a feminist approach aims to establish non-exploitative, collaborative relationships and to conduct research that is transformative.

A feminist standpoint can provide insight into power, knowledge and social structures (Brookfield, 2001; Jacques, 1992; Ritzer, 1992). Since power is a central concept in feminist theory, I am of the opinion that it was appropriate to rely on feminism, in my attempt to explore and understand the experiences of teachers as I unveiled issues of power relations and partnership dynamics, from the participants' own perspectives, experience and local knowledge. Feminism is believed to have conceptualised power as a resource to be (re)distributed (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). Other groups of feminism perceive power in terms of resources as domination and as empowerment, which could be exercised at individual and collective level respectively (Belenky *et al.*, 1986). I agree with

this conceptualisation, as the intention throughout the study was to investigate how teachers understand power from their standpoint as a group or individuals, either as resource to be redistributed or as a tool of empowerment.

While there are no other independent points that exist to evaluate the virtues of other standpoints, what has been referred to as legitimate knowledge is based on the lives of men in dominant status, cultures, classes and races (Allen, 1998). Collins (1990) argues that premising the construction and legitimisation of knowledge claims perpetuate and uphold unjust power systems. In most areas of studies, for example, the dominant knowledge upholds that women and other marginalised groups are outsiders, whose relations can be analysed in relation to dominant groups. I agree that no neutral field of knowledge production exists and that all knowledge production is rather influenced by standpoint in a social class. Furthermore, I agree and argue that the current way of knowledge production (typically created by the upper group in a hierarchy) is not a universally applicable framework, but one of many possible avenues for knowledge construction. Feminist standpoint theory derives its argument from the power/knowledge framework that focuses on collective experiences and histories (Heckman, 1997). The collective experiences and histories are based on common experiences in subordinate locations in relation to power hierarchies, and these common experiences lend a particular kind of sense-making to social groups (Heckman, 1997; Collins, 1990). The power and knowledge framework created is established in such a way that the activities of the dominant group (mostly men) that usually occupies the top of the stratified hierarchy organise and limit what persons in lower positions can understand about themselves and the world around them. Therefore the dominant hierarchy standpoint is usually given privileged preferential treatment by most theorists. As a result, qualities of race, class, gender, ethnicity, age and sexuality are essentials of social structure that foster inequality in groups (Haslanger, *et al.*, 2012; Collins, 1990). The compound of the qualities creates social groups and their resultant standpoints.

Many feminists want to deconstruct the power/domination relationship and suggest alternative methods for understanding relationships, based on reciprocal empowerment (Cixous, 1977; Hartsock, 1997; Held, 1993; Irigaray, 1985). A feminist way of knowing thus emphasises the relationship built, rather than the domination over others. It seeks to value multiple ways of knowing instead of privileging one over the other (Belenky *et al.*, 1986; Fletcher, 1998; Ritzer, 1992). I pay heed to this concept of using feminist epistemology of emphasising

relationships, and also pay attention to the multiple ways of knowledge construction, appreciating one's standpoint in a society.

Feminist standpoint theory emphasises the social location of the knower and the participants. As humans are engaged in dialogue, questions such as the following come to mind: *Whose lens of reference and understanding are humans concerned with? What is the situation of participants in terms of their gender, race, social class, power and margin? Through their voices, whose ideas count?* (Chambers, 1994a). Throughout the study, I formulated a method of articulating voices of participants (as reflected in my research journal, see Appendix J) as they experienced power relations, partnership, authority of knowledge and experiences of enablement.

Having said the above, I found it appropriate to utilise a feminist perspective as a tool to understand the complexity of partnerships and teachers' experiences in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the related issues of power relations, knowledge, authority, voice, and empowerment. In line with this, I selected PRA as research design. The basic assumption of PRA is that common people (everyone regardless of being a researcher) possess a rich knowledge base and are capable of generating new knowledge necessary to guide actions for their own benefit. Furthermore, PRA stresses power reversals in research, whereby 'ordinary' people are the ones who lead, do the research and come up with solutions. Power reversals are such that the idea is to help a community rediscover or create knowledge that will improve quality of life. By returning the power of knowledge generation and use to 'ordinary', often marginalised people, such knowledge could contribute to the creation of a more accurate, critical reflection of social reality, the liberation of human creative potential, and the mobilisation of human resources to solve social problems (Hall, 2009; Maguire, 1987). Feminism and PRA both emphasise relationship building based on reciprocal empowerment and the value of multiple ways of knowing.

One of the many advantages of using feminist standpoint epistemology is that it 'incorporates the Marxist idea which proposes that all social groups have different epistemological standpoints' (Ahlstrom, 2005:30). All social groups are considered equal in terms of the knowledge that they possess, regardless of their socioeconomic position. Social groups, including marginalised groups, construct their social reality. This gives them a sense of emancipation; hence, they may feel that they too are understood. The goal of this study was to allow for the creation of knowledge that is truthful from the social reality of teacher

participants. It is my belief that multiple truths do exist, based on feminist standpoint epistemology. The participants in this study were allowed to share their experiences from their own perspectives, meanings and social locations with respect to their unique ways of thinking and knowledge creation.

However, feminist standpoint theory also implies a few limitations and challenges (Stanley, 1997). Some critics question the very epistemology of feminism, in which it is critiqued for a lack of producing rational and unbiased knowledge (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). This is attributed to the concern that a researcher might bring his/her own biases. For the feminist standpoint, this problem can be countered by being reflexive about the research project (Olesen, 1998). I used reflexivity to reflect on my views, thoughts and conduct. Another critique relates to the recognition of diverse experiences from different social classes by feminist standpoint, making it hard to come up with clear accurate knowledge (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). In order to address the aforementioned challenges, I used different methods of data generation to articulate the credibility and authority of knowledge. Furthermore, my position as an African woman, pursuing her doctoral studies and with experience of being a teacher, allowed me to acquire multiple identities and be in the position to represent the social realities of teachers who participated. Additionally, it was the goal of the study to recognise diverse voices and knowledge production from the different standpoints of the participants.

As an epistemological doctrine, feminist standpoint theory is critiqued for the possibility of entailing a subjectivist approach to knowledge that privileges the experience of knowers as the source of knowledge without grappling with complex questions concerning the credibility of particular knowledge claims (Hawkesworth, 1995; Olesen, 1998). In relying upon experience as the ground of truth, feminist standpoint theory is further critiqued and there are claims that it does not do justice to the fallibility of human knowers, the multiplicity and diversity of women's experiences, and the theoretical constitution of experience (Grant, 1995; Hawkesworth, 1995). In an attempt to address this challenge I employed crystallisation, where I used multiple data sources. I also included member checking, to ensure that the participants' voices were heard.

Feminists are also challenged with ethical dilemmas, which include 'the concern for and even involvement with the participant persons' (Olesen, 1998:316). Some ethical dilemmas may arise when doing research in one's own professional culture, where roles may conflict. In this study, I had established sound rapport with the participants. They were more than willing to

participate, and at the same time I ensured that I remained reflexive, subsequently applying ethical research principles. Furthermore, I treated the participants as co-researchers, whose lives and situations were the focus of the research project. As this study was participatory, both partners discussed issues openly and in a respectful manner as a way to achieve consensus on research through a co-learning and reflexive process (Cargo & Mercer, 2008). By ensuring that I used participatory principles and practices, I was able to be politically and ethically accountable to the participants.

I believe that standpoint epistemology can provide resources that traditional epistemologies lack. Several central themes in standpoint theory may provide a comprehensive picture of how societies are structured and may thus have epistemological consequences. Knowledge and power are interconnected (Freire, 1987; Turner & Roth, 2003). Turner and Roth (2003) succinctly summarise the core themes of feminism, which I applied and adhered to as a guide in this study and the focal point of my research questions. Accordingly, I believe that what people do – what kinds of interactions they have in social relations and relations to the natural world – both enables and limits what they can know. Yet what people typically can ‘do’ ‘depends in part upon their locations in social structures – whether or not they are assigned the work of taking care of children, and of people’s bodies and the spaces they inhabit, or of administering large agencies, corporations, or research institutes’ (Turner & Roth, 2003:201).

In conclusion, and addressing the challenges associated with feminism, I relied on reflexivity as a strategy and political stance, with reflexivity serving as a powerful analytical and methodological tool enabling sensitivity to the power relations embedded in the process of research. Haney (2002:296) emphasises the results of such an approach: ‘... feminist scholars have produced new interpretations of the forms of power embedded in everyday life’. Taking a feminist stance, I was interested in empowerment and investing control over the process of the production of knowledge in the hands of the participants (teachers). This perspective is evident in this study. The power dynamics within the world of research, as well as within the research relationships and psyche, were factored into the research rationale of this study and accounted for. The potential of research as an empowering and emancipatory tool was also seriously considered.

### 3.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: PR

I used PR as methodological paradigm. I view a PR approach as a suitable paradigm since it involves inquiry based on the existential concept of experience, as proposed by Ortega-Gasset (cited in Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). PR is an umbrella term for approaches that share a core philosophy of inclusivity and that recognise the value of engaging those who are intended to be the beneficiaries, users, and stakeholders of the research (Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Israel, 2003; Green & Mercer, 2001). In broad terms, PR is defined as ‘systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education and taking action or effecting change’ (Cargo & Mercer, 2008:326).

The essence of PR is that marginalised people take the responsibility of researching problems they face in a partnership with outsiders (researchers) and take action to advance their lives and ultimately reflect on their ongoing experience (Rahman, 2008). PR projects are typically conducted with the view of a social change agenda and are based on the belief that the process of participating in constructing knowledge about one’s own context could result in equalising asymmetrical power relations that are often present in social science research (Rahman, 2008). The key element of participatory inquiry approaches is that they reduce the ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’ distinction which is common among a traditional research stance. The assumption of PR is based on the notion that integrating implicit knowledge and multiple perspectives might result in more authentic research. Equal participation of academic and non-academic partners is the ideal for many PR approaches to help partnerships balance scientific excellence with social and cultural relevance; foster ownership, capacity building, and empowerment of non-academic partners; and translate research knowledge into action. This democratic ideal emphasises the unique strengths, complementary expertise, and shared responsibilities of academic and non-academic partners who are engaged in a partnership where each contributes equally (Israel *et al.*, 1998). PR assisted me in understanding the dynamics of power relations as experienced by teachers participating in a participatory study (STAR intervention).

In PR, the conceptualisation of power stands central, as PR addresses the notion of relationships between power and knowledge. PR argues that its ‘strategies can challenge the deep rooted power inequities’ (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008:172). Power is an important element in that it allows people to construct reality, meaning and truth as perceived by the participants from their standpoint (Foucault, 1977). Gaventa and Cornwall (2008) further

argue that in PR, the goal is to reduce and maximise the multiple ways of conceptualising power and its implications to research. Assuming that knowledge is power, PR is premised on the concept of attempting to rectify power imbalances by sharing the power that is within a knowledge generation process. This implies that the role of the researcher is to form a ‘power with’ relationship with the co-researchers in a community. By virtue of this assumption that knowledge is power, PR adds a different set of social relations to the participants engaged. Participatory projects are unique and highly context-specific, and the social relations among those involved in a research project are typically complex. However, the advantage of PR for this study is that it could be used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon under investigation with the purpose of describing and understanding power and partnership in PR from the perspective of teachers (Leedy & Omrod, 2005).

Chambers (1997:45) argues that the principle of PR is to ‘recognise the importance of bringing in the voice of marginalised people’s realities as it forms part of decision-making and basis for action’. In other words, PR allows for diversity of knowledge from different social groups. Chambers (1997) further argues that bringing in participants and listening to them in a participatory process might result in new insights, priorities, problems and issues. I view this methodological paradigm as appropriate and relevant to the current study, as I truly believe that participatory methodology assisted me in uncovering dynamic complexities of power, from multiple perspectives (Boser, 2006).

A key strength of PR is the integration of researchers’ theoretical and methodological expertise with non-academic participants’ real-world knowledge and experiences into a mutually reinforcing partnership (Cargo & Mercer, 2008). The advantage of using PR further rests on two dimensions, which clearly distinguish this approach from the traditional approaches to social sciences. First, PR is people-centred as the research is informed and guided by the experiences and needs of people (Brown, 1985). In this case, people are brought together to discuss through dialogue, and talk to one another as they investigate a problem from their own standpoint. People-centredness implies that everyone’s voice is heard and that there is no relying on people of the ‘upper’ strata for action and decision-making. Praxis is equally important as it acknowledges that theory and practice cannot be separated, which makes PR value-based and explicit in its political stance (Brown, 1985). Throughout the study, the teacher participants were engaged in all forms of investigation and they were allowed to use and capitalise their power through language and meaning-making. The essence of PR is promoting the forging of partnerships, which I employed in the study as I allowed the

teacher participants to interpret content. In doing this, Sohng (1995) asserts that such partnerships will result in empowerment. Through empowerment, the teacher participants in this study were brought together to investigate a common problem as well as acknowledge their experiences as the basis for understanding and critical reflection.

PR also implies some challenges. I acknowledge the fact that traditional research as well as in participatory research has been critiqued for being gender blind and overlooking some of the differentials inherent in participatory research (Reid, 2004). Women have been largely excluded from producing dominant forms of knowledge and Maguire (1987) emphasises the distinct silence around gender and women in PR discourse, calling it the ‘androcentric filter’. While feminists researchers have attempted to address the androcentric biases inherent in PR (Reid, 2004) and embrace a call for transformational structural and personal action (Maguire, 2001), Harding (1986) argues that there is no clear strategy for achieving truly emancipatory knowledge-seeking. In order to address this challenge, I applied the guiding principles of inclusion, participation, social change, and researcher reflexivity as provided for in feminist action research frameworks. Some critics view PR as non-scientific in its methodology and particularly challenging in terms of issues such as reflexivity, transferability and rigour. The aim of this study was to gain insight into the experiences of teachers using participatory methodologies in the STAR intervention project by exploring issues of power and partnership. As such, credibility is an important aspect of this study to assure readers that the findings can be trusted in terms of the information presented and interpretations made. According to Keeves (1998:322), ‘a measure is valid if it does what it is intended to do’. I relied on the strategy of crystallisation in which I derived the sources of data from multiple methods such as focus groups, interviews and visual methods in order to view the phenomenon from various angles. I also utilised the strategy of member checking, where my interpretations of the data were taken back to the teacher participants to confirm what they have said. Furthermore, I strived to obtain trustworthiness in terms of the criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (2005), being credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. These criteria are explained in more detail in section 3.9.

The concept of empowerment in PR has been criticised for implying a paternalistic relationship between researchers and the people being researched, and ignoring the extent to which people can self-empower (Leyshon, 2002). There is a tendency to assume that power can always be transferred, that academic researchers have this intention and that participants are willing to be empowered in this way (Kitchin & Hubbard, 1999). Given the increasing use

of PR in research, ‘empowerment’ can mean empowering people to take part in the modern sector of developing societies (Henkel & Stirrat, 2001), and participatory processes may give an impression of change while serving to contain planning or stifling dissent (Pugh & Potter, 2003).

Inequalities within communities are sometimes poorly reflected by PR, as has been illustrated in various studies in the subordination of women’s voices and interests unless these are explicitly addressed (Maguire, 1987; Goebel, 1998; Guijt & Shah, 1998; Momsen, 2003). The power relations in which participants are enmeshed within their communities can make it difficult to participate fully, even where they wish to. In researching violence, for example, women may be reluctant to speak as it may jeopardise their safety (Moser & McIlwaine, 1999). In practice, academics often have the most input and retain overall control in research (Pain & Francis, 2003).

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Since I attempted to explain teachers’ experiences and perceptions of power relations and partnerships in a participatory intervention project, I view a PRA design as appropriate for the study. A PRA research design enabled me to interact with teachers by understanding and learning from them in an interactive manner.

#### **3.3.1 CONCEPTUALISING PARTICIPATORY REFLECTION AND ACTION**

Participatory reflection and action (PRA) is a methodological approach for interacting with local people in an effort to understand and learn from them (Chambers, 1994b). It involves a set of principles, a process of communication and a menu of methods for seeking local people’s participation in putting forward their points of view to make use of such learning (Chambers, 1994b). PRA is a means of collecting different kinds of data, identifying and mobilising intended groups, evoking their participation and opening ways in which intended groups can participate in decision-making, project design, execution of actions and monitoring of progress and outcomes (Chambers, 1994b; Mukherjee, 1993). Due to its participatory nature, PRA is a useful methodology to focus attention on people, their livelihoods and their inter-relationships with socio-economic and ecological factors (Chambers, 1994b; Mukherjee, 1993). To fully explore the in-depth experiences of teachers as

partners in research with particular reference to power relations, I used innovative PRA-based data generation techniques.

The philosophy of PRA is that the researcher is required to acknowledge and appreciate that the research participants possess the necessary knowledge and skills to be partners in research. I took cognisance of the fact that teachers do indeed possess the knowledge and skills to be partners in the study as they participated in getting answers to the research questions. PRA is both a methodology and change of attitude technique that combines a number of approaches to enable local or indigenous people to obtain, share, and analyse their knowledge of life and living conditions (Chambers, 1994a; Chambers 1994b). In academic research (Goebel, 1998), using PRA methodology provides a means to increase the space for participants to express and control the knowledge being created.

In this study, I believe that a PRA design allowed the participants with the necessary space to express the knowledge being created. PRA relies on visual, flexible and creative data generation methods such as venn diagramming, direct observation, and focus groups. The use of PRA lies in pursuing selected objectives through application of its principles, processes and methods. Some of the objectives of PRA are greater and better involvement of participants by learning about their perceptions, experiences and capabilities; ongoing research on the use of PRA; and suggesting improvements for this methodology (Mukherjee, 1993). In the current study, I assumed that participants could learn from their experiences, as articulated by Murkherjee (1993).

In order to fully benefit from the selected PRA design, I adhered to its guiding principles as cited by Chambers (1994b). I employed the following principles as I interacted with the participants: (1) Reversal of learning: I learnt directly from the participants, on the site and face to face, gaining insight from their local, physical, and social knowledge on issues related to teachers' experiences on power relations and partnerships; (2) They do it approach: I allowed the participants to facilitate the investigation, analysis, presentation and learning by participants themselves, for them to generate and own the outcomes and also learn, known as 'handing over the stick'; (3) Sharing of information and ideas between participants and outsider facilitators as well as between different practitioners and organisations (Chambers, 1994b). For this purpose, I engaged in a dialogue with the teachers.

A major strength of data generated by means of PRA is the possibility of rich contextual data which draws on people's own standpoint and locations (Chambers, 1994b). In this study, I used a combination of techniques drawn from PRA, which I explain in detail in section 3.5. I found PRA techniques to be suitable, as participants had the opportunity to express their experiences and ideas against the background of their own social reality and in their own terms. PRA emphasises control and definition of information by participants. For example, participants could be asked in their own language to provide drawings on how they perceived themselves as partners in research. Participants were at liberty to express themselves in their mother tongue if necessary.

Chambers (1994a) relates the success of PRA to a series of reversals, namely that of (1) frames (from etic to emic, that is, from the social standpoint or view of teachers; (2) modes (from individual to groups, from verbal to visual, from measuring to comparing); (3) relations (from reserve to rapport, creating a conducive environment where teachers could easily relate to me); and (4) power (from extracting to empowering; teachers did their own investigations and were allowed a voice) (Chambers, 1994a). As this study explored power dynamics and partnerships in PR, all series of reversals as stated by Chambers (1994a) could be observed and put into practice.

Although some scholars (Gibbon, 1999; Gibbon & Shrestha, 1998) view PRA as lacking in aggregating local knowledge to influence policy, it is used extensively in developing countries to plan, design, and implement programmes and policies that are culturally relevant, specific, and sustainable. Criticism of PRA cites its apparent lack of consideration for the complexity of rural communities (Goebel, 1998; Guijt & Shah, 1998). To some authors, problems with PRA may stem from its wide use and from scaling up without proper care, training and understanding of the methodology (Blackburn & Holland, 1998). To other authors, the challenges related to PRA concerns the methodology itself. For example, Guijt and Shah (1998), as well as Goebel (1998) argue that PRA, by emphasising public expression of knowledge and consensus, may obscure power differences and conflicting interests in the community (particularly gender-related differences), thereby contributing to the disempowerment of already disempowered groups. In response, Chambers (1994b) points out that PRA is oriented more by 'what works' than by 'why it works'. He argues that the advantage of this approach is that it is practical and related to the field, as opposed to an academic approach. In conducting the study, I agree with Chambers (1994b) that PRA is about 'what works'.

Another potential challenge of PRA is that when used in large applications it may end up becoming more extractive and losing meaning of the underlying principles of this approach. This study followed the underlying principles of PRA as articulated by Chambers (1994a), in which the foundation is the use of different types of methods and activities to collect information. I relied on PRA-activities, visual data, interviews and focus groups. Goebel (1998:41) further asserts that PRA could disadvantage people within a group, as PRA may ‘work to hide local power relations’ in which the voices of others can be silenced. In this study, the issue of ‘dissident’ views was not a problem since I allowed everyone to participate and express their opinions freely. Furthermore, I aimed to represent the views of all participants using different data generation activities.

Bevan (1999) identifies some additional challenges of PRA. The first challenge relates to little recognition of the fact that poor people are diversely embedded in unequal meso-/macroeconomic and social power structures (Bevan, 1999). In addition, many poor people are aware of their situations. In most countries there are universities with historians, social anthropologists, economists and sociologists, who often know a lot about the way poverty is mapped spatially, economically and socially within the country and about the causes and dynamics of poverty (Bevan, 1999). The STAR project uses the asset-based approach, whereby it is acknowledged that participants bring with them skills, strengths and resources. Therefore, as a researcher I aimed to learn from participants and fulfil the role of facilitator (Grinstein-Weiss, Curley & Charles, 2007; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002). Bevan’s (1999) second challenge is related to the likelihood of scanty local knowledge on the part of PRA practitioners. Bevan (1999) asserts that people will often not mention important things in public or to strangers they do not trust. In this study, the STAR project has been ongoing since 2003, and sound rapport between teachers and researchers has been established (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011; Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2010). The participants thus seemed open and an equal partnership appears to have been established (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011; Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2010).

The third problem according to Bevan (1999) can be characterised as one of moral confusion. Recognition of the prevalence of nonlinear dynamics in social life brings with it the recognition of a gap between intentions and outcomes of PRA. In conditions of uncertainty and ongoing path dependence where the actions of other actors cannot be predicted, an act committed with the best of intentions can produce the worst of outcomes and vice versa. As indicated above, the STAR intervention is formed on the assumption that teachers who are

core participants are the drivers of the intervention, where they initiate and sustain psychosocial support in their school communities (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011).

### 3.3.2 SELECTION OF RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

The ongoing STAR project has been conducted in three different regions in South Africa. For the purpose of this study, I conveniently chose (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) two of these sites (schools) to partner with teacher-cohorts. The rationale for convenience sampling is that, as explained earlier, the study forms part of a national PRA study conducted under the leadership of Ronél Ferreira and Liesel Ebersöhn (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2011, 2012). The schools that participated in this study are familiar with the project and primary research team. This enhanced accessibility based on established relationships between the school stakeholders and the research team. I thus applied convenience sampling to select an information-rich site for an in-depth study. The sites that I chose are a primary school in the Eastern Cape and a secondary school in a remote area in Mpumalanga.

As convenience sampling implies the possibility of participants not reflecting a true representation of the greater population (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), the possibility exists that the results might not be generalised to the greater population. However, it was not the aim to obtain generalisable findings, but rather to focus on the experiences of a selected group of people. However, based on the detailed descriptions I provide on the context and the research process, the findings may be transferable to other similar contexts, as judged and decided by the reader of this thesis. Photographs 3.1 and 3.2 show sites of the participating schools.



**Photograph 3.1:** School 1: 1 March, 2009



**Photograph 3.2:** School 2: 19 May, 2010

As indicated in table 3.1, I purposefully selected (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) fifteen co-researchers (teachers: fourteen females and one male) from the participating schools in the two said provinces, who have been participating in STAR since 2003/2004. Although the research sites

were thus conveniently identified, the participating teachers were purposefully selected based on the following selection criteria:

- Teachers who have participated in the STAR intervention project since its initial stage;
- Teachers who have acted as STAR facilitators in the STAR dissemination research phase;
- Teachers who are teaching at the participating schools.

Employing purposive sampling allowed me to choose participants that fit the selection criteria, from whom I could obtain relevant data in terms of the focus of the study (Silverman, 2000). Furthermore, purposive sampling allowed me with the opportunity to choose participants involved in a phenomenon or process in which I am interested (Silverman, 2000). However, a purposive sample implied certain challenges and potential limitations as the selection of participants was solely based on my criteria (researcher’s decision). Therefore, the selection can be regarded as subjective and biased (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). However, as this study contributes to the broader STAR project, I do not regard this as a limitation. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the selection and number of participants at each site.

**Table 3.2: Summary of participants at each site**

Site	Context	Number of participants	Criteria for selecting participants
Site A	Primary school: Eastern Cape, Port Elizabeth	Ten female teachers	Teachers participating in the STAR project since 2003
Site B	Secondary school: Mpumalanga, Steynsdorp	Four female teachers & one male	Teachers participating in the STAR project since 2004

### 3.4 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND ACTIVITIES

In this section I provide a detailed description of the research process of the study. The study involved four activities, spread over a period of two years (March 2009 to July 2011). Data were generated by using PRA-based activities, namely visual data techniques, focus groups, interviews, observation, field notes, member checking and a research journal. Table 3.3 provides a research schedule of the data generation process.

**Table 3.3: Summary of research process**

<b>Venue of study</b>	Respective school sites (Eastern Cape [EC] & Mpumalanga [MP] participating in STAR)			
<b>Activity of study</b>	<b>Activity 1</b>	<b>Activity 2</b>	<b>Activity 3</b>	<b>Activity 4</b>
<b>Description and purpose of activity</b>	<p>Concept clarification and visual activity.</p> <p>To find out how teachers as co-researchers experienced being part of the STAR intervention in terms of power relations and partnerships.</p>	<p>Interactive visual activity and clarification on experience of power/partnerships.</p> <p>Participants had to explain and share their own understanding and experiences of power and partnerships in STAR and how they perceived themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations.</p>	<p>Focus groups.</p> <p>To determine which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between co-researchers and researchers in a research partnership.</p>	<p>Interviews.</p> <p>To determine which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between co-researchers and researchers in a research partnership.</p>
<b>Time Frame</b>	<p>Eastern Cape March 2009 –July 2011</p> <p>Mpumalanga March 2009 – July 2011</p>			
<b>Data generation techniques</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Data documentation techniques</b>	<b>Participating teachers</b>	<b>Activity</b>
PRA-based visual activity (drawings)	To determine how teachers perceived their role in the project.	Drawings, tape-recordings, transcripts, field notes.	Ten teacher participants in EC school. Five teacher participants in MP.	Activity 1
Formal discussion sessions	Conceptualisation of the key concepts of the study (power and partnerships).	Tape-recordings, verbatim transcripts, photographs, videos.	Ten teacher participants in EC school. Five teacher participants in MP.	Activity 2
Visual activity (poster pictures)	To determine how teachers perceived themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations. To establish when the teacher participants experienced power or felt powerless through poster photographs, going through the years of participating in the project. This also addressed the research question of how power can be expressed by teachers as co-researchers within a participatory process.	Photographs, drawings, tape-recordings, transcripts, field notes.	Ten teacher participants in EC school. Five teacher participants in MP.	Activity 3

Visual activity (sun rays/ clouds)	To determine the factors that enabled or hindered power and partnerships in the project using sun rays and clouds, and also how teachers perceived themselves.	Tape-recordings, verbatim transcripts, Photographs, videos.	Ten teacher participants in EC school. Five teacher participants in MP.	Activity 4
Focus group session	To gain insight into issues of power and partnership as experienced by teachers, the challenges and the successes. To determine in which manner teachers as co-researchers could benefit from participating in an asset-based intervention. This provided an opportunity to further elaborate in detail on activities 1–3.	Tape-recordings, verbatim transcripts, photographs, videos.	Two teacher participants in each school.	Activity 5
Interviews	To augment the information gained through focus groups and to address the research question on the relations of power at play in the specific activities of STAR.	Tape-recordings, verbatim transcripts.	Three participants per school.	Activity 6

### 3.5 DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION

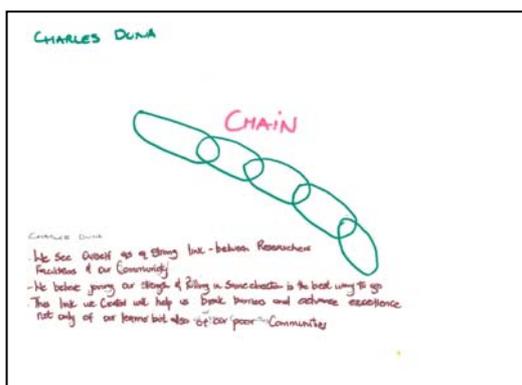
Janesick (2003) emphasises that research methods must go beyond the aim of triangulation and therefore proposes crystallisation. The concept of crystallisation allows for an infinite variety of angles. This enables a shift from seeing something as a fixed, rigid two-dimensional object towards the idea of a crystal, which allows for variety of shape, substance, transmutations, multi-dimensionality and angles of approach (Janesick, 2003). Richardson (1994:522) explains the crystallisation metaphor as follows: ‘crystals grow, change and alter, but are not amorphous... crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, though partial understanding of the topic’. Since the purpose of this study was to provide an in-depth exploration and description of teachers’ experiences as partners in a PR project in terms of power relations and partnerships, I relied on crystallisation and employed multiple data generation techniques (Creswell, 2002; Yin, 2003).

Furthermore, I utilised PRA techniques with direct participation, many of which involved visual activities as an integral part of the study. These correlate well with feminist standpoint

epistemology. My supervisors were present throughout data generation. I also consulted with my supervisors on a regular basis when doing data analysis, as explained in section 3.6.

### 3.5.1 VISUAL PRA-BASED DATA GENERATION AND DOCUMENTATION TECHNIQUES

I used visual representations in the form of drawings and photographs as one of the major sources of data generation during a seminar on ‘Partners in education research and practice: collaboration between teachers and education researchers’ (2009). I introduced myself to the teachers and reflected on the STAR project. The purpose of this visual PRA-based activity was to address the following research questions: *How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations? In which manner might teachers as co-researchers benefit from participation in an asset-based intervention.* During this session, teachers were requested to in groups draw how they viewed themselves in the STAR intervention. I provided teachers with pencils and coloured markers, for them to compile symbolic representations of their role, and experiences in the project as co-researchers. Photograph 3.3 show teachers’ perceptions about themselves in the STAR project using a PRA visual activity.



**Photograph 3.3:** Teachers’ drawing, depicting how they perceived their role as a chain that links the community, school 1: 19 March 2009

In addition to asking the participants to draw pictures that would depict how they saw themselves as co-researchers in the project, I requested them to include some narratives to accompany their drawings. Even though this activity involved all schools participating in the STAR project at the time, I only analysed the drawings of the two schools I selected for this study.

For the second data generation activity, exploring how power can be expressed by teachers as co-researchers within a participatory process, I asked the participants to divide into groups of at least three (where the group was large enough to be divided into groups), where each group had to discuss the question that I presented to them (Appendix A: video showing teachers conceptualising concepts of ‘partnerships’ and ‘power’). The purpose was to access prior knowledge on concepts which formed the core of the study, namely ‘Power’ and ‘Partnerships’. Essentially, I aimed to conceptualise meaning and understanding of the words ‘Power’ and ‘Partnerships’ as understood by the teachers. Participating teachers had to write their own meaning and understanding of these two concepts on flipchart sheets. During this conceptualisation stage, the groups had to explain their conceptualisation in terms of their own experiences and how they related their understanding to the project. Thereafter, small groups shared their power sharing partnership experiences with the rest of the teachers. Each group reported back, after which the entire team was allowed to add or elaborate, if they felt they needed to do so.

Following this discussion, another visual activity was completed, where I requested the participating teachers to use drawings to demonstrate how they perceived themselves as co-researchers in the STAR project. These drawings were supported by written narrations. This visual drawing activity was done in an attempt to address the research question on *how do teachers perceived themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations*. Photograph 3.4 depicts some writing by teachers on the PRA visual activity expressing their meanings of power and partnerships.



**Photograph 3.4:** Conceptualisation and meaning making of concepts, school 1: 18 March, 2010

In the third visual PRA-based data generation activity, teachers were requested to locate power retrospectively using visual data. I provided the teachers with photo posters of themselves participating in the STAR project dating to 2003 (Appendix B). Each photo poster had a couple of photographs showing the teachers participating in the project. Below the photographs a line was drawn with the word ‘power’ on one end and the word ‘powerless’ on the other end. I asked the teachers to indicate at each year of photograph posters to which extent they experienced power or felt powerless. Teachers used a symbolic indicator (hammer drill) on the line to indicate their experiences. Once they had indicated their location of power on the continuum line by pasting the hammer drill symbol on the line, I asked them to explain in writing below each photo poster why they had placed the indication where they did. After documenting their views, groups were requested to report back to the entire group in order to elaborate on their writing during a focus group discussion. Photographs 3.5 and 3.6 provide evidence of this activity.



**Photograph 3.5:** Photo poster to indicate power, school 1: 18 March, 2010



**Photograph 3.6:** Photo poster to indicate power, school 2, 15 November 2010

I found the use of photographs as a data generating prompt advantageous in the sense that it seemingly captured the PR process as is (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006), which allowed me to prompt the participants to remember events that happened some time ago. Since I used photograph posters that covered a period of eight years, this enabled me to provide concrete prompts. The mere fact that photographs are tangible evidence and that they attest to the fact that a certain event took place as it was captured in motion at that particular time, guided participants in reflecting on their experiences.

Another advantage of photographs is that they assisted me during the data analysis process. Through photographs, I was able to come up with themes that emerged during data generation. Furthermore, photographs did not only provide concrete evidence, they also

showed change of time as transpired in the research process and through the different times of how the STAR project advanced, making it easy for the teacher participants to capture moments of ‘power’ and ‘partnership’. The last advantage of using photographs in the study was that it demonstrated rigour in the study, as this could provide evidence of the research process.

While visual representations may depict various reflections of the meaning of a phenomenon, they may be difficult to analyse because of the rich information captured in them (Harper, 2005). As a researcher, I agree that visuals are open to multiple interpretations. As stated elsewhere, I used member checking and crystallisation to ensure that I capture the participants’ views and meanings as they were. Another potential disadvantage is that I could potentially influence the nature of drawings or visuals collected (Harper, 2005). In this study, I occasionally allowed participants to draw what they wanted to and how they wanted to depict the situation, by leaving them to their drawings. As a result, I do not believe that I influenced the participants in creating their drawings.

The fourth visual PRA-based activity of data generation focused on factors that could have enabled or hindered power and partnerships. During this interactive visual activity, I provided small groups of participating teachers with drawings of sun rays (photograph 3.7), in which teachers had to indicate factors that enabled them to experience power and that they were partners in research. This activity attempted to address the research question on *which factors that can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in a research partnership.*



**Photograph 3.7:** Using sunrays to indicate factors that enabled power and partnerships, school 2: 15 November, 2010



**Photograph 3.8:** Using clouds to indicate factors that impeded power and partnerships, school 1: 19 March, 2010

Additionally, I provided the participating teachers with drawings of clouds (photograph 3.8), requesting them to indicate factors that hindered power and partnership as they participated in the projects. After completing the sun ray and cloud visual activity, groups were requested to report back to the group and elaborate on their experience of power and partnership in the project (Appendix C). This activity was augmented by interviews with a minimum of two teachers per school.

In the last PRA activity, I facilitated a discussion on clarifying factors that had enabled or hindered power and partnerships as experienced by teachers in the STAR project. Each group and the team as a whole had the opportunity to reflect on their participation in the STAR project and report back on their experiences of being partners in a participatory project with emphasis on power relations. Furthermore, I asked additional questions during focus groups at each school, where all participating teachers formed part of the focus group. In particular, the purpose of the focus group discussions was to augment the following research question: *In which manner might teachers as co-researchers benefit from participation in an asset-based intervention?* Photograph 3.9 provides evidence of this activity.



**Photograph 3.9:** Focus group discussion to augment PRA visual activities, school 1: 19 March, 2010

‘Making a photograph is a form of thinking’ (Da Silva, 2000:4), which might work as a vehicle for promoting self-exploration, reflection, and personal discovery. Following post-positivist research, social scientists have often connected photographs, videos, drawings, paintings, and films with narrative descriptions to illuminate a society’s culture and behaviours (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Educational researchers (Richards, 1996, 1998), particularly those using qualitative methods, have expressed keen interest in using visual approaches as a form of inquiry (Banks, 2001; Emmison & Smith, 2000; Janesick, 2003;

Pink, 2001; Rose, 2003). Visual method interpretation as a form of data may provide an alternative opportunity to explain phenomena in a rich manner and interpret experiences (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

The advantage of visual representation is that it is ‘viewed as trustworthy text that can be more important than the spoken or written word’ (Pink, 2001:5). This study used feminist standpoint theory that locates local knowledge. Therefore, I believe that drawings had the potential to adequately and accurately reflect the understandings of the phenomenon from the standpoint of the participants themselves. Visuals provided an opportunity to participants to express and share their perceptions of reality (Harper, 2005). Richards (2006:38) succinctly states that ‘we rely on sensory images that present up to date information and instantaneous messages’. These messages are in the form of films and digital graphics; therefore, knowledge becomes visually constructed (Rose, 2003). As a researcher, it is my view that the drawings portrayed teachers’ perceptions of their reality and state of mind as compared to verbal definitions and descriptions (Diem-Wille, 2001).

Pink (2001) argues that the use of visual methods needs to move away from concerns with justifying visual ethnography as ‘valid’, both in itself and as a part of qualitative research, to a focus on seeing the visual as a medium through which knowledge and critiques can be created outside of text. Prosser (1997) shares the same sentiments of image-based research and states that the use of images within research is often viewed as a practice that has traditionally been seen to detract from social research as a science. In other words, visuals may be considered untrustworthy (Polkinghorne, 2005). Prosser (1997) states that it is only through the increased use of visuals within research, and discussion of this, that the disparate and fragmented instances of image-based research will be brought together and into the mainstream. In support, recent research brings the value of visual methodology to the fore, as seen in the work of Theron (2012) and Theron, Stuart and Mitchel (2011). I agree with the benefits and possibilities of visual methodology stated by authors like these, hence my choice of these data generation activities.

Another concern for visual ethnographers and anthropologists relates to the ‘realism’ which can be claimed from visual material. Traditionally, positivists have been concerned with the demonstrable objectivity of images in research. Those from an ethnographic background have been concerned with ensuring that the film and images they use convey a picture which is real, that portrays realism (or the ‘truth’) of the situation as it occurred (Ball & Smith, 1992).

With the development of digital technology, it is also increasingly easy to manipulate images, giving an impression of events that may be inaccurate (Ball & Smith, 1992). Yet, since the first visual anthropology, there has been an awareness of the implications of photographs or events captured being staged. I have addressed this potential challenge by ensuring that each picture is accompanied by a description of time and place as well as field notes and analytical observations. In addition, I relied on reflexivity and recognition of the context which produced the images (Pink, 2001).

### **3.5.2 FOCUS GROUPS**

In an attempt to obtain in-depth insight into how teachers experienced power and partnerships in the STAR project, I supported visual techniques with focus group discussions (see Appendix E for transcripts of the focus groups). Focus group interviews allowed me to obtain a range of responses and activate forgotten details of experience (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). According to Berg (2003:100), focus groups are described as ‘either guided or unguided discussions addressing a particular topic of interest or relevance to the group and I’.

Focus groups were conducted with about five teachers as a way of creating a non-threatening atmosphere. For each PRA visual activity, I included a focus group discussion. At each site I conducted a total of four focus group discussions. In the Eastern Cape, focus groups were conducted in March 2010 over a period of two days, each lasting for at least an hour. In Mpumalanga, focus groups were conducted in October 2010 over a period of two days, each lasting one to two hours. A non-threatening atmosphere was conducive for participants to speak freely and openly as they expressed their opinions and shared their views on how they had experienced power relations and partnerships in the STAR project. I ensured that the discussions remained focused and that everyone’s voice was heard and opinions expressed. I also selected conducive venues that could allow teacher participants to feel comfortable. Photographs 3.10 and 3.11 capture some of the focus groups that took place.



**Photograph 3.10:** Focus group, school 1:  
19 March, 2010



**Photograph 3.11:** Focus group, school 2:  
15 November, 2010

All focus group sessions were conducted in the various staff rooms which could be closed. Sessions were conducted at a time when most non-participating teachers did not need to utilise the staff rooms. Focus groups were conducted in a language that was understood by both parties, namely English. As I was aware of the fact that English is a second language to all of us, teacher participants were allowed to also contribute in their mother tongue languages with translations by fellow group members. I cross-checked the translations with a language expert to confirm accuracy. Sessions were attended by five participants.

The use of focus groups in this study proved to be valuable in the sense that I was able to ‘generate large quantities of material from the group in a short period of time’ (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005:903). The data gained from focus group discussions provided me with ‘powerful interpretive insights’ about the topic under discussion (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005:903). Furthermore, I was able to gain rich information about the issues of power and partnerships in greater depth due to the synergy and dynamics of the group. The study used the feminist standpoint epistemology to unravel the voice and knowledge of teacher participants on how they saw situations in their own way. I therefore agree with Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) that focus groups may reveal the dynamic and in-depth ways in which people perceive themselves in relation with one another during dialogue. Another important observation that I noted in this study was that the principles of a participatory methodology that advocates for voices of the marginalised to be heard and propagates handing over the stick, were revealed during the study. I noted democracy during the process of data generation as teacher participants experienced ownership of the research process since the whole process encouraged open dialogue interactions. By experiencing the feeling of democracy and ownership of the research process, focus groups allowed teacher participants to create a

variety of meanings, interpretations and perspectives on the topic under discussion (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005).

During focus groups, I experienced the advantage of such discussions allowing researchers to acknowledge, appreciate and understand group dynamics (Nieuwenhuis, 2007), by facilitating interaction in terms of the participants' views and experiences within a group. Focus groups provided me with the opportunity to observe how the teacher participants interacted with one another. I was able to identify how meanings and attitudes were formed among the participants and could observe non-verbal cues. I could prompt teachers to elaborate when needed (Anderson, 2002). Furthermore, I was able to identify the power relations at play among the teacher participants. Whenever I noticed that certain members were dominating the discussions (another potential challenge), I gave others the chance to express their ideas and experiences, hence allowing everyone an equal voice (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Yet in this study, I view the potential disadvantage of domination to be positive, since it could expose issues of power relations, which form part of the study. I devised the strategy of using non-verbal cues in a respectful manner to encourage everyone to participate. At times I would move the digital voice recorder to the direction of silent participants, as a cue. I was able to notice contradictions and uncertainties, and could encourage teacher participants to share more and further clarify issues. I believe that the dynamics of the groups in terms of the participants' experiences, perspectives and ideas that were shared made it possible to obtain rich, informative contributions (Berg, 2003; Litosseliti, 2003).

Power is a contested and at times sensitive issue to discuss, particularly when it is mentioned together with partnerships. This study thus focuses on issues that imply discussions of sensitive topics, in turn implying ethical challenges of confidentiality and anonymity. In this regard, I aimed to conduct the research with respect and sensitivity for all the information I obtained. The core responsibility of this study, as indicated by De Vos *et al.* (2002), was to keep the identities of the participants anonymous; therefore I made sure that I did not mislead them in any manner during the research process.

Krueger and Casey (2000) argue that at times focus groups may not be able to achieve their purpose of providing reliable data on topics that might elicit strong feelings. This may be true in instances where a discussed topic is sensitive to a particular group. However, focus groups enabled me to discuss and address a contested and sensitive topic with teacher participants

who had been collaborating with researchers. As the environment seemed conducive, participants were able to communicate and express their views freely in my presence as a doctoral student. I focused on creating sound rapport based on trust between me and the teacher participants, which made it easy for them to share their experiences and views. At the start of each discussion we established a code of conduct. Participants agreed that there ought to be respect for one another; that all should speak freely and that no one should be judged on the basis of their contributions nor be interrupted when they were speaking. Before each focus group, we had lunch together, creating an atmosphere of relaxation and trust. During lunch, I could convey the message that I was interested in more than the information to be shared at the session, that I respected the participants as individuals and that I too was comfortable with relating to them. At the end of each focus group discussion, I again spent time with the participants in general discussions, planning for future sessions.

While focus groups are good ways of generating data in qualitative research, there are some limitations when using them. I do acknowledge for example, that due to the small number of participants, the end results may not be generalised, also because meaning varies and differs across situations and contexts of human interaction. However, the study had the purpose of gaining in-depth understanding and description of issues of power and partnership in a specific participatory project (STAR) from the perspective and experience of teachers, and not to generalise the results. Generalisation was not the purpose of this study as I aimed to gain insights and knowledge on how power and partnerships were experienced by teacher participants specifically within the STAR intervention project.

Focus groups have also been critiqued for the possibility of being influenced by the voices of one or two participants. I agree that focus groups do not clearly imply a homogeneous group in terms of thoughts, views, opinions and attitudes. As a researcher who is also a trained psychologist I relied on my experience of facilitating group discussions when conducting the focus groups. I guarded against individuals dominating the discussion and allowed everyone to participate equally, since the goal was based on truly valuing the diversity of each participant's views and experiences. Another disadvantage of focus groups could be that they can become artificial, which could have an adverse impact on the quality of responses generated. While I was aware of the possibility of an artificial environment, I do not think that this potential challenge affected the study. As mentioned earlier, I established sound rapport with the teacher participants and they became very open in discussing how they felt.

I further found focus groups challenging in the sense that some participants seemingly influenced others regarding their own views and opinions. I also experienced that the participants tended to occasionally divert from the topic to address other issues that were not part of the scope of the study. I had to keep redirecting the participants to remain focused on the topic of discussion (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). Another challenge specific to qualitative research relates to participants' opinions and views being interpreted within a specific social context, implying that a research study can be viewed as biased and subjective. However, I support the statement that there is no one truth and no value-free science, as Denzin and Lincoln (2000) succinctly state.

### 3.5.3 INTERVIEWS

I conducted semi-structured interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002) (see Appendix G for transcripts) with two participants from each school. Fontana and Fray (2005:707) advocate for the importance of finding an informant who is an insider member of the group that is studied 'who is willing to be an informant and act as a guide and a translator'.

I aimed to obtain in-depth knowledge on individual participants' views on power relations as experienced during the STAR project by means of these interviews, through the lens and view of each participant (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). At its core, an interview has the purpose of understanding how the interviewee perceives the world as he/she interprets the meaning of the phenomenon described (Kvale, 1996). Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2003) affirm that an interview is a two-person conversation where the goal is to gain information that is relevant to research. In this study, I was able to take advantage of such a face-to-face dialogue, which allowed for on the spot clarification and elaboration of issues that needed to be explained further. The opportunity to probe for more details was a distinct advantage that I experienced first-hand. Through interviews, teacher participants were thus able to open up even further and convey the meaning of their experiences from their points of view (Kvale, 1996).

Another advantage of interviews is that they allow for participants' voices to describe their own construction of 'knowledge and social reality' (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87). I allowed the participants to explain their own beliefs and understanding on how they perceived power relations in the participatory intervention project. As I had already established rapport with participants prior to the interviews, they seemingly revealed deep-level information. I agree

with Holstein and Gubrium (2004) that the interviewer should use creative ways of interacting with participants based on friendly feelings and intimacy. I developed a close relationship with the participants, thereby reducing the differences between myself and the participants. I was also reflexive in creating an environment in which there was an ongoing dialogue about experiences.

I captured the detailed ‘voices’ of the participants as they described their knowledge and social reality using a tape-recorder, after obtaining their permission. The audio-recorded interviews were then transcribed (see Appendix D). The audio-recorder allowed for the permanent storage of the information ‘as is’ (verbatim), hence making the study more authentic, representing the true voice of the participants. I agree with Merriam and Simpson (1995:101) that data need to be presented ‘in the form of quotes from interviews, episodes from field observation, evidence to adequately and convincingly support your finding’. I conducted two series of interviews, each lasting about two hours. I asked questions such as *What is your understanding of power and partnership and how have you experienced power and partnership in the STAR intervention project? What are the benefits or challenges for participating in the project?* (see Appendix E for the interview schedule that guided this phase of data collection).

The use of interviews as means of data generation implies certain potential limitations. Some participants could view interviews as intrusive to their personal lives. Since I had created rapport and applied the principle of PR, where the participants and I were equal, I did not find this challenge to be a problem. Besides, I had obtained permission from the participants, who had agreed to participate on a voluntary basis. In order to ensure confidentiality, raw data was preserved, particularly during data analysis. Finally, interviews are sometimes critiqued for lacking objectivity. This research is not concerned with objectivity, as I believe that many truths exist. However, I used other data generation methods to corroborate data obtained during interviews. I was primarily focused on the intersubjective interaction, which is premised on the notion of standpoint feminist epistemology (Olesen, 1998). Even though the interviews were time-consuming, interviews served as a strategy for rigour by allowing for prolonged engagement in the field (Padgett, 1998).

#### **3.5.4 OBSERVATION**

I used observation in support of the other data generation methods. I observed all the activities and interactions of teachers during data generation, thereby becoming a participant observer

(Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Merriam, 1998). As I employed observation-as-context-of-interaction (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000), I did not rely on an observation schedule. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative researchers often become participants in the situation being observed. I used Merriam's (1998) checklist of elements to structure my observations, in terms of the physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversation, subtle factors, and participants' behaviour. Evidence of the checklist is found in entries of my field notes (see Appendix M). Additionally, in order to document a clear picture of my observations, I videotaped all activities and interactions between teachers and between them and myself. In this manner, visual data documentation methods enhanced the observations that I relied upon (Creswell, 2002). I view observation as a measure of trustworthiness, as I was able to correlate what I observed with what I had heard from the participants during PRA-based activities and discussions. I thus believe that observations assisted me in gaining insight into possible issues of power, knowledge and social structures based on the perspectives of teachers as they shared their experiences of power and partnership during their involvement in the STAR project.

The possibility of observer bias is a main critique of observational research. I acknowledge that no observation can be truly objective and that it may lead to subjectivity that could in turn jeopardise the reliability of data. Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000:693) succinctly recognise observer bias by stating that 'observational research is essentially a matter of interpersonal interaction and not a matter of objective hypothesis testing'. I acknowledge that I entered the study with my own background and worldview that could have had an impact in shaping the research inquiry and became part of the interpretation and construction of meaning. I addressed this challenge by declaring my bias in my field notes (see Appendix M) and using an audit trail from other data generation techniques to corroborate the trustworthiness of the data (Adendorff, 1996).

Another challenge with participatory observation is that participants' behaviour may change because they know that they are observed. At times, participants may become comfortable with the researcher and end up revealing information that they did not intend to disclose (Merriam, 1998). Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) warn against this and remind researchers to be mindful of such factors and find means of addressing such challenges during observation and interpretation of data. I addressed this challenge by constantly reflecting on the possibility that I could influence the participants to alter their behaviour. As a way of guarding against this, I did member checking (see Appendix H), thereby involving

participants in the process of data interpretation as a way of ensuring that their experiences and perspectives were accurately captured and reproduced (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). I also used my research journal (see Appendix J) to document my observations, thoughts and experiences as accurately as I could. My research journal was used as a tool for debriefing. Observations were documented immediately when I observed certain actions.

### **3.5.5 FIELD NOTES (RESEARCH JOURNAL) AND AUDIO/VIDEO-RECORDINGS**

I relied on field notes throughout, documenting what I observed and what transpired during the PRA-based activities. I used field notes in both the descriptive and reflective sense (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For descriptive notes, I relied on words, pictures of the setting, participants' actions and conversations that I observed. For reflective notes, I captured my own ideas, concerns and thoughts. The value of field notes lies in the fact that they supplement other data generation techniques. Additionally, field notes allowed me to document observations as accurately as possible, hence making it possible to establish context and meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

I also documented the research process by means of audio and video recordings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Both audio and video recordings added the nuances of people's voices (Ely *et al.*, 1996). I recorded all proceedings and transcribed conversations verbatim (see Appendix F) for the purpose of data analysis. Both audio and video recordings allowed me to repeatedly check any ideas against transcripts and field notes (Ely *et al.*, 1996). The use of verbatim transcripts could subsequently serve as an audit trail of the research process (Creswell, 2002; Janesick, 2003).

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis is not a onetime event, but rather a continuous process. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) view the continuous process of data analysis as a dynamic and systemic search for meaning. For data analysis, I made use of some features of Charmaz's (2000) grounded theory as well as Stakes' (2000) guidelines to inform the thematic analysis and interpretation of verbatim transcripts of focus groups and interviews, visual data and observation notes in my research journal. Thematic analysis and interpretation is a systematic inductive method for analysing and interpreting data (see Appendix I to view examples of my thematic data

analysis). This process is interactive as it takes into consideration the co-creation of knowledge and meaning by both the researcher and the participants, and attempts to obtain an interpretive understanding of participants' meaning. I engaged participants in the interpretation of data using member checking (see Appendix H).

Although thematic analysis and interpretation is an interactive, systematic process, its main challenge is that it is time-consuming. However, it provided me with a record of the research process as well as an audit trail (Anderson, 2002; Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I had large volumes of data to analyse, in the form of visual data and text. I had to make sense of the raw data in order to identify core meanings in terms of patterns, themes, subthemes, categories and interrelationships, working inductively. I was the primary data collector and analyst, with data analysis being an on-going process. I was engaged throughout the research process, giving me the advantage of gaining insight into the entire context, which helped me with interpreting the data. All the data collected and documented, were analysed and interpreted against the theoretical framework of the study (see chapter 2).

First of all I organised all data into a database (Yin, 2003) in a chronological order, after each data collection session. By organising the data in a chronological order, I was able to see the progression of the entire data set. For each site I analysed the generated data sources (i.e. each of the A to E activity outcomes/artefacts/visually documented data). Each analysis depicts the setting and participants as well as the chronology of events. Charmaz (2000) identifies important strategies for data analysis and interpretation, which I utilised. I audio/video-recorded the data generated. I had to process the generated raw data by typing, and editing transcriptions.

For the transcribed data that came from focus groups and interviews, I used the method of open coding, which is based on the phrases, paragraphs and sentences that represented the participants' perceptions on a line-by-line basis (Glaser, 1978). Some of the codes include definitions of the concepts of power and partnership perception, experiences, interaction with university researchers, and challenges encountered. These common elements in the data formed part of categorical aggregation (Stakes, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Creswell, 1998). In addition to the open codes, I made brief notes in the margins, which became the initial sorting process (Stakes, 2000). Thereafter, I coded the data in order to identify categories and themes that occurred in the data. The process of coding and categorising sharpened and enhanced my ability to ask questions about the data. Through the categories

that emerged in the data, I started to create themes based on the relationship within the categories ( Stakes, 2000).

Further subcategories were identified using the process of axial coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998:125), ‘axial coding is a way of resembling and organising data such that there are connections between categories’. Through axial coding, I was able to sort by category again to identify emerging relationships between categories (Stakes, 2000). The identified categories and themes were related back to existing literature (see chapter 2 and 5). Furthermore, the process of coding helped me to stay abreast of the unique viewpoints and realities of participants (Charmaz, 2000; Merriam, 1998).

Over and above my role as primary data analyst, I regularly consulted my research supervisors to discuss the data analysis process, particularly on issues of the codes and themes that emerged. I had the opportunity of going through the process of coding and re-coding each line of my data with the assistance of my supervisors (Charmaz, 2000). We made notes of possible themes and categories. After reaching saturation in the coding process, I finalised the themes and subthemes.

As for visual data, I utilised an inductive process of data analysis and interpretation. I coded visual data and used memo writing, by writing notes in the margin. I also used member checking to ensure accurate portrayal of the interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I followed the tenets of content analysis as proposed by Ball and Smith (1992). Since the visual data was accompanied by some text, I did a ‘line by line reading’ of text (Ryan & Bernard, 2000:780). I began by coding the data manually. Coding is a process of breaking down data sets into small chunks for easy analysis by creating categories and concepts derived from the data (Creswell, 1998). The process of coding data aided me to become more familiar with the data, and identify common patterns. As there is a relationship between the visuals and the text that accompanies it, I had to reread the units of ideas to come up with common connections. I realised that these common connections within the data had what Creswell (1998:154) calls ‘issue- relevant meaning’ for the study.

When I identified common elements, I focused on determining whether events were supported throughout the data. I also observed that there were some concepts that stood out because of their uniqueness. As categories within the documented data began to emerge, I started looking

for patterns or themes that could connect the categories. I made use of Stakes (2000) guidelines for developing categories that are thorough and insightful.

As part of all data analysis and interpretation, I formulated inclusion and exclusion indicators (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This was achieved through the process of conceptualisation, whereby I formulated working definitions of the meaning of concepts used in the study. I indicated the indicators, by stating the presence and absence of each concept. At first I indicated a set of anticipated meanings of concepts which I defined during data analysis and interpretation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Throughout the data analysis and interpretation process, I did member checking, presenting the teacher participants with preliminary findings as themes emerged, in order to allow them the opportunity to confirm if the findings represented a true reflection of what they had said, or indicating where it was necessary to elaborate (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). As the study is based on feminist standpoint epistemology, it was imperative for me to honour and include the participants' perceptions as truthfully as possible and to ensure that their voices were reflected (Hole, 2007; Sultana, 2007).

A challenge of thematic analysis and interpretation is that coding and meaning analysed from the same data might differ from one researcher to another. I attach a copy of my thematic analysis (Appendix, I), so that the reader will be able to understand where I derived the themes from (Anderson, 2002; Babbie & Mouton, 2001). However, it should be taken into consideration that humans are subjective beings and that each interpretation is therefore subjective in nature. As a result it will always be a challenge to achieve objective truth as every researcher's subjective experience of interaction adds to unique knowledge (refer to 3.9 for quality criteria of the study).

### **3.7 MY ROLE AS RESEARCHER**

The researcher plays a vital role in PR as both an active participant and interviewer, with particular emphasis on fulfilling the role of principal data collector (Maree, 2007). As a researcher, I was immersed in a 'rigorous experience' with the participants, requiring of me to be aware of any potential bias, values and personal interest that could affect my actions or interpretations of data (Maree, 2007:297). I am aware of the fact that I have my own framework of understanding the world and as a result could be subjective and biased in data interpretations. I guarded against this by constantly reflecting in my research journal on

potential factors that could influence my interpretations and meaning-making process. In my research journal (see Appendix N) I noted my thinking, and reflected on the perceived experiences of the teachers. I also used the research journal as a memory tool to describe and keep record of the research process in order to assist me in remembering events at a later stage. I thus used my research journal to document my observations, feelings and ideas during interactions with the teachers (Patton, 2002).

It is important to feminists to be attentive to the politics of knowledge production and processes of research, to be analytical and reflexive about their fieldwork and research process, to challenge pre-given categories and narratives, and to be attentive to power, knowledge and context (Moss, 2002). For feminists, being reflexive implies ‘an attempt to identify power and power relations, a theoretical take on power in research, making ethical judgments, accountability for knowledge produced’ (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002:119). Reflexivity in research thus involves reflection on the self, the process, and representation, critically examining power relations and politics in the research process, and researcher accountability in data generation and interpretation (Sultana, 2007). In this study, I continually focused on being reflexive. I agree with Sultana (2007) that a reflexive research process can open up research to more complex and nuanced understandings of issues, where boundaries between process and content can get blurred.

I believe that, taking a feminist stance in this study, allowed me to pay ongoing attention to positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge and the power relations that were inherent in the research processes in order to undertake ethical research (Sultana, 2007). I do not believe that being reflexive about one’s own positionality; rather, it allows one to reflect on how one is inserted in grids of power relations and how that may influence methods, interpretations, and knowledge production (Kobayashi, 2003; Sultana, 2007). It may further impacts on how one relates to research participants and what can/cannot be done *vis-à-vis* the research within the context of institutional, social, and political realities.

Peshkin (1988) points out that an individual's subjectivity is not something that can be removed, and is therefore something that researchers need to be aware of throughout the research process. I had to acknowledge that my values, personal views, opinions and experiences were part of the research process (Strand, 2000). While subjectivity is not altogether negative, as a researcher, I had to appreciate, realise and acknowledge the possibility thereof (Peshkin, 1988).

Therefore, as a researcher, it was imperative that I examined my own subjectivities throughout the research process and attended to my own ideas and preconceptions based on gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. I do believe that my status might have influenced the contact with the participants. My status in relation to my nationality, conducting a study in a foreign country, and my position as a graduate student might have influenced how the teachers viewed me and my role. My language background could also have affected the interactions with the teachers. I come from a country where I speak Setswana, and the majority of participants spoke Xhosa and SiSwati. Although the participating teachers spoke and understood English, there were possibly times when the participants were more comfortable in expressing themselves in their mother tongue. The contextual use of a language could thus have been a barrier, as English is used in many countries with each country having its own version of English. I aimed to address these challenges by means of continuous reflections, a constant awareness and debriefing sessions with my supervisors.

Stakes (2000) warns that researchers should not compromise the needs or interests and situations of participants. As a researcher, my role was to collect data, in a manner that adhered to the ethical guidelines described in section 3.8. Another important aspect of PR is the recognition of emic (insider) explanations and epic (diverse voices of participants) contributions in the research process (Creswell, 1998). The diverse voices of participants, bringing in their values, beliefs, views and understandings of reality, posed a challenge. As such, I attempted to understand and interpret the participants' views and values, while being mindful of the fact that I have my own views, values and understanding of the world. To attend to this dilemma, I tried to borrow from the concept of empathic identification (Schwandt, 1994), trying to put my own values and beliefs aside. According to the emic approach, learning does not imply an imposition of outside views but is built locally. In addition, I also reflected on the perceived experiences of the teachers and the views they shared. I used field notes to describe and record the research process, which served as a memory tool, to help me remember events at a later stage.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Power functions at different levels, both implicitly and explicitly (Alldred, 1998). This has particular resonance for my research, which is primarily based on the theme of power. Alldred (1998) describes the multi-layered power relations present in research as follows:

Researchers' power can be conceptualised as operating through multiple levels: through the hegemonic cultural perspective contained within the language we (must) use; through the subject positions we take up and are positioned within (including our deliberate claims to researcher positions); and through our particular individual relationships with participants and to our field of inquiry (Alldred, 1998:162).

There are challenges with making judgments about ethical behaviour in research, and the codified ethics in government and institutional 'regulatory regimes' of review boards (IRBs) (Boser, 2006; Israel & Hay, 2006). One of the goals of PR is to include the participants (often called 'subjects' in conventional or traditional social research) in the design, analysis, interpretation, and subsequent applications of the research (Boser, 2006; Kindon, 2005). PR seeks social change, or social action, as the name suggests. The degree of participant involvement at each stage of PR varies with the goals of the project and the researcher. PR recognises power relations within the research process, and seeks to empower social groups who may be marginalised within society and especially in social research (Kindon, 2005).

PR does not see the researcher as able to 'give' power to participants per se, but views research as inherently power-laden, needing negotiation between researchers and participants (Kindon, 2005). PR demands that the researcher take on political causes or stances that reflect the needs and goals of research participants. By working to interrupt power relations and to change them, PR brings an explicitly normative component to the research process. Interpretations of what is 'right' in research will inevitably be subject to considerable debate, however. Such controversy extends to how to work within, or challenge, bureaucratic norms that seek to ensure ethical practices in research (Hay, 1998). The simplest and broadest meaning of ethics is that it 'is a branch of philosophy and theology...' Ethics is the study of 'right behaviour' (Singleton & Straits, 2005:515). Applying ethics to research, then, involves determining what is the 'right' research approach for a given project. Drawing on Reese and Fremouw (1984), Singleton and Straits (2005:515) identify three distinct areas of research ethics: 'data generation and analysis... treatment of participants, and... responsibility to society'.

Focusing on human subjects, Hay (1998:40:41) suggests that three principles guide most human subject committees in their evaluation of research projects: 'justice, beneficence, and respect'. These echo the 1979 Belmont Report of the United States National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, U.S., 1979). The central conflict between bureaucratised ethics

and PR philosophies is that the former conceptualise research participants as ‘subjects’ who face potential harm and exploitation in the research process (Kindon, 2005). PR, however, seeks to redefine the researcher-subject model, conceptualising research as a collaborative, negotiated process in which the direction and benefits of the research are as much a product of the participants’ involvement as the researcher’s (Kindon, 2005; Kitchin & Hubbard, 1999). Understanding the origins and frameworks of the regulatory regime, however, may offer means to challenge those frameworks, creating a more active and empowering model of participant and researcher subjectivity.

What is understood as ethical PR has been strongly influenced by debates around feminist methodology (Sultana, 2007). These debates are on issues of reflexivity, positionality, difference and representation (McDowell, 1994; Nast, 1994; Staeheli & Lawson, 1994) and several scholars have debated at length how to undertake reflexive research while still engaging in material and political struggles that have meaning and relevance (Mounts, 2002; Nagar, 2002; Raju, 2002; Staeheli & Nagar, 2002). Many feminist methodologies emphasise non-hierarchical interactions, understanding, and mutual learning, where close attention is paid to how the research questions and methods of data generation may be embedded in unequal power relations between the researcher and research participants (Bondi, 2003; Moss, 2002).

Drawing from my own research experience in the STAR intervention project and based on insights from feminist scholarship, I argue that ethical research is produced through negotiated spaces and practices of reflexivity that is critical about issues of positionality and power relations at multiple scales. It is broadly proposed that quality research implies an ethical piece of work (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillion, 2003). Throughout this research study, I abided to the ethical guidelines stipulated by the University of Pretoria’s ethics committee. Principles relating to ethics include respect for the rights of the participants, participants not being exposed to harm, and voluntary participation. I adhered to all these principles of research ethics in relation to the participants’ rights (Welman *et al.*, 2005).

### **3.8.1 INFORMED CONSENT AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Drawing from my research experience and insights gained, I believe that informed consent and confidentiality cannot be assured in PR in the same manner as in conventional research (Boser, 2006). This argument is based on the rationale that participants cannot always give

informed consent to research activities up front, because the scope of the process of the research is not determined in advance by one individual (Boser, 2006). Instead, the practice in PR is that research activities are negotiated by participants at each stage of the research cycle; hence participants will have a voice in determining what these research processes will entail.

Nevertheless, I obtained ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria's ethics committee that allowed me the right of passage and permission to enter the research field (Appendix K). All participants were requested to participate of their own free will (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). In order to respect their rights, I explained informed consent to them and requested them to sign consent forms (Appendix L). I explained the nature of the study, their role in the study and what they would be expected to do. I also informed the participants that all discussions would be recorded, obtaining their consent to do so.

Participants were furthermore informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished to do so. I also explained the possible consequences of participation in the study.

### **3.8.2 PROTECTION FROM HARM**

Sarantakos (2005) states that researchers should not expose participants to physical, psychological or legal harm. Throughout the research study process, particularly during data generation, I ensured that participants were not subjected to unnecessary stress or embarrassment. I remained aware of the possibility that participants might be affected by data analysis and the reporting process, particularly during member checking. There is a possibility that participants may identify themselves in the way that a researcher reports on a study. This issue did not affect me since the participants were eager to know the outcome of the results and embraced their participation in the study, which seemingly resulted in them experiencing feelings of empowerment.

### **3.8.3 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

Participants were informed of their right to confidentiality and anonymity, including respect for the data obtained. In this study, participants expressed the desire not to be anonymous because they felt that the PR project was a platform to bring about social change, through which they could share experiences with the community. In this study, participants openly shared their experiences and views on issues of power relations and partnerships. At times

they also divulged sensitive information. Mouton (2001) mentions the so-called epistemic imperative, which refers to the moral commitment researchers are expected to make, while in search of truth and knowledge. In order to respect the views of the participants, I treated information with the utmost confidentiality. However, in PR, confidentiality cannot be assured, since a discrete, distant researcher does not gather all data and assume responsibility for removing identifying information before releasing findings (Boser, 2006). I am aware that multiple individuals in the context may have access to the data, thereby implying that even when publicly disclosed information removes specific identifying information, the location of such projects within local contexts often renders anonymity unlikely (Boser, 2006).

I stored all data safely and did not expose any of the participants' names or locations. Additionally, participants were assured of issues of privacy and anonymity, as well as their obligation to respect the confidentiality of any information shared by others during the study. I changed the real names of participants to pseudonyms in raw data. I argue that ethical guidelines that are stipulated by most research institutions are often inadequate for meeting the ethical needs present in PR which is democratically intended research. However, PR by its nature is inherently ethical because it is a normative, dialectic process with a democratising intent. This position is supported by feminist standpoint epistemology (Boser, 2006; Stringer, 1996).

#### **3.8.4 TRUST**

The goal of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of participants in partnership. Therefore, I aimed to establish an environment where participants could share their views without hesitation. In order to maintain rapport, I applied the principle of trust and respect of privacy with the participants throughout the research process. I ensured that I created positive and warm relationships with the participants. Participants were also not misled in any manner (Mouton, 2001).

#### **3.9 QUALITY CRITERIA OF THE STUDY**

Rigour in qualitative research assumes that research findings accurately reflect 'an external objective world' (Essy, 2002:51). I aimed to enhance trustworthiness in this study in terms of how I interacted, facilitated and applied PRA principles. I also continually observed all the processes and interactions, and made adjustments where needed. I strived to meet the quality criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (2005), as discussed below.

### 3.9.1 CREDIBILITY

Polit and Beck (2008:751) define credibility as ‘a criterion for evaluating integrity and quality in qualitative research’. Credibility is equated to internal validity in quantitative research. It should be noted that in qualitative inquiry, participants typically reveal multiple and changing realities and that participants will always have unique ways of constructing reality (Merriam, 2002). Therefore, the comprehension obtained is a researcher’s interpretation of participants’ experiences of the phenomenon being studied. In this study, I believe that the data interpretations, observations as well as conclusions drawn are a true reflection of the raw data, which in turn is supported by the perceptions of the participants. Credibility is concerned with the extent to which findings are true reflections of the ‘truth’.

Credibility is thus concerned with professional integrity, methodological capability and rigour (Lincoln & Guba, 2005; Seale, 2000). Throughout the research process, I attempted to maintain credibility by representing the perspectives and experiences of participants as holistic as possible. I employed several strategies in order to meet these criteria.

First of all, during data generation, I employed the strategy of prolonged and extensive engagement in the field. Data generation was done over a period of two years (March 2009 to July 2011) during more than six field visits. The prolonged visits were augmented with the utilisation of observation and field notes, which helped me to continually reflect on the study in order to make decisions that were appropriate to the research. Furthermore, I used field notes to give a detailed account and description of the research context and environment and of my own feelings, experiences, assumptions and biases about the research. In an attempt to improve credibility, I provided in-depth, rich and thick descriptions of the environment, participants and the entire research process. I therefore believe that, by virtue of providing rich and thick descriptions, it may be possible that the findings of the study could be used in other communities of similar context.

Peer review and debriefing were utilised in this study, whereby both the supervisors and co-researchers were allowed to comment and review through the process of data generation, analysis and interpretation. Another strategy that I used was that of providing an audit trail, where I have included some samples and evidence of the field notes, design of a transparent process of coding, raw data, data analysis, and interpretations. The whole process of an audit trail allows other readers to have access to a transparent process and gain a clear understanding of the study.

I relied on crystallisation, in order to obtain multiple perspectives about the phenomenon under study as a way of obtaining layered multiple meanings from various data sources. I subsequently used member checking to enhance the accuracy of the interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As themes emerged during my data analysis, I went back to the teacher participants to verify that the themes were a true reflection of what they had said. The process of member checking allowed the participants an opportunity to reflect on the credibility of the account of their perceptions. As part of this process, I furthermore employed the validity strategy of disconfirming evidence (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **3.9.2 TRANSFERABILITY**

The ability to generalise data and transfer the findings to other research settings is regarded as transferability, which is the equivalent of external validity in quantitative research (Polit & Hungler, 1995). In the natural sciences, research is concerned with the extent to which the findings can be generalised to the general population. However, in qualitative inquiry, the aim is not to generalise but rather to transfer the findings to other research sites and settings (Merriam, 2002).

In this study, I presented a thorough, detailed, rich, thick description of the research process. I also made use of video-recordings and photographs, as background of the study and a way to show the physical setting and content of each research site. I hope that these strategies will allow readers of the study to be able to determine the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts. It is not the intention of this study to generalise. My argument is premised on the notion that the study applied PRA principles, and that each setting is unique and different from others, having its own unique resources, challenges and preferences. Findings from one community can therefore not merely be transferred to other communities (Mukherjee, 1993). While some researchers may experience the need to use these findings and transfer them to other settings, such a decision lies with the reader who will be in the position to determine if findings can be transferred to other settings or not.

### **3.9.3 DEPENDABILITY**

The equivalent of dependability in quantitative research is reliability. Dependability therefore attempts to answer the following questions: *Are the results consistent with the data collected? Can the same study be replicated and yield the same results?* (Merriam, 2002:125). This study dealt with human beings, who shared their experiences by interpreting their own

experiences and views of the phenomenon under study. I thus dealt with human beings, where human behaviour is not static, but keeps changing as people adapt to new situations. Furthermore, the study used principles of PRA, characterised by diverse creative interaction during data generation.

Hence, attempting to replicate the study and ultimately get the same results may be a challenge because the outcome of other studies will be different. In an attempt to obtain similar findings (dependability), should the same study be conducted with the same participants and in the same location, I used an audit trail (Creswell, 2002), where I provide a detailed account of the methods, procedures and decision points in carrying out the study. All data collected were audio-recorded and video-recorded and the use of verbatim transcripts as well as a field journal added to the depth and rigour of the study. This auditing process assisted me in producing a trusted report and a true reflection of the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2000).

#### **3.9.4 CONFIRMABILITY**

Ladkin (2005:110) asks: ‘Is it possible that subjectivity can lead to knowledge which might be valid outside of one’s unique subjective experience?’ The concern for objectivity versus subjectivity is a concern in qualitative research (Ladkin, 2005; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Therefore, confirmability is concerned with the possibility of the findings and interpretations being confirmed, reflecting the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher.

I used crystallisation to reduce the potential effect of bias and enhance confirmability. Miles and Huberman (1994) consider a key criterion for confirmability as the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions. I acknowledge the possibility of my own bias, as my values might have had an effect on the way in which I interpreted data. However, in order to guard against biasness, I employed reflective commentary, in a field journal. In order to acknowledge my own bias, I involved others throughout my study, particularly when I involved participants during data analysis and interpretation. I reflected my preliminary interpretations to the participants to gain their views and further elaboration. I engaged my supervisors to check and ensure that my interpretations and conclusions were supported by the data. Moreover, I included an audit trail which allowed me to trace the course of the research step-by-step *via* the decisions made and procedures described (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

### **3.9.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Authenticity refers to the true description of people, events and places. Authenticity within qualitative research therefore indicates whether descriptions and explanations correlate with each other. It refers to the degree to which different points of views are fairly and equally represented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Spencer *et al.*, 2003). In qualitative research, authenticity is assessed in terms of fairness and implies catalytic, ontological and tactical authenticity.

The goal of this study was to use participatory methods to accurately describe a social phenomenon in such a way that the description correlates with and was a representation of the participants' views. I attempted to achieve authenticity by using a range of different perspectives (realities) as well as reporting on contradictions and conflicting values, as a result addressing fairness. In order to enhance the authenticity of the research, I asked the participating teachers to verify the identified themes for authenticity and make sure that their perceptions were understood correctly and are accurately captured and reported, hence enhancing ontological authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To this end, I used member checking and an audit trail.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the research methodology and strategies that I employed, which I explained and justified. I further explained my choice of paradigmatic assumptions, including the metatheoretical and methodological paradigm of the study. In this chapter I thus explained the research process and different strategies I employed. I also justified the use of a PRA research design and explained my choice of the selected place and participants. Thereafter, I explained the process of data generation analysis and interpretation. I concluded the chapter by explaining the quality criteria and ethical considerations of the study.

In chapter 4, I present the results in terms of the three themes that emerged. I authenticate, substantiate and enrich the results by means of participants' verbatim quotations, visual data and entries from my research journal.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3 I focused on the research methodology and strategies that I used in the study. I conducted research over a period of two years in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. I justified the choice of my research design and other methodological strategies by explaining why I found these to be suitable for addressing the research questions and purpose of the study.

The focus of chapter 4 is to report on the results of the study. I present the results in terms of three themes that emerged during thematic analysis, namely:

- The nature of power in participatory partnerships
- The role of agency in relation to power and partnerships
- Participants’ understanding and meaning-making of power and partnerships.

Before discussing the various themes, I summarise the inclusion and exclusion indicators I used to identify themes, subthemes and categories. Each theme is then explained in detail, authenticated and enriched with participants’ verbatim quotations from focus groups, interviews, visual data and extracts from my research journal. As an introduction, Table 4.1 provides an overview of the three identified themes, subthemes and categories.

**Table 4.1: Summary of themes, subthemes and categories**

<b>THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>Subtheme 1.1: Characteristics of power</b>	Leadership
	Decision-making
	Empowerment
	Achieving personal goals
	Appropriating (owning) power
	Trust

<b>THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>Subtheme 1.2: Factors impeding power and partnerships</b>	Time constraints
	Lack of commitment
	Work overload
	Limited confidence
	Lack of role clarification
<b>Subtheme 1.3: Power dynamics</b>	Trust and confidence
	Knowledge brings ability
<b>THEME 2: PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>Subtheme 2.1: Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships</b>	University researchers
	Peers
	Wider community
<b>Subtheme 2.2: Establishing an enabling environment</b>	Local level enablement
	National level enablement
<b>THEME 3: THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP</b>	
<b>Subtheme 3.1: Agency</b>	Capacity to empower others
	Capacity for leadership
	Taking action
<b>Subtheme 3.2: Participants as agents of social transformation</b>	Transferring knowledge
	Mobilising resources
	Creating community networks

#### **4.2 THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS**

The first theme I identified in the data relates to participants' expressing the factors that influenced power and partnership in a participatory project. Participants seemed to believe that in order to experience a sense of power and partnership, some factors could promote such feelings in a power-sharing participatory project. This theme focuses on data that reflected and addressed three research questions: (1) How do teachers conceptualise power and partnerships in participatory partnership? (2) What are the relations of power at play in the specific activities of the STAR intervention? and (3) Which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in a research partnership? The theme is supported by subthemes related to the nature of power in participatory partnerships, namely 1) the characteristics of power, 2) factors influencing

power and partnerships, and 3) movement or shift of power. Table 4.2 summarises this theme and the related subthemes and categories, in terms of the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion indicators for Theme 1**

<b>THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
<b>Subthemes and categories</b>	<b>Inclusion indicators</b>	<b>Exclusion indicators</b>
<b>Subtheme 1.1: Characteristics of power</b>	This subtheme includes educators' definitions and characteristics of what power entails in a participatory partnership project. These characteristics of power are provision of leadership, decision-making, empowerment, achieving personal goals, appropriating (owning) power and trust.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Leadership	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as providing leadership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to the provision of leadership as a characteristic of power.
<b>Category 2:</b> Decision-making	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as being able to make decisions.	This category excludes references that do not refer to being able to make decisions as a characteristic of power.
<b>Category 3:</b> Empowerment	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as empowering others.	This category excludes references that do not refer to as empowering others as a characteristic of power.
<b>Category 4:</b> Achieving personal goals	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as being in a position to achieve personal goals.	This category excludes references that do not refer to as being in a position to achieve personal goals as a characteristic of power.
<b>Category 5:</b> Appropriating (owning) power	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as owning and having power.	This category excludes references that do not refer to as owning and having power as a characteristic of power.
<b>Category 6:</b> Trust	This category includes data related to participants' definition and characteristics of power as having trust.	This category excludes references that do not refer to the provision of having trust as a characteristic of power.
<b>Subtheme 1.2: Factors impeding power and partnerships</b>	This subtheme includes educators' nature of power in PR in terms of factors impeding power and partnerships. The factors that impede power and partnerships are time constraints, lack of commitment, work overload, lack of confidence and lack of role clarity.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Time constraints	This category includes data related to time constraints as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to time constraints as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
<b>Category 2:</b> Lack of commitment	This category includes data related to lack of commitment as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to lack of commitment as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
<b>Category 3:</b> Work overload	This category includes data related to work overload as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to work overload as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.

<b>THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
<b>Subthemes and categories</b>	<b>Inclusion indicators</b>	<b>Exclusion indicators</b>
<b>Category 4:</b> Limited confidence	This category includes data related to lack of confidence as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to lack of confidence as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
<b>Category 5:</b> Lack of role clarification	This category includes data related to lack of role clarification as a factor that impedes power and partnership.	This category excludes references that do not refer to lack of role clarification as a factor that impedes power and partnerships.
<b>Subtheme 1.3: Power dynamics</b>	This subtheme includes participants' experiences of the changes they underwent as they participated in the project, being the shift from a lack of trust and low self-confidence to ultimately reaching a stage of achieving trust and confidence. Participants also experienced power from having limited knowledge and being uncertain to ultimately experiencing a stage where they were knowledgeable.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Trust and confidence	This category includes data related to participants' shift of power from lack of trust and low self-confidence to achieving trust and confidence.	This category excludes references that do not refer to participants' shift of power from lack of trust and low self-confidence to achieving trust and confidence.
<b>Category 2:</b> Knowledge brings ability	This category includes data related to participants' shift of power from limited knowledge and uncertainty to a stage of being knowledgeable.	This category excludes references that do not refer to participants' shift of power from limited knowledge and uncertainty to a stage of being knowledgeable.

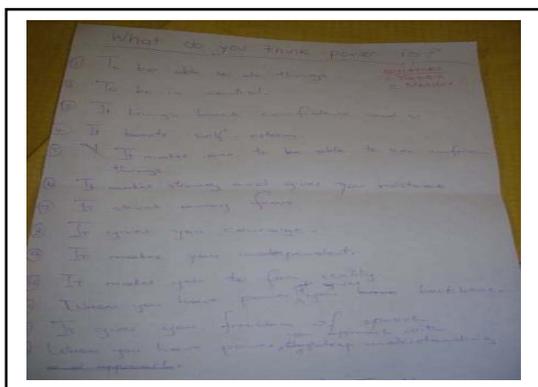
#### **4.2.1 SUBTHEME 1.1: CHARACTERISTICS OF POWER**

Participants seemingly defined and understood the concept and meaning of power in terms of a few descriptive characteristics. Participants reported that the nature of power in participatory partnerships could be understood by referring to activities that allowed them to act and be in charge of the project, hence allowing them to experience ownership of the project. Participants reported that various experiences in the PR project enabled them to explain and define power. This subtheme was common among all participants from both schools. The subtheme is supported by categories that are in line with descriptive words of power, namely a) leadership, b) decision-making, c) empowerment, d) achieving personal goals, e) appropriating (owning) power, and f) trust.

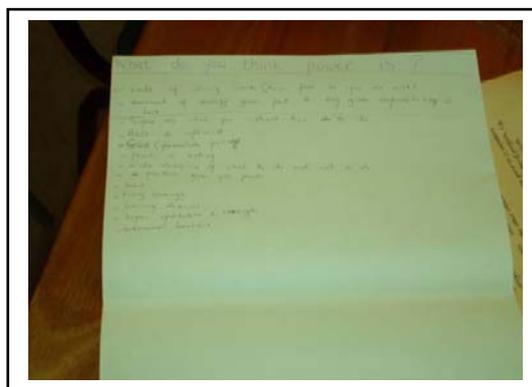
The following extract from my research journal attests to the evidence that power is a contested concept and that its definition will thus vary depending on context:

*Characteristics of power indeed will always vary depending on your stand point...all these words are positive and very inclusive of other parties... I think my choice of using feminist standpoint as my epistemology is good.... from where you stand, only your lens could show you how the world operates... power contested but its meaning and understanding will come from your standpoint and experience of how the world is or ought to be (Research Journal, 1 February 2011).*

In support, photographs 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate PRA visual images portraying participants' view of the meaning and understanding of the concept of power.



**Photograph 4.1:** Conceptualisation of the concept 'power', school 1: 18 March 2010



**Photograph 4.2:** Conceptualisation of the concept 'power', school 2: 15 November 2010

#### 4.2.1.1 Category A: Leadership

Participants reported that they experienced power by taking initiative, implementing actions and empowering others. The following extracts illustrate this statement:

*We were taking lead, mentoring others. Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard, and we decided on the project. We picked the area (activities to do within the project) and we divided ourselves in activities. We instructed them on what to do, even now people are living out of what we showed them (School 2, MP<sup>2</sup>: focus group and PRA visual activity on conceptualisation of power, p. 5).*

*Being able and capacity to lead, motivate, and persuade people in order to develop a person, community, country and world. If you have power, you become a leader who can reason (not boss) (School 1, EC<sup>3</sup>: PRA visual activity on conceptualisation of power, p. 17).*

<sup>2</sup> MP = Mpumalanga

<sup>3</sup> EC = Eastern Cape

#### 4.2.1.2 Category B: Decision-making

For participants, their definition and the character of power entailed the ability to make independent decisions. Participants reported experienced power due to their ability to decide on what they wanted to do, live their dreams and achieve their vision for the project. To be in a position to decide and have a say, is what seemingly constituted power for them. Evidence to support this reported characteristic of power is shown in the following extracts:

*What you think power is? Power is knowledge of knowing. How do you do it? You have to plan, when you have power you organise, take responsibility and must delegate, discuss and analyse. How? With power you must create better living and be passionate and pass it on to community-nation and country and the world. Where? Power starts within yourself and then empowers your environment, community, and nation. You have power you work with those around you* (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 14).

*We were acting because we sat with primary school participants and explained what we were doing and why we decided they should join... we the participants decided on what to do on the project* (School 2, MP: photo poster activity, p. 5).

#### 4.2.1.3 Category C: Empowerment

Participants indicated that for them, power was about being in a position to share knowledge and reaching out to others, hence empowering others. Participants were seemingly empowered by the researchers as well as by extending what they had gained to others to benefit others and ultimately facilitate social change in communities. Evidence to support empowerment as a characteristic of power can be found in the following data:

*The university researchers mentored us and we were able to lead the community member and lead them* (School 2, MP: photo poster activity & formal discussion, p. 7).

*You enlightened us. Thank you guys, we are now learners in the community of (xxx municipality), have gone far now. After informative meeting, we felt confident about issues affecting us for a long time* (School 1, EC: photo poster activity, visual sun ray activity and focus group, p. 12).

#### 4.2.1.4 Category D: Achieving personal goals

Participants reported that through their experience of being part of the project they realised their dreams and lived up to achieving their goals, which formed part of their set vision. Through achieving personal goals, participants indicated that they were able to gain power which could lead to transformative social change. Evidence in support of this characteristic of power is demonstrated by the following formal verbatim extracts:

*Power starts within yourself and then empowers your environment, community, and nation. You have power you work with those around you* (School 1, EC: sun ray activity and focus group, p. 14).

*Oh, dreams did come true we wanted to have a garden and we were able to have a garden... that is achieving dreams.... we acted according to what we wanted to do* (School 2, MP: photo poster activity, p. 7).

#### 4.2.1.5 Category E: Appropriating (owning) power

Participants remarked that the process of appropriating power was being able to soldier on, achieving their goals, creating more networks, and contributing to social transformation. They were further able to share and exchange experiences with other stakeholders. In this way, spaces of participation were created, enabling participants to appropriate power. This seemed to be the quintessential characteristic of participants' conception of power. The following verbatim extracts demonstrate this perception and experience:

*We are now facilitators in this project-oh, wow greatest power we have ...we felt power through these activities. We had more power, we adopted two schools* (School 1, EC: photo poster activity and focus group, p. 15).

*Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard* (School 2, MP: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 5).

#### 4.2.1.6 Category F: Trust

Participants emphasised the importance of establishing and building loyalty, in order to achieve common goals in participatory partnerships. To them, this was based on trust and respect (teachers and researchers). In the participants' view, trust added to equitable and

mutually beneficial power-sharing partnerships. Participants further indicated that trust could ensure that power-sharing partnerships result in continuous flexibility, thus strengthening community capacity. Trust reportedly allowed for an opportunity to create spaces for participation that was co-empowering and resulted in a sense of ownership in the project. Evidence in support of the characteristic of trust is shown in the following excerpts:

*That is when we felt more powerful and trusting them.....the bond began to be stronger* (School 1, EC: visual PRA activity, photo poster activity and formal discussion, p. 20).

*OK, trust was very, very strong* (School 2, MP: clouds activity and focus group, p. 5).

#### **4.2.2 SUBTHEME 1.2: FACTORS IMPEDING POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Participants reported that the nature of power in participatory partnerships could be understood by referring to stumbling blocks and challenges that might result in poor execution of the project. Participants reported that various factors in the PR project could impede the nature of power and partnerships, namely a) time constraints, b) lack of commitment, c) work overload, d) lack of confidence, and e) lack of role clarity.

##### **4.2.2.1 Category A: Time constraints**

Participants reported that certain factors such as time constraints could be an impeding factor for experiencing positive partnerships and gaining power. Time is a critical element of management in terms of achieving one's goals and objectives. Participants reported that they had to split their already tight time allowance to include the activities of the STAR project. Additionally, participants reported that they had to use time over weekends in order to cater for the needs of the project, which were usually scheduled for family time. The following verbatim extracts support these perceptions:

*Okay, a major barrier is time. We have to teach and also attend to learners and use weekend time for family to attend to programme activities. It's a lot of work, but we love it* (School 1, EC: photo poster activity, PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 12).

*As a group, we do share ideas, but the problem is we don't have enough time. Time is not on our side. We have to use our family time to do activities* (School 2, EC: photo poster activity, PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 9).

#### **4.2.2.2 Category B: Lack of commitment**

Another impeding factor that participants shared was lack of commitment to the project. Participants reported that some colleagues (fellow participants) were not committed to the project and were not showing willingness to attend to project meetings or stick to agreed activities. This could result in delays in executing the agreed activities. Evidence to support this reported impeding factor is shown in the following extracts:

*A problem is when educators do not show up for appointments or do the things they are supposed to do* (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 17).

*At times, some of us do not attend meetings as agreed and they only want to be part of travelling to different places that the university researchers usually invite us to* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 9).

#### **4.2.2.3 Category C: Work overload**

Participants indicated that fear of work overload was an impeding factor for power and partnerships, which could potentially jeopardise participants' performance in both the project and at school. Participants indicated that they were already overwhelmed with teaching and attending to extracurricular school activities. Including STAR project activities in their workload therefore posed a challenge. The following verbatim extracts demonstrate this perception and experience:

*We had fear of our teaching and extracurricular activities to be disturbed by additional work from the project. How will we do all these?* (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 19).

*We had to use more time to do activities, which at times increased our workload* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 11).

#### **4.2.2.4 Category D: Limited self-confidence**

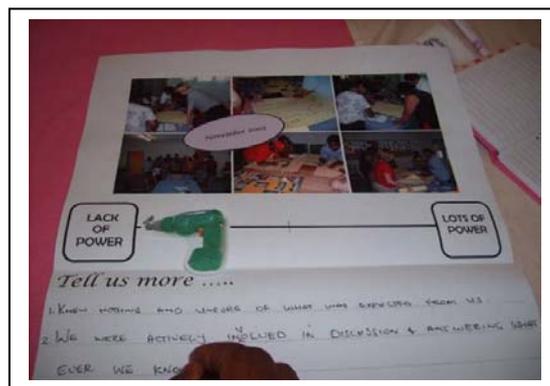
Participants furthermore reported that self-doubt and lack of confidence could be obstacles to experiencing power. Participants indicated that initially, that is at the beginning of the STAR project, they were uncertain about what they were expected to do by the researchers, thus doubting their capability. This perception is illustrated in the following excerpts:

*Ooh, ooh, we had to make presentations in the large groups. It was a scary feeling, especially if you are not aaahh, used to present in a big group. First for me I was scared, meeting different people from different provinces - yaah I was scared, you power feel challenged... I think here 2008 we were a big group. Ja, u know, when you are in a big group it's not the same as in your small comfort groups where you are able to influence - But in a big group there are challenges. Sometimes you want to present, but are afraid that you will be asked questions left right centre... you know, I am thinking of of of — not being confident. It's a challenge- you you think what I will be saying to a group. You are afraid not being able to answer questions that you might be asked: what will people say when you speak - will I be able to give correct answers? (School 2, MP: photo poster activity, PRA visual activity and formal discussion, p. 8).*

*Ja, you know prior to the project I was reserved, a bit conservative, kept to myself, I had lots of thought but kept them to myself (School 1, EC: photo poster activity and formal discussion, p. 12).*

#### 4.2.2.5 Category E: Lack of role clarity

Participants reported that they were initially unsure of their roles and expectations in the project. The latter plausibly indicate initial mistrust and confusion on the side of participants, which could signify impeding factors in PR partnership. Photograph 4.3 illustrates the use of a photo poster through which participants indicated their lack of power as a result of limited role clarification.



**Photograph 4.3:** An activity illustrating participants' ideas around limited role clarification as an impeding factor in PR, school 1: 19 March 2010

### 4.2.3 SUBTHEME 1.3: POWER DYNAMICS

Participants reported that the nature of power in participatory partnerships was, inter alia, experienced through the shift in power over the course of their engagement in the project. Participants felt that, as a collective and relational phenomenon, power changed over time. Participants saw themselves gradually changing to become members of a community of practice, eventually trusting one another and gaining more confidence. Initially, participants stated that they lacked trust and experienced low self-confidence as they doubted their skills, knowledge and assets. Participants described the shift in power in the participatory project as synonymous with ‘handing over the stick’. Participants ultimately experienced a sense of ownership in the participatory partnership. Participants felt that, as their knowledge changed in terms of the participatory project, they became emancipated from their perceived limited levels of knowledge to being more knowledgeable.

Photographs 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate participants involved in a PRA visual activity illustrating clouds as obstacles in terms of their initially perceived lack of trust, limited knowledge and low self-confidence. The photographs also show the use of sun rays to indicate the perceived power they possessed, which allowed them to share knowledge and information with parents. This shift demonstrates a move from clouds to sunrays (also included in Appendix C), which indicates the movement of power from challenges to achievements.



**Photograph 4.4:** Participants using drawings of clouds and sun rays to indicate movement/shift in power, school 1: 19 March 2010



**Photograph 4.5:** Participants using drawings of clouds and sun rays to indicate movement/shift in power, school 1: 15 November 2010

#### 4.2.3.1 Category A: Trust

Participants reported that at the onset of the participatory project, they did not trust the researchers. Participants were not comfortable with their relationship between them and the

researchers and the role they were supposed to play. However, over time, power shifted. Participants began to open up and trust the university researchers due to their prolonged engagement in schools. As a result, participants reportedly felt confident about the partnership. The following extracts provide evidence for these statements:

*OK, in 2003, we fear of changes, especially meeting new people more especially the white ones. The fears of overloading of work on top of the one we already have and then we asked ourselves, what were they coming to us for? May be they want to expose us the area, community, why a done in a black schools instead of white schools; there are lots of white schools but they chose this one, why? Doing this as a ladder for their own benefit? After the introduction of the programme, we began to trust and open up more to R and L. They also on the other hand trusted us and had confidence on us, because they kept on visiting us and updating us (School 1, EC: photo poster activity and focus group, p. 20).*

*Were afraid because we were not confident, very scared ... We asked ourselves, why our school, what do they want, may be they want to expose our school, why, why, why us. Aaahh, I can say it was strong commitment, as much as the people of Pretoria, we could see that they were committed to the project, they did not look into us only. They came kept checking the progress of the project, visited a lot here (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 7).*

#### **4.2.3.2 Category B: Knowledge brings ability**

Participants reported that initially, they did not possess sufficient knowledge about psychosocial challenges in their communities, nor ways of providing assistance. However, participants reported that the more they interacted with the university researchers and participated in the project, the more they experienced a shift in power. They felt that they became more knowledgeable about the challenges they faced and how to address and solve these. As a result, participants felt knowledgeable and certain about their actions. Participants explained that power dynamics meant that they became active members in a community of practice who were knowledgeable and able to participate in the project. The following extracts attest to these statements:

*We were not sure of what was expected of us... but we were wondering why the two white ladies we here for? So! we thought that may be what we would say will be*

*wrong. At first we did not know what is it they wanted from us? What was it that they expected from us? I thought it was a one time off visiting, I did not know that it would last long. After that they kept on coming; now we own the project and we know a lot of thing* (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 23).

*We knew nothing and we were not sure of what was expected of us at first. We were able to claim back that we can. We were decision makers - we love that. We were confident because it was us who were actively involved as we know the problem facing the community we work in* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 20).

The following extracts from my research journal further support the idea of the nature of power in participatory partnerships shifting, so that participants ultimately experienced ownership of the project and that they were equal partners who could influence the direction, focus and scope of the project.

*The pictures that I see in chronological order from 2003-2010 attest to the fact that there is shift in power with time, and participants claiming that power and space of participation. Both parties are equal partners, but participants are really in charge on the direction of the project* (Research journal, 19 May 2010).

*From limited knowledge to becoming more knowledgeable, from lack of trust to more trust and loyalty... participants are community leaders and they empower others, that's a true essence of participatory research... locals having a sense of ownership... spaces of participation are open... I have witnessed what Chambers calls 'handing over the stick' in my data analysis. I think achieving the state of power-sharing partnerships is a journey* (Research journal, 15 February 2011).

*I think I have represented the participants well. This member checking activity proved that well, the participants voices were clearly articulated from their standpoint* (Research journal, 16 July 2011).

#### **4.3 THEME 2: PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS**

The second theme of this study relates to participants' own understanding and meaning-making of power and partnership. Participants explained their construction, meaning-making

and understanding of what ‘power’ meant in relation to their experiences and participation in a participatory project. The participants conceptualised power as both a way in which their working environment enabled them to do what they wanted to do, and also as a personal space where they felt capable and had initiative to coordinate project activities.

Theme 2 focuses on data that reflected and addressed the following research questions: (1) How do teachers conceptualise the partnership in participatory partnership? (2) How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations? and (3) Which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in research partnership? Participants indicated that, based on their experience and interaction during the project, they were able to construct meaning and an understanding of ‘partnership’. They conceptualised partnership by emphasising the need to forge equal and beneficial relationships with other partners involved in the project.

It follows that the two subthemes that emerged regarding teachers’ understanding and meaning-making of power and partnerships include 1) forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships, and 2) establishing an enabling environment. Table 4.3 summaries Theme 2 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion indicators of the relevant subthemes and categories.

**Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion indicators for Theme 2**

<b>THEME 2</b>		
<b>PARTICIPANTS’ UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
<b>Subthemes and categories</b>	<b>Inclusion indicators</b>	<b>Exclusion indicators</b>
<b>Subtheme 2.1: Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships</b>	This subtheme includes participants’ forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with partners who participated in the project. Equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships were established with researchers, peers and the wider community.	
<b>Category 1:</b> University Researchers	This category includes data related to participants working with researchers, resulting in partnerships that are equitable and mutually beneficial.	This category excludes data that do not refer to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with researchers.
<b>Category 2:</b> Peers	This category includes data related to participants working with peers, in this case fellow participants, hence creating partnerships that are equitable and mutually beneficial.	This category excludes data that do not refer to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with peers.

<b>THEME 2</b>		
<b>PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
<b>Subthemes and categories</b>	<b>Inclusion indicators</b>	<b>Exclusion indicators</b>
<b>Category 3:</b> Wider community	This category includes data related to participants working with the wider community, hence creating partnerships that are equitable and mutually beneficial.	This category excludes data that do not refer to equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with the wider community.
<b>Subtheme 2.2:</b> Establishing an enabling environment	This subtheme includes establishing an enabling environment in which participating participants could work and freely do what they wanted to do. The enabling environment includes the local and national level.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Local level enablement	This category includes data related to an enabling environment at local level.	This category excludes data that do not refer to an enabling environment at the local level.
<b>Category 1:</b> National level enablement	This category includes data related to an enabling environment at national level.	This category excludes data that do not refer to an enabling environment at the national level.

#### **4.3.1 SUBTHEME 2.1: FORGING EQUITABLE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

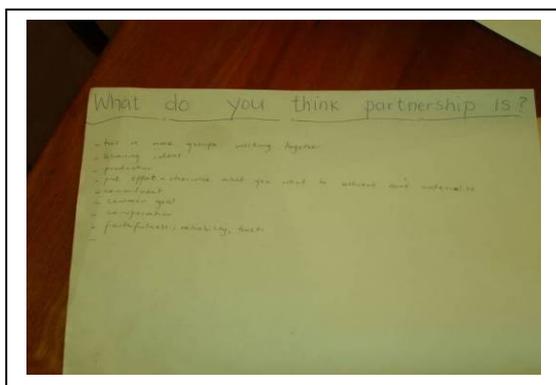
The forging of equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships was explained at multiple levels in terms of three categories, namely a) university researchers, b) peers, and c) the wider community. The following verbatim quotations from focus group and photo poster attest to this subtheme.

*It means, let's say in production, if you are working together, you share ideas, if one fail, then you all fail. Partnership is about what you both want to achieve-achievement. Partnership is about achieving and having common goals. What we want to achieve. It's about commitment (School 2, MP: photo poster and focus group, p. 1 & 2).*

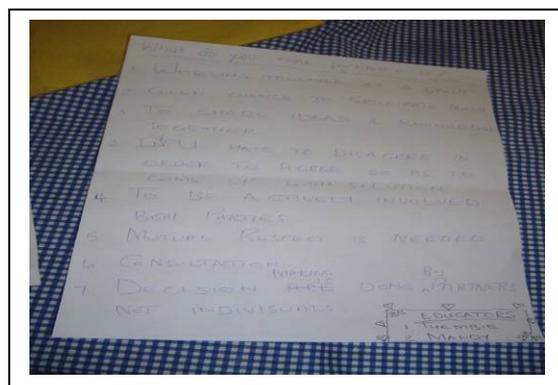
*Partnership is working as a group, share knowledge and ideas together, to share to agree, to be actively involved both parties there must be mature respect needed, consultation and decision-making done by partners, not individual or certain groups. To us partnership we mean to work together closely, aah, share ideas information as partnerships, you become brothers, when it comes to decision-making, you are on the same level. No one is beyond others, it's becoming one minded as you share information and exchange. Learn from each other (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 14).*

*Both parties are highly involved. You work together. Reach agreement. Good relationship - will enhance. It broadens awareness. There must be trust and transparency. Both parties must be humble and knowledgeable. They must have confidentiality and loyalty (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 18).*

Participants expressed their understanding of partnerships as created and nurtured through equity and respect, as well as working together harmoniously, resulting in both partners achieving fruitful results. Participants indicated that partnerships should benefit both parties so that all have equal voice and participation in decision-making. Dedication, passion and commitment to achieve a common goal were emphasised. Photographs 4.6 and 4.7 further demonstrate the view of participants in explaining the meaning and understanding of partnership as forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships.



**Photograph 4.6:** Conceptualisation of the concept of partnership, school 1:  
18 March 2010



**Photograph 4.7:** Conceptualisation of the concept of partnership, school 2:  
15 November 2010

#### 4.3.1.1 Category A: University researchers

Participants referred to partnerships as the process of coming together and building long-lasting relationships with researchers based on trust and respect, and strengthened by mutual benefits. Participants seemed to view partnership as a process of working together with university researchers to achieve common goals. A partnership with researchers was viewed as a form of power within which both parties had a common interest. Interest in working together was reportedly based on collective strength, alliance building and commitment to continuing the project. Evidence of this category is shown in the following extracts from focus group transcripts and visual data:

*Mmm, there was cooperation, we worked together as a team, and we had a common goal - to, to to, to -what can I say, to say to help reduce problems of HIV and AIDS and help the learners who are affected and infected (School 2, MP: visual activity and focus group, p. 4).*

*We have powerful relationships with the University of Pretoria (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 21).*

*Aaahh, I can say it was strong commitment, as much as the people of Pretoria, we could see that they were committed to the project, they did not look into us only. They kept checking the progress of the project, visited a lot here...you know when we produced our beads in the project, we took our products and gave them to the university people to sell on our behalf. We trusted them, however by giving them our beads, we didn't know if they will come back again or what would happen to our products. But they did sell the products and gave us our money to the school. That was the building of trust. To believe that you can give someone your things and get what you ask for. For us trust was built through such experiences (School 2, MP: visual activity and focus group, p. 7).*

*After the introduction of the programme, we began to trust and open up more to R and L [UP researchers]. They also on the other hand trusted us and had confidence on us, because they kept on visiting us and updating us... The relationships are from time to time strengthened as they further introduced other researchers to the project. More participants joined the group after seeing how well it is and how we interacted with researchers (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 20).*

Photograph 4.8 captures beaded underwear produced by teachers of school 2 and given to university researchers to sell, indicating a firm relationship of trust between the two partners. Participants thus entrusted researchers with the products, seemingly believing in this joint venture as a result of an established partnership.



**Photograph 4.8:** Participants gave beaded products to university researchers to sell on their behalf, school 2: 15 November 2010

The following extracts from my research journal (see Appendix J) support participants' perception of mutual and beneficial relationships forged between participants and researchers:

*I am anxious, I don't know what to expect from the teachers. We will be meeting for the first. I have to establish rapport (that's a rule of thumb) to get it right the first time (Research Journal, 1 March 2009).*

*From the very time when I met with participants, they gave me a special African welcome, they treated me like one of their own, as if we have known each other for a long time... indeed there is trust and loyalty when working with them, they show that to R & L as well (Research Journal, 19 March 2010).*

#### **4.3.1.2 Category B: Peers (fellow participants)**

Participants viewed partnerships as enhanced relational networks with fellow peers that created not only a deepened appreciation for each other as colleagues, but also commitment to the project, and lastly mutual support. Participants reported that they built several partnerships with other participants because of their participation in the project, particularly with school management (principals). Participants also indicated that the partnerships that they had established with peers were mutual and beneficial for achieving the vision and goals of the project. They indicated that equitable relationships resulted from joining the project and involving more participants. The following extracts from the data support this category:

*We were supported by management. More participants joined the group after seeing how good it is and how we interacted with the researchers from UP (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 19).*

*Now we have increased. It started with two groups, now it is four or more groups, the partners are many. We were joined by eight to ten people in this group (School 2, MP: visual activity and focus group, p. 8 & 9).*

*We felt more powerful when we went to a seminar in Amanzingwe with other participants, universities, researchers. There we shared our different experiences, learnt from others and others gained from us. We gained more relationships with other participants from other provinces. We confidently made presentations in front of an entire audience we have mentioned above. We felt very honoured. We had courage to talk to other people (School 1, EC: visual activity and focus group, p. 21).*

Photograph 4.9 illustrates participants meeting with peers from different schools at a seminar<sup>4</sup>. The meeting with peers illustrates how these relationships were forged with others.



**Photograph 4.9:** Participants at a group seminar in Amanzingwe where they met fellow teachers, who participated in the project from different schools, viz. school 1 & 2: 3 March 2009

#### **4.3.1.3 Category C: Wider community**

Participants reported that partnerships imply the ability to build long-lasting relationships that allowed greater participation at different levels with the broader community. The wider community includes the business community, service providers in the community and parents.

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<sup>4</sup> A national seminar on partners in research was held in Amanzingwe in March 2009

Participants indicated that partnerships were created in an equitable manner as they were able to choose how and when to engage in different spaces in instances where they worked within the wider community. Partnerships with the broader community seemingly allowed them to draw on existing knowledge and share experiences with one another. Participants reported that they extended their relationships to join hands with the wider community as partners who seemed to matter and be of benefit. Evidence in support of this category is included in the following interview and focus group data:

*Now we work with OVC, SASA, ABSA<sup>5</sup>...yes, 100%. We work hand in hand with community (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 11 & 12).*

*Partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books (School 2, MP: interview, p. 4).*

*Partnerships created - Olive Leave Seed, H.A.C., ABSA... Created soup kitchen through Muslim. Have had health volunteers (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).*

In further support, I noted the following in my research journal, referring to participants' working partnerships with the wider community:

*There are food hampers and clothes donated by the business community (ABSA), this is a true reflection of forging equitable relationships with the business community which is beneficial to the wider community (learners and parents). Participants are creating different spaces for others to participate in the STAR project. The counselling centre is well furnished with furniture donated by the business community. Amazing! Real working partnerships. Everybody is benefiting here, very mutual beneficial partnerships indeed (Research journal, 18 March 2010).*

#### **4.3.2 SUBTHEME 2.2: ESTABLISHING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT**

Participants seemingly experienced their environment as enabling at both local and national levels, which apparently promoted their ability to participate freely in the participatory project. An enabling environment appeared to be a key factor in engaging performance at the local level, where the school leaders (principals), colleagues at schools, and the wider

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<sup>5</sup> OVC=Orphaned and vulnerable children; SASA= South African social service; ABSA= a financial institution (bank) in South Africa; HAC= Health Advisory Committee

community served as catalyst for participants to participate in the project. Furthermore, in the broader community, participants reported that they were allowed to institute partnerships with other stakeholders. Participants thus indicated that the democratic organisational nature of the project permitted an enabling environment. They reported that fellow participants in the project brought in complementary and compatible interests and roles, thereby adding to an enabling environment where all could freely participate. The enabling environment is discussed in terms of two relevant categories, namely a) local level enablement, and b) national level enablement. The following excerpts from focus group and interview data serve as an introduction to the discussion of this subtheme:

*Aaah, there is no stumbling block between us now because if we want something from you, we come straight to you and also the principal is a link between us and you. We work together with principal and you. It's easy now to work with you, it's easy for you to come to our school*(School 1, EC: focus group, p. 11).

*Another factor is the people involved, enable you to do something, that vision of resources, enable you to have power, human resources, network as resource and also other factor is ability to carry out something, further mission, the vision and mission enable to carry you to have power* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 5).

#### **4.3.2.1 Category A: Local level enablement**

The local level denotes the participants' own school community. Participants reported that stakeholders were widely encouraged to become part of the project. This resulted in participants being able to plan, make decisions and implement their activities without difficulty, as the environment was experienced as enabling. An enabling environment meant that they were well positioned to willingly take on the initiative of implementing and leading the project. On local level, an enabling environment allowed for increased capacity and subsequently collective action. The following verbatim focus group extracts provide evidence of an enabling environment as experienced on local level:

*Talking about HIV and AIDS was not part of our language, in those days but now it's gone. It was new and scared, all those things, but gone are those days, people come and ask for our help, the number of parents and learners who are interested have increased. I call it collaboration - it's like a three-legged pot. At school is learner and educator and parents but we add more, it's researchers, participants,*

*community, this three-legged pot is growing. It's no longer few people, that is, we are using many pots, we put more fire that means we are cooking, OK. We are what we are because of you. We are where we are because of you. Thank you (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 12).*

*Oh boy, you know in 2006, we felt we were powerful because through the project we managed to divide the activities within the project on our own and able to manage the project, we were able to influence the community. As you can see from the pictures, there were lots of community people participating, for instance some were doing bead work project. They were able to participate, even the garden. That is, I say we were in control with lots of power, we decided on our course of action (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).*

Photographs 4.10 and 4.11 further demonstrate an enabling environment through which teachers discussed issues of HIV and AIDS openly by establishing a resource centre and producing AIDS beaded ribbons. In photograph 4.10 participants of school 1 were able to establish an information centre, through which the local community could learn more about issues of HIV and AIDS. In photograph 4.11, participants of school 2 together with the local community, crafted bead work using the HIV and AIDS symbol, thus signifying their willingness to discuss issues of HIV and AIDS.



**Photograph 4.10:** Information Centre to discuss HIV and AIDS issues openly, school 1: 18 March 2010



**Photograph 4.11:** Beaded AIDS ribbons showing an enabling environment to discuss AIDS and HIV issues openly, school 2: 15 November 2010

#### 4.3.2.2 Category B: National level enablement

National level enablement refers to activities conducted by the respective participants and their stakeholders outside their provinces. Participants reported that the nature of the project provided them with a platform to share their experiences, ideas and knowledge with partners

from other schools and provinces. This experience appeared, in turn, to allow participants to share and exchange notes and knowledge with others and as a result learn from others. In addition, participants apparently experienced access to other networks, as the inclusion of new actors implied that issues could be discussed openly in newly created public spaces.

Participants experienced the environment as enabling because they reported that the researchers allowed access to them at any time, provided them with mentoring, support and guidance, and most importantly, allowed their voices to be heard. This resulted in participants experiencing that they were in charge of the project. Therefore, an enabling environment gave participants the freedom to reach out to other participants or partners, particularly in other provinces, and share their experiences of participation in the project. Evidence of these experiences and perceptions is illustrated by the following excerpts:

*They never stopped us from partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books. The volunteers are able to get us free books* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 5).

*We were confident because it was us who were actively involved as we know the problem facing the community we work in... Through working with us as participants, we were able to identify our problems and how to address them... They were giving us chances to explore not to be stumbling block on what we know (experiences)... They were supportive and gave us strength in what we were doing all the time* (School 1, EC: focus group and visual activity, p. 19).

*Mmmmh, I think here is Amanzingwe - we met a group from Port Elizabeth and also a group from Pretoria, Shoshanguve and met more people from the university and us. Now we have increased. It started with two groups, now it is four or more groups, the partners are many* (School 2, MP: focus group and photo poster activity, p. 8).

The following extract from my research journal further supports participants' experiences of an enabling environment that seemingly gave them the leverage to reach out, voice their experiences and strive to attain their vision and goals without hindrance:

*Spaces and opportunities for interacting with other stakeholders are very open, participants have the freedom to reach out to whoever they want and share their*

*experiences. This participatory project is very enabling* (Research journal, Amanzingwe, 3 March 2009).

*These spaces of participation keep on increasing. I am impressed with the fact that, at the member checking session, teachers had the platform to share their experiences (progress report) with state officials from the ministry of education and an international academic expert* (Research Journal, 16 July 2011).

In further support, photograph 4.12 illustrates participants at a national seminar where they shared their experiences of the project. This platform provided a network space for participation and information sharing between teachers from various provinces. The platform for participation was an indication of an enabling environment at national level.



**Photograph 4.12:** Participants sharing experiences at a national seminar, demonstrating the presence of enabling environment, schools 1 & 2: 3 March, 2009

#### **4.4 THEME 3: THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP**

Participants indicated that they experienced agency to act freely based on the perceived power they had gained and the partnerships they had established. Participants seemingly believed that they experienced power and partnership in terms of the capacity to act through the power they had gained, resulting in their empowering others, taking action and providing leadership. This theme focuses on data that reflect and address the following research questions: (1) How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations? (2) In which manner might teachers as co-researchers benefit from participation in an asset-based intervention?

The theme is supported by subthemes that relate to the role of agency in relation to power and partnerships, namely 1) agency, and 2) participants being agents of social transformation change. Table 4.4 summarises Theme 3 in terms of the inclusion and exclusion indicators for the related subthemes and categories.

**Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion indicators for Theme 3**

<b>THEME 3</b>		
<b>THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP</b>		
<b>Subthemes and categories</b>	<b>Inclusion indicators</b>	<b>Exclusion indicators</b>
<b>Subtheme 3.1: Agency</b>	This subtheme includes participants as being able to take charge and act which shows their power in a partnership of participating in the project. This capacity to take charge and act includes capacity to empower others, capacity to assume leadership and take action by making decisions.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Capacity to empower others	This category includes data related to participants as a source of empowering others in the community because of the power they experienced in the participatory partnership project.	This category excludes data that do not refer to participants as a source of empowering others in the community through the power they experienced in the participatory partnership project.
<b>Category 2:</b> Capacity for leadership	This category includes data related to participants being able to assume leadership due to the power they experienced in a participatory partnership project.	This category excludes data that do not refer to participants being able to assume leadership due to the power they experienced in a participatory partnership project.
<b>Category 3:</b> Taking action	This category includes data related to participants being able to make decisions that result in them creating spaces to initiate and take action as a result of the power experienced in a participatory partnership project.	This category excludes data that do not refer to participants being able to make decisions that result in their creating spaces to initiate and take action as a result of the power they experienced in a participatory partnership project.
<b>Subtheme 3.2: Teachers as agents of social transformation</b>	This subtheme includes participants as agents of knowledge transfer and social change that participants brought to the community by participating in the project. These agents of knowledge transfer include transferring knowledge, providing resources and creating community networks.	
<b>Category 1:</b> Transferring knowledge	This category includes data related to participants as source of information and transferring knowledge to parents, schools and community hence facilitating transformative social change.	This category excludes data that do not refer to transfer of knowledge to parents, schools and community that could bring about transformative social change.
<b>Category 2:</b> Mobilising resources	This category includes data related to participants mobilising resources, hence facilitating transformative social change.	This category excludes data that do not refer to mobilising for resources that could bring about transformative social change.
<b>Category 3:</b> Creating community networks	This category includes data related to participants creating community networks, hence facilitating transformative social change.	This category excludes data that do not refer to creating community networks that could bring about transformative social change.

#### 4.4.1 SUBTHEME 3.1: AGENCY

Participants reported that they experienced and understood power as an activity that required the capacity to initiate ideas and activities, make decisions and plans with a view to implement them, and subsequently act accordingly. Furthermore, participants viewed power as the ability to be aware, organise and mobilise assets based on their existing skills and strengths, in order to make decisions and act. Participants seemingly viewed themselves as initiating, mobilising and acting in all phases of the participatory project. They reported power as ‘power to’ and ‘power with’, which implies being capable of acting (to exercise agency) and have a voice to express their experience.

Participants reported that since they could voice their experiences, opportunities abounded for them to be taken seriously and to demonstrate how they made decisions. This allowed them to act in a way which mirrored how they perceived things. The ability to voice their experiences was also a result of the spaces of participation that were created in a power-sharing partnership. Participants viewed power as the capability of individuals to shape their own lives. They further indicated that free democratic participation in the participatory project resulted in an increase of their own confidence and their belief in what could be accomplished, particularly with the skills they had gained in a power-sharing partnership. The following extracts from interviews and focus groups support this theme.

*What we wanted to do was achieved, we were able to achieve because power is about change, power is about making decision and we were able to influence. Our dream came to be because we wanted a garden and reaped what we sow (School 2, MP: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 5).*

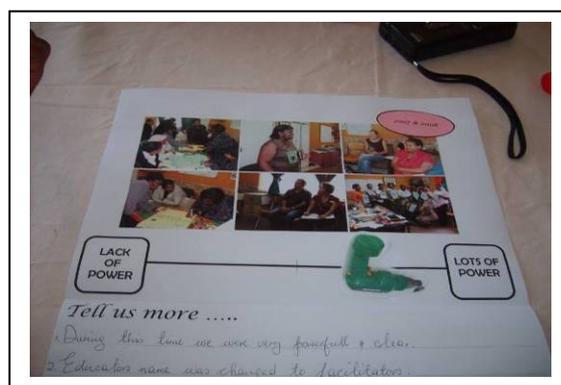
*I will start at the school, we made decisions of having a counselling centre, we manage to influence other participants and they joined us. To be in charge of centre and help learners (School 2, MP: interview, p. 12).*

*We were facilitators that were ready to help other schools and communities around. We had more power- adopted two schools (School 1, EC: photo poster and formal discussion, p. 19 & 20).*

The following extract from my research journal further attests to the evidence that participants experienced agency:

*Today, as I transcribe data and look at the pictures of the photo posters, I began to have a sentimental feeling that teachers value their participation in the STAR project. They have gotten the power to be the change agents of their communities. They have planted the mustard seed and they nurture it with all their faculty and might. I think as I listen to the audio, the theme of empowerment, community leadership and action come to mind (Research journal, 25 May 2010).*

In support, photograph 4.13 displays a photo poster activity of which participants indicated the power gained through being facilitators to other schools, sharing their knowledge, and thereby displaying their perceived power in action. Participants indicated ‘lots of power’ gained which enabled them to have the agency to empower others.



**Photograph 4.13:** Photo poster activity illuminating participants’ perception of how they gained power, due to their perceived empowerment of others in their role as facilitators, school 1: 18 March 2010

Participants reported and conceptualised power as ‘power with’, which is the collective action in which they worked with others. To them, power meant individual capacity that could translate into new participatory spaces that resulted in gains. Participants indicated that power implied the ability to undertake complex, challenging initiatives which they did not think they could do. The following focus groups and formal discussion data demonstrate this perception:

*Even if something is difficult on our side, with strength, power we will overcome - no matter how challenging situation. With power, we can achieve... We managed to act. We took initiative to influence our neighbouring school to join us (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 1 & 23).*

*We visited our baby schools to see if they had progress, we had interviews with them, we were pleased to see the programmes progressed that far (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 21).*

#### **4.4.1.1 Category A: Capacity to empower others**

Participants explained ‘power within’ in terms of gaining a sense of self-identity, awareness and confidence which was viewed as a precondition for action that would allow them to empower others. Participants reported that they were able to go out and reach out to other schools by telling them about the project and the positive outcomes they had obtained. This ability to empower others was apparently made possible by the perception of participants that they could recognise their own sense of self-worth and self-knowledge, and then share with others. Such an occurrence translated into a form of so-called visible power. Participants apparently saw themselves as a source of hope in which they became the ‘sun’ that transmitted its sunrays to nourish other plants. Evidence in support of this category can be found in the following statements made during PRA visual activity and focus group discussions:

*We were facilitators that were ready to help other schools and communities around. Became facilitators to two other high school and primary school (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 19).*

*In 2006, community members we able to do bead work through our initiative, items that we made we sold, these members’ stress were overcome, because what they did would take them far... We had community members in 2006 that came here to join us in the project and we told them what to do and they complied. And they also took what they learnt here to their community (School 2, MP: photo poster and focus group, p. 4).*

Participants also reported that they had made others (schools and participants) aware of their potential to become experts of their lives and communities. Participants viewed themselves as potential tools to help others see and understand the realities of their communities. Evidence in support of this perception is captured in the following verbatim extracts:

*In 2010, we went to the neighbour schools. We were acting because we sat with primary school participants and explained what we were doing and why we decided they should join the group. And again we managed to divide ourselves since are big*

*group now (language+ literacy, garden, career guidance and counselling, staff abilities) (School 2, MP: photo poster and focus group, p. 5).*

*We managed to facilitate workshops with two high schools and one primary school of our community (on our own)... We were able to introduce L and R that we are working with (making appointments, leading in conversations with the schools) (School 1, EC: photo poster and focus group, p. 20).*

Participants seemingly viewed themselves as human capital, possessing assets, resources and skills that in turn implied positive outcomes for community members. They reported that they gradually experienced a higher sense of empowerment and agency. They experienced power as they were reportedly able to use their skills to apply knowledge for effective negotiation with others. Evidence to attest to these statements is shown in the following focus group extracts:

*We were able to share ideas. These community members stresses were overcome, because what they did would take them far, because of our knowledge (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).*

*We have opened the resources centre. We had more power because we adopted two schools (School 1, EC: photo poster and focus group, p. 15).*

Participants also reported that they experienced power in transformative learning environments as empowering since these opened up more spaces for greater community participation. They reported that the transformation was fulfilling the capacity to facilitate change through the initiatives they had started. The following interview extract demonstrates this perception:

*Yes I can say that its power gained since project started, step by step we started here and now we are here. If someone can say relate to me, I know these steps. This environment and training has made me realise who I am, I can now know when I have forgotten something and go back to remind myself step by step, now I have lots of information and knowledge, am able to stand in front of people being confident and present. I believe in me, because of the dedication, commitment and being positive in power. I would like to keep on moving and start a new project in Ghongwane (near Mozambique) not very long, in fact during holidays I will talk to*

*some educator then I will inform R & L about way forward* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 3).

#### **4.4.1.2 Category B: Capacity for leadership**

Participants reportedly gained power by providing leadership. According to them, this enrichment became a determining catalyst for transforming communities. Participants reported that they took it upon themselves to expand their wings and initiate activities, thereby leading the way for others to follow in their footsteps. Participants further indicated that they believed that they experienced this leadership because of an enabling environment. Leadership, they reported, their positive feelings and incidences where they created opportunities for participation with others expanded partnerships with other stakeholders. Evidence attesting to this category is shown in the following focus group verbatim extracts:

*Yes, yes, yes, 2006. We had community members in 2006 who came to here to join us in the project and we told them what to do and they complied. And they also took what they learnt here to their community* (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 5).

*We felt very powerful to introduce the programme to other schools. We ourselves decide on the schools we chose NOT the researchers. The bond is stronger than before, they just come and observe the progress We believe that they have faith in us to take this programme further* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 20).

*We were taking lead, mentoring others. Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard, and we decided on the project. We picked the area (activities to do within the project) and we divided ourselves in activities* (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 5).

Participants reported that their experienced sense of power as evident in their decision-making was characterised by negotiating openly, deciding on the agenda to create more partnerships and mentoring others. To the participants, the capacity for decision-making was characterised as agency. They further reported that agency made them feel empowered, which they felt also had a positive influence on their sense of self-worth, dignity and self-confidence. The following focus group verbatim extracts from the PRA visual activity demonstrates this idea:

*What do you think power is? Power is knowledge of knowing. How do you do it. You have to plan, when you have power you organise, take responsibility and must delegate, discuss and analyse. How? With power you must create better living and be passionate and pass it on to community-nation and country and the world. Where? Power starts within yourself and then empowers your environment, community, and nation. You have power you work with those around you (School 1, EC: PRA visual activity and focus group, p. 14).*

*Cell buddies (learner to learner) - having volunteers and caregivers - great achievement, relief for us. They give us report, feedback that is wow! Excellent. We attended workshops naming of learning centre by deceased learners. Working extra mile; self-renewing school now. We overcame our fears. We felt power through these activities (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 16).*

#### **4.4.1.3 Category C: Taking action ('lighting the fire')**

Participants reported a broader awareness of their environment based on their participation in the project. They reportedly relied on newly gained knowledge and skills to assist them with taking action through community mobilisation and organisation. Through their mobilisation and organising abilities, participants reported that they were able to contribute to social change. Evidence in support of these statements is provided in the following focus group and interview extracts:

*We divided the project on how to manage it in order to influence the community - see- community members. They did a bead project here at school, participate. They participated in the garden, garden was blooming in 2006. We had lots of power in 2006... Oh! dreams did come true. We wanted to have a garden and we were able to make a garden that is achieving a dreaming. If you are able to dream about something and make it happen in reality, that's power (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 6).*

*The progress was unbelievable (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).*

*I would say more. I would say yes. I have changed a lot of people, other people are thinking differently. They also want to do more project, even my colleagues. Working together people can do more (School 2, MP: interview, p. 3).*

Photographs 4.14 shows a vegetable garden initiated by participants that took action after planning. Photograph 4.15 shows clothes items that were donated and vegetable produce, the fruits of taking action after planning support initiatives.



**Photograph 4.14:** Vegetable garden established by teachers taking action, school 1: 19 March, 2010



**Photograph 4.15:** Clothes donated and produce from vegetable garden, signifies participants' capacity to take action, school 1: 19 March, 2010

Participants also reported that in instances where they experienced community participation and reflexivity regarding the involvement, they perceived themselves as having the power to act (exercise agency). Participants indicated that they were able to create new partnerships and share ideas, plan and make independent decisions. Evidence to attest to these statements is captured in the following focus group contributions:

*Success-formation of the working group, giving food hampers, feeding community with soup from Muslim. We have opened the resources centre, we are now facilitators in this protect. Oh, wow, it's the greatest power tool we have (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 15).*

*We visited our baby schools to see if they had progress, we had interviews with them, we were pleased to see the programmes progressed that far (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 21).*

The following extracts from my research journal further support the idea of participants 'lighting the fire' (their way of referring to taking action) by means of the activities they were involved in.

*Participants are busy in action, they decide and act on their words, this is very participatory, it is them who are bringing ideas based on the resources, skills and*

*knowledge that they have within themselves and amass these resources... I salute participants, they are true mobilisers... taking teaching and learning beyond the classroom... that's how I see it from them* (Research journal, 19 March 2010).

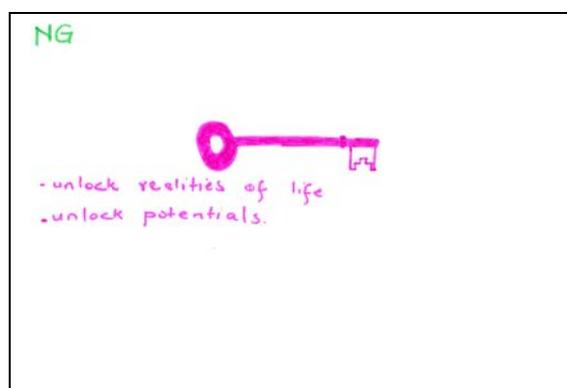
*I am excited about the data I am collecting from both MP and EC provinces. Teachers see themselves as the sun that brings light, hope to their communities* (Research journal, 19 May 2010).

#### 4.4.2 SUBTHEME 3.2: TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Participants seemingly perceived themselves as agents of social transformation. In their view, the change that they brought about was a result of the knowledge they had acquired. They appeared to regard themselves as agents that could unlock potential in order to facilitate social change in their communities. Participants' perception of themselves as agents of social transformation in their communities is supported by observations in my research journal:

*A key unlocks doors, therefore I think participants see themselves as unlocking doors to bring community into this new opportunity and as a result it changes the communities' lives...they bring new life, new beginnings filled with hope. I am impressed* (Research Journal, 19 March 2009).

Photograph 4.16 illustrates a drawing of a key by a group of participants from school 2. They visually depicted themselves as keys that could unlock the future to bring about social change. They used this metaphor at the Amanzingwe seminar to represent themselves and their role in the project.



**Photograph 4.16:** Participants' view of themselves as keys unlocking realities and being agents of transformation, school 2: 3 March 2009



**(a) Transferring knowledge to parents**

Having knowledge and information about the problems faced by the community, participants seemingly tended to rely on collective agency to sensitise parents about the psychosocial issues learners faced and ways to resolve these. Participants reported that they had the power to influence the lives of parents by means of, inter alia, knowledge sharing. As a result, parents were able to exercise their voices and capacity to learn about psychosocial problems that learners encountered, particularly on HIV and AIDS. As such, participants indicated that they perceived themselves as agents whose actions could transform society and impart knowledge that is useful to parents. This idea is captured in the following verbatim quotations.

*Learners and community are suckling from us as well as members in our school... as you see we are fat and we have big udder* (School 2, MP: focus group and PRA visual activity, p. 23).

*Ja, I would say starting from the 'snakes and knobkerries' enabled to think about challenges of community and how to solve them. It has helped us to come up with ideas, it help to open us up, broaden my wings* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 8).

*Addressing OVC problems, life skills programme. Able to visit child headed families. Able to form working groups (information, support, and garden)* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).

*Also being able to visit with learners homes, going to municipality (grants, RDP<sup>6</sup> houses) grant they qualify for. We have volunteers and caregivers - visit learners give report* (School 1, EC: focus group, pg11).

Photographs 4.18 and 4.19 illustrate participants of schools 1 and 2, where they are busy with a PRA activity using sun rays to indicate their perceived power in the project. They related sun rays to the ability to share knowledge and information with parents.

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<sup>6</sup> RDP=Rural Development Projects



**Photograph 4.18:** Using PRA visual activity of sun rays as an indication of having the power to give light to parents, school 1: 19 March 2010



**Photograph 4.19:** Using PRA visual activity of sun rays as an indication of having the power to give light to parents, school 2: 15 November 2010

In support, the following extract from my research journal further captures participants' perceived sense of being agents of knowledge transfer and information sharing with parents:

*Be the change you want to see. These are great participants, they have realised the importance and benefit of reaching out to the parents if their goal is to see change. Change can only happen when we share with others the realities of what we know. This important lesson for me to learn... share, share, share=informed people=informed decisions and choices within us if we reach out. This is a humbling experience... to knock into parents' doors and bring light... very humbling (Research journal, 20 May 2010).*

Participants reportedly used dialogue and reflection to transfer knowledge to parents. Reciprocally, this sharing of knowledge enhanced further understanding of the type of assistance parents needed for social change. Participants' experience of social transformation repeatedly opened up spaces for knowledge sharing with parents inside and outside the classroom, as evident in the following statement:

*Not all but there are parents who are willing to learn and help. We help parents to know about problems and explain HIV (School 2, MP: interview, p. 3).*

#### **(b) Transferring knowledge to schools**

Participants shared their discovered knowledge and understanding of the psychosocial problems faced by the community with other schools. Participants thus seemingly experienced a sense of power, allowing them to contribute their gained knowledge to their

neighbouring schools. The following verbatim PRA activity, focus group and interview excerpts provide evidence that participants seemingly perceived themselves as transmitters of knowledge to other schools:

*Mmm, maybe in first place we were able to influence participants; before they were not able to see our vision and goals but we managed to talk to them and explain; on how school will benefit in project. School benefit, if all of us are part of the project (School 2, MP: PRA activity and focus group, p. 9).*

*We now have 5 babies (schools). We got big 'mabele lidhle' (Xhosa). Everyone can suck - got a long breast, we are cows now. Visiting the participants, it's our duty to inform (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 15).*

*This environment and training has made me realise who I am; now I have lots of information and knowledge, am able to stand in front of people being confident and present. I believe in me, because of the dedication, commitment and being positive in power. I would like to keep on moving and start a new project in Ghongwane school (near Mozambique border) not very long, in fact during holidays I will talk to some participants then I will inform R & L about the way forward (School 2, MP: Interview, p. 4).*

Participants, in their role as agents of change, thus appeared to transfer knowledge which could benefit other schools by raising awareness. Participants perceived themselves as rays of the sun transmitting sunlight, thus bringing about light. The following verbatim focus group contributions demonstrate these statements:

*In 2009-10 we joined by more participants here in school. Before we were only four (4), now joined by 8-10 people in this group (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 9).*

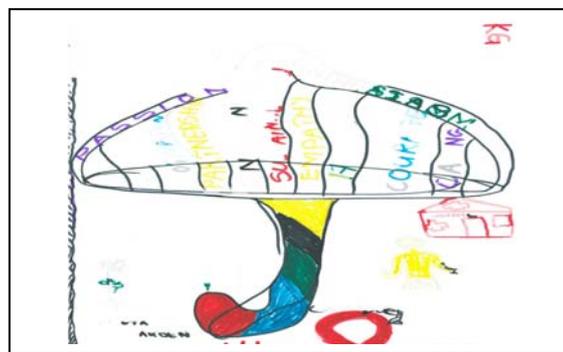
*We have facilitated workshops, we managed to plough back e.g. (xxx primary school, xxy senior school). We have babies, we have big 'mabele' - community can suck from our breast. We are cows (School 2, EC: focus group, p. 11).*

*Now that I have power you can make decision and lead other people to follow you when you request them. If you are in power, other people will follow instructions. I think power has influence, what we training them, they do, and they have managed.*

*Moving from this point to higher level because they present to us and explain steps that they took (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).*

*Secondly, being able to influence our neighbour primary. We are going to train them - this project not only is in our school/area (XXX), but start in neighbouring schools. I think now we are in power (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 10).*

Building on these contributions, photograph 4.20 is a drawing of an umbrella by participants from school 2 to indicate sharing knowledge with others. The umbrella depicts how different stakeholders were brought together and relationships maintained.



**Photograph 4.20:** Umbrella that depicts bringing the community together, school 2: 3 March 2009

### (c) **Transferring knowledge to the wider community**

Participants reported that to them, being part of a participatory project meant that they could express power because of the knowledge they had gained on issues affecting learners. They used this power and knowledge by sharing it with the wider community (e.g. social services, NGOs, service providers, businesses) as a way to sensitise others about challenges in the community. Participants indicated that, through sensitising the wider community about various challenges, social change could be facilitated. The following verbatim focus group excerpts attest to the participants perceiving themselves as transmitters of knowledge to the wider community:

*Oh boy, you know in 2006, we felt we were powerful because through the project we managed to divide the activities within the project on our own and able to manage the project, we were able to influence the community. As you can see from the pictures, there were lots of community people participating, for instance some were doing bead project. They were able to participate, even the garden. That is I say we*

*were in control with lots of power, we decided on our course of action* (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

*It is our duty to inform... able to visit child-headed families* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 16).

*Ja, we acted according to what we wanted. You know, one thing is overcome barriers; our community, most of them are not working, a lot of them, but in 2006, community members we able to do bead work through our initiative, items that we made we sold, these members stress were overcome, because what they did would take them far* (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 4).

*We were able to share our experiences... We felt in control. We managed to build relationships with others ... We could make powerful arguments (giving examples of how other schools do it e.g. males at high schools)* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 21).

#### **4.4.2.2 Category B: Mobilising resources**

Participants reportedly also brought about social change by mobilising resources in the community. Participants explained that they were able to mobilise resources that could benefit the community. The following verbatim extracts provide evidence for this statement:

*Our powerful and strong minds made other participants to see the need for help... Number of schools are flocking to our school for help... The department of education has confidence in our school and sending other schools to come and see the display of (xxx centre). We are making our own decisions and we are proud of ourselves* (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 22).

*Oh, dreams did come true. We wanted to have a garden and we were able to make a garden that is achieving a dream* (School 2, MP: focus group, p. 6).

Participants seemingly facilitated social change by being a platform from which others could access resources, such as the provision of social services, food, information centres and networks. It seems as if participants had the power to make decisions for facilitating and mobilising resources. The following verbatim focus group and interview extracts provide evidence for this category:

*We were recognised, first we did counselling room, gardening. We created partnerships with olive leaf seed, PEACE, H.A.C., ABSA and created kitchen soup through Muslim. We brought in health volunteers... At the end we felt like owners - hurray!!! (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 19).*

*We have had a career day the other time, it was started by varsity students, and it was successful. Then later we initiated more career day, we started in 2009 by inviting police SAPS and invite people from different varsities to talk about different careers (School 2, MP: interview, p. 7).*

#### **4.4.2.3 Category C: Creating community networks**

Participants reported that they created opportunities to add new partners to participate in the STAR project. These new partners were sensitised about the psychosocial problems that the learners and parents were facing. Participants allegedly developed community networks to provide a variety of services to community members (both learners and parents). Participants reported that they became a link between the wider community, resources and additional networks. They reportedly used their power to collaborate with existing community networks across common interests to build collective strengths resulting in perceived synergy. The following focus group and interview data provide evidence for these experiences:

*We have beautiful school garden, we have attended workshops with HOPE worldwide. All work done was done during school holidays, so we are using our time, our family time. We are supported by other participants, wow! They support us. Most of the participants support us fully, now we work with OVC, SASA, ABSA, Muslim school. We working extra mile. Our school is a self-renewing school, we are a No school fund school (School 1, EC: focus group, p. 11).*

*You know UP is very open, they gain from us as well, it's a mutual relationship, and we gain from them too. The school gained from UP, like help with library. They never stopped us from partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books. The volunteers' are able to get us free books. ... Engineering students come here. I would say R and L are nice people, it's a matter of good working relations (School 2, MP: interview, p. 5).*

Participants described situations where individuals from businesses and NGOs<sup>7</sup> listened to them and agreed to be part of a movement to facilitate social change. Forming and deepening relationships appeared to encourage participants to participate on local and national level (as described in section 4.2.2.1). Ultimately, strengthened networks and solidarity resulted in creating more spaces of engagement, as evidenced in the following excerpts:

*People who are helping, giving us strength, what we are doing to the community is benefiting, because now, our learners work with others learners and community, things are easy* (School 1, EC: formal discussion, p. 12).

*You know, the network we have now is meeting other colleagues from other provinces, and they help us to see how far we are with the projects. Also our department and school to have it as a community. We have forge hands with local clinic, the learner get resources. Another network is social workers; they are involved with the school once a week. Also with Agriculture, Masibuele, how can they help with project - garden, to meet us half way? But they think that as participants we want to benefit - but we are facilitators, we want to bring in community members, so that they benefit. We also bring in more of our colleagues to get our vision, especially that we started as five. The school accepted us* (School 2, MP: interview, p. 4).

The following extracts from my research journal further supports the idea of participants being agents of social transformation based on the knowledge that they shared with others:

*Participants have knowledge and information as assets that they use to uplift their community. Both schools are reaching to the community in unique ways that really bring change to the lives of many who are touched... I think the community feels the same, they are being touched by angels... angels bring new life. I think platforms of sharing these with other schools throughout the country should be created. To share with others that teachers can do more to transform communities* (Research journal, 15 November 2010).

*Every time I make corrections to this thesis, I get a deeper connection and relationship with the journey that I experienced, in an attempt to explore and seek*

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<sup>7</sup> Non Governmental Organisation

*insights into the lives of extraordinary teachers, who had a vision and a mission that was well executed. The journey of partnership synergy and transformation had made me to fall in love with power-sharing participatory partnerships. The data that I collected, analysed and interpreted has convinced me that the community development echoed by UN/IMF/World Bank is happening in a synergistic manner at EC and MP. My convictions truly tell me that, lessons can be drawn from these two sources to make a better world* (Research journal, 8 April 2012).

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter reports on the results obtained during the study, in terms of the three themes that emerged during thematic data analysis. The subthemes and categories represent the power-sharing partnerships as experienced by teachers in a PR project. Throughout, I aimed to enrich my discussions with verbatim extracts and examples of visual data.

In the next chapter, I interpret the results and present the findings of this study. Throughout, I discuss the findings against the background of existing literature, as presented in chapter 2.



## CHAPTER 5

### RELATING RESEARCH FINDINGS TO EXISTING LITERATURE

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#### 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; Gaventia, 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
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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-

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<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.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I discussed the findings of this study against the background of existing literature on partnerships, power and Gaventa's power cube. In this chapter, I present conclusions in terms of my research questions, based on the findings I obtained. I also reflect on the study in terms of the challenges I faced and the potential value that the knowledge generation holds. I conclude by making recommendations for training, practice and future research.

#### 6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS

In chapter 1, I introduced the study by setting the background of what the study entailed and explaining the rationale to undertake the study. I described my interest in PR and subsequently gave an overview of the STAR project. I justified my choice to focus particularly on partnerships and power relations in the STAR project. The purpose was to gain insight into the experiences of teachers who had been participating in the project, with the view of understanding issues of power and partnerships in PR from the perspective of co-researchers. I explained that I would use the power cube theoretical framework (Gaventa, 2003a, 2006) to investigate power relations and partnerships in PR.

I indicated the purpose of the study and formulated relevant research questions. The main research question focused on insight into teachers as co-researchers' experiences of power relationships to elucidate knowledge about partnerships in participatory methodology. After briefly introducing the foreseen contribution of the study, I contextualised key concepts and provided an overview of the paradigmatic perspectives I relied upon. Additionally, I provided an overview of the research design, ethical considerations and quality criteria that applied.

In chapter 2, I discussed existing literature as background to the study, and presented underlying theory on partnerships, power, empowerment and leadership, as well as the theoretical framework of Gaventa's power cube (2003a). I explained partnerships in PR, the functions of partnerships and the context of partnerships between academics and

communities, extending the concept to include discussions on empowerment and participation. In addition, I explored existing literature on power. In particular, I investigated literature on power theorists' view (Lukes, 2005; Bourdieu, 1980; Foucault, 1980; Freire, 1970; Mills, 1959), as background to the empirical study I undertook.

In chapter 3, I explained how I followed a PRA approach to explore the experiences of co-researchers (teachers) participating in a longitudinal participatory intervention, where I specifically examined issues of power and partnerships. I elaborated on the research methodology and strategies I used. Subsequently, I justified my choices of feminist standpoint theory as epistemology and a PR approach as methodological paradigm. I described the selection of participants and sites of the study, the data generation and analysis I completed, as well as ethical guidelines I considered. I concluded the chapter by explaining the quality criteria I aimed to adhere to.

Chapter 4 reported on the results of the study, structured according to three main themes that emerged during thematic analysis. These themes relate to (1) the nature of power in participatory partnerships; (2) participants' understanding and meaning making of power and partnership; and (3) the role of agency in relation to power and partnership. Each theme was unpacked in terms of related subthemes. Throughout, I substantiated results from the data sources, namely verbatim transcriptions, my research journal and visual data.

In chapter 5, I interpreted the results I obtained against existing literature. I highlighted correlations as well as discrepancies between the findings of this study and those reflected in existing literature. I also indicated the silences I noticed when comparing the results of this study to existing literature. Throughout, I highlighted the potential contributions of this study to the existing knowledge base, indicating where new knowledge was obtained.

### **6.3 CONCLUSIONS IN TERMS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

I now use the findings of the study to answer the secondary research questions. In section 6.4, I address the primary research question.

### 6.3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1

#### **How do teachers perceive themselves as co-researchers in a collaborative research project in terms of power relations?**

In this study, co-researchers perceived themselves holistically as participants in a collaborative research project. Co-researchers indicated that their experiences changed over time based on their participation in the collaborative research project. Initially, co-researchers reportedly felt powerless. They felt that they did not know which roles were expected of them and what purpose they were to serve in the project. The more they interacted with the university researchers, and could express their voice, the more they experienced a shift in power relations. The findings of this study reveal that when spaces of participation were opened in a democratic manner, the personal, organisational and political change permitted a shift in mental landscapes that allowed for equal power relations, where co-researchers gradually perceived themselves as part of a community of practice where all fulfilled an equal role as co-researchers.

From a co-researcher perspective, power is fluid, with partners adjusting to change over time. Participants were significantly affected by their experiences as co-researchers in the collaborative research project. In their view, they became community change agents facilitating transformation. Participants thus perceived themselves as co-researchers with equal power relations by virtue of their full participation in decision-making and acting on decisions. Co-researchers experienced power because they could initiate ideas and implement activities. Furthermore, by perceiving themselves as equal co-researchers in a partnership, participants regarded power gained as ‘power with’ (a collective action of working together in synergy). The ‘power with’ synergy is a horizontal relationship underpinned by values of equity, cooperation, equal regard of multiple voices, and decision-making.

This illustrates that participants perceived themselves as co-researchers. In this role, they embraced a collective identity as agents of change who were in turn able to empower others. This capacity to empower others reminds one of ‘power within’. According to co-researchers, ‘power within’ capacitated them to reach out to others. The capacity to empower others was rooted in participants’ confident sense of self-worth and enriched self-knowledge, which seemed to manifest as the demonstrated power of co-researchers. The capacity to empower others can further be seen as an agency to engender hope in themselves and others, that they were able to bring about change in communities.

Closely related to their drive to empower others to facilitate social change, co-researchers in this study indicated that they expressed power by providing leadership. As community leaders, co-researchers perceived themselves as having a voice based on power emanating from the partnership. They felt they were able to share their knowledge with the community and come up with solutions to address psychosocial challenges. Co-researchers became aware of ways to address circumstances and conditions within their communities. In this, they provided leadership, transferred knowledge and created networks. Co-researchers thus saw themselves as community change agents, able to assert ongoing social reconstruction in communities. The powerful perception of themselves as community leaders and change agents was rooted in an enabling environment, characterised by opportunities to negotiate openly, decide on a shared agenda, establish more partnerships and mentor others.

Through a collaborative research project, co-researchers thus enriched their awareness of their own existing strengths. As co-researchers, they experienced themselves as tools to help others and assist with social change. Co-researchers became critical collective resources that supported the community in addressing challenges. This perception of themselves as agents of change who could unlock potential made them experience a sense of well-being, also reflecting their role as partners with equal power. Their collective resources helped relational networks to evolve and increased awareness of change processes and a strengthened commitment to the community.

Given the above context, co-researchers therefore perceived themselves as having ‘power with’ university researchers and ‘power within’ themselves. The power was rooted in an enabling environment in the collaborative research project. Co-researchers expressed power in leadership they provided as a community of practice to facilitate social transformation in new partnership spaces they created.

### **6.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

#### **How do teachers conceptualise power and partnership in participatory research?**

From this study, it emerged that participants conceptualised power as fluid and available, based on various descriptive characteristics they identified. These descriptive characteristics extend existing notions of power by emphasising an alternative view of power in PR. For co-researchers, power entailed the means to provide community leadership for capacity building.

Accordingly, for participating teachers, power in PR was underpinned by the ability to take initiative, implement actions and empower others.

For participants, the opportunity to voice decisions in PR constituted ‘power within’. By voicing decisions, co-researchers embodied power to achieve goals, towards transformation change. In this way, participants appropriated power whilst achieving their personal goals.

Participants furthermore viewed power as a form of leadership to voice their experiences and freely negotiate. To them, power was about opening up new ways of thinking and working, and creating an environment to enable empowerment opportunities. I therefore found that for the participating teachers, partnership was about working together in synergy to achieve a common vision. For co-researchers, working together in synergy may thus result in collective strength, in turn culminating in commitment to a project and deepened appreciation for each other as colleagues. Findings indicate that interdependency on each other’s expertise, experience and knowledge is critical. The higher the levels of commitment, the more trust will be present, resulting in mutual relationships that may typically last long. As such, for participants, partnership is about translating the benefits of mutual relationships to mobilise networks and further enhance community development that could in turn promote transformation.

Finally, co-researchers equated power and partnership to an enabling participatory project environment. Such an enabling environment is evident in opportunities for participation and empowerment. To achieve partnership and power implies the creation of a symbiotic relationship to promote trust and foster a joint spirit of knowledge creation. Therefore, power and partnership in collaborative research implies a process of finding potential synergies in voice, based on valuing trust and knowledge sharing to unlock partners’ mutual strengths for social change.

### **6.3.3 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

**How can power be expressed by teachers and co-researchers within a participatory process?**

In this study, co-researchers expressed power as being able to share expertise and have their voices, knowledge and experiences valued in a collaborative research project. For them, equality of voice promoted inclusive participation. The latter implied full engagement,

resulting in a leadership platform for making decisions and identifying opportunities to implement these.

The notion of ‘power as leadership’ among co-researchers allowed for opportunities to give direction and scope to achieve the mission and vision of a partnership. Co-researchers believed that as leaders they were empowered and could in turn empower others. For example, co-researchers taught other teachers how to use the asset-based intervention in their schools. To them, empowerment was being responsive to the environment. Empowerment meant seeking their own solutions and developing new ways of addressing challenges by relying on resources (assets and strengths) in their immediate environment. Additionally, for co-researchers, empowerment implied commitment and building confidence and competence. When co-researchers felt empowered and able to be involved in multiple aspects of the project, they experienced a sense of ownership. Sense of ownership was thus achieved through immersion in a project with the view of a transformative endeavour.

#### **6.3.4 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 4**

##### **What are the relations of power at play in the specific activities of the STAR intervention?**

Change in power distribution requires varying levels of power to facilitate participation. Consequently, spaces of participation need to be created across the spectrum of partners. In this way, power is typically demonstrated when partners contribute meaningfully and equally towards the realisation of the vision of a partnership. Co-researchers in the current study expressed that they became members of a collective community of practice. They gained confidence as they participated in the collaborative project. Co-researchers realised that a few factors contributed towards forming a community of practice. The community of practice levelled the field of play, and thus equalised power relations between teachers as co-researchers, and university researchers. Two main contributing factors are consequently described.

First, teachers attributed trust that evolved over time as a contributing factor to establishing a community of practice. The more teachers (co-researchers) and university researchers interacted, the more the former were afforded a platform to direct the agenda of the project, resulting in the relationship deepening. Nurturing trust by allowing partners to relate easily with one another plausibly solidified interdependence on each other. Partners’ realisation of

being interdependent on each other's expertise and roles seemed to strengthen mutual respect for one another's voice and contributions, inevitably building trust as well. With trust both a cause and outcome of interdependence, exclusive power became inclusive power as both partners appreciated the value that other partners added. As mentioned earlier, I found that through trust, co-researchers could feel confident in their capabilities and responsibilities, and developed a sense of ownership of the project.

Secondly, co-researchers (teachers) categorised the acquisition of asset-based knowledge as an opportunity that unlocked their abilities to contribute collectively to a community of practice. The more teachers participated and interacted with university partners, the more confident they were about ways to address different problems faced by the community. Co-researchers (teachers) viewed themselves as able to solve problems and seek solutions. In fulfilling the role of co-researchers, teachers developed confidence in their ability to change a situation that had previously been a challenge. In this manner, teachers chose to use the knowledge they had by sharing it with other community members to address challenges. Their appropriation of power was visible when they used asset-based knowledge to influence decisions, action and empowerment of others. Teachers were thus positive decision makers, directing action and providing leadership. They indicated that, in this project, they located themselves as co-researchers who experienced power equal to that of their university counterparts.

### **6.3.5 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 5**

#### **In which manner might teachers as co-researchers benefit from participation in an asset-based intervention?**

As stated, co-researchers viewed contextual issues (emotional, physical and social) as significant for enabling participation. Co-researchers indicated that an enabling environment influenced partners' emotions, and depended on how partners related to each other. Building and nurturing relationships were important to create an emotionally enabling (supportive) environment. In such an environment, free participation can be promoted where co-researchers can feel that they are accepted and their contributions recognised. In this manner, co-researchers may benefit when they feel appreciated and their experiences, knowledge and voices are treated as valued contributions. Furthermore, an emotionally enabling environment may promote learning and openness about issues, particularly when dealing with highly stigmatised topics such as HIV and AIDS. A supportive environment may then facilitate

opportunities to generate solutions in a spirit of mutual understanding. An enabling emotional environment will in turn allow partners to attain goals for capacity building and empowerment (where partners come together for collective action). Subsequently, co-researchers will probably benefit as a supportive environment appears to enable leadership directed at social change.

The social and physical enabling environment that was evident in this study, implied that co-researchers could expand opportunities to build networks beyond working only with university researchers. The social environment of a funded collaborative research project provided teachers, in the role of co-researchers, with opportunities to share experiences, ideas and knowledge with other co-researchers (in this case teachers from other schools) and the wider community like businesses, social service providers and parents. As network opportunities increased, more knowledge could be shared. Consequently, collective action could be taken to address problems and transform communities. Co-researchers felt that they benefitted by gaining skills (such as research skills), and learning how to mobilise these. Newly acquired skills and competencies seemed to boost their confidence which they in turn used to lead and guide others to mobilise change. In addition, co-researchers seemed to become more aware of strengths which they had not mobilised in the past. Co-researchers subsequently recognised and appreciated their knowledge as a resource for facilitating change.

#### **6.3.6 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 6**

**Which factors can facilitate or hinder the process of partnership between teachers as co-researchers and university researchers in a research partnership?**

From their perspective, a couple of factors served as barriers to co-researchers during the partnership process. Co-researchers firstly identified time as an obstacle to establishing and maintaining partnerships. The STAR collaborative research project constituted an additional commitment to existing obligations, such as teachers' teaching cadre, family time and other social responsibilities. For them, an additional project, in their already tight schedules, posed a threat to the stability they were accustomed to. More specifically, the collaborative project implied responsibilities and courage, as co-researchers had to make action plans, implement and monitor the project – which they had not necessarily done before. These activities occurred after school hours, with co-researchers even contributing during weekends. This

interfered with personal (family) time and caused some co-researchers to be less committed than the others.

Additionally, co-researchers were required to network and facilitate access of certain social services to children and/or families. Networking activities occurred either during or after school hours. Consequently, in their role as co-researchers, teachers occasionally had to sacrifice teaching time to accommodate these activities. In this regard, teachers also had to do counselling or assist as special needs teachers when the need arose. This increased their workload and occasionally detracted them from their core role as facilitators of learning. All these competing demands could have had an adverse effect on the commitment of a few of the co-researchers.

Initially, co-researchers distrusted their university partners and viewed them as intruders/outsideers in their lives. In the initial partnership phase, co-researchers were somewhat sceptical of the intentions of the university partners. Language differences between co-researchers and university partners meant that co-researchers were initially not completely comfortable when university researchers spoke in their mother tongue (Afrikaans) during informal sessions/encounters. This tended to confirm some socialised doubts and fears, and contributed to initial mistrust of intentions and expectations.

Finally, at the beginning of the partnership, co-researchers were unsure if they were regarded and treated as equal research partners. They were not sure if their particular skills and abilities were valued by university researchers. In addition, co-researchers stated that they initially did not feel confident of coping with the challenges they and the communities faced. During the first stages of the collaborative project, co-researchers were thus hesitant to voice their opinion as they held a preconceived notion that they could be ridiculed.

#### **6.4 FINAL REFLECTIONS**

In this section, I discuss the findings relating to the primary research question as indicated in chapter 1. In this manner, I indicate the contributions of the study to existing theory on power and partnerships, as well as research methodology and other applications to the profession of educational psychology. I conclude the section by reflecting on the limitations of the study.

#### 6.4.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

**How can insight into teachers as co-researchers' experiences of power relationships broaden knowledge about partnerships in participatory methodology?**

This study revealed findings on teachers' experiences of power and partnerships in PR. When I entered the research field, the participating teachers had been involved in the STAR participatory project since 2003. Teachers had experienced different phases of the PR process. Initially, they were not sure if their knowledge was valued, which translated into their perception of not having power and fulfilling the envisaged role. In the initial phase of working with university researchers, participating teachers thus relied on university partners to facilitate and provide guidance during workshops. Additionally, teachers seemed unsure of what was expected of them as co-researchers and did not completely trust the university researchers. While university partners engaged participating teachers to identify challenges and plan for solutions, the teachers initially did not mobilise existing assets and resources to provide solutions. As such, there was a period when co-researchers experienced limited power, not sharing ownership of the research. This experience was exacerbated by issues of conflicting agendas and actions potentially undermining the goal of PR through established partnerships.

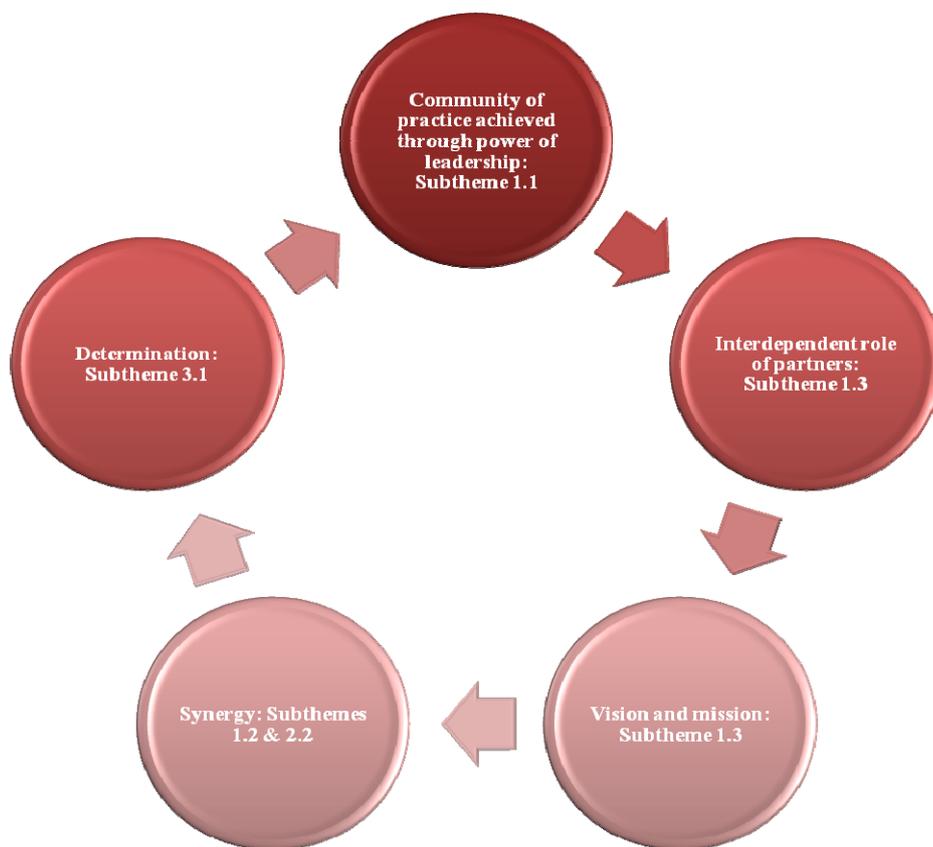
As the participating teachers continued to collaborate with the university researchers, trust was built. Simultaneously, participants were seeking to fit in and understand their roles in the collaborative project. Gradually they were able to identify, mobilise and manage assets (their own and the community) to provide psychosocial support in their community contexts. This involved dialogue, frequent interaction and building rapport. As co-researchers, teachers seemed to gradually perceive themselves as a group of people who were skilled and knowledgeable, and who could fulfil a collaborative role in the school-community context. Co-researchers began to see themselves as members of a community of practice who could lead a process to build community capacity by empowering others. This process manifested as co-researchers built capacity in their local neighbourhood by giving guidance, based on shared decisions, enabling structures and empowering mechanisms to involve others at different levels.

The above actions indicate co-researchers' determination, because they believed that they had what it takes for a new beginning of hope and light to challenged school-communities. Co-

researchers perceived themselves as equal partners in the research and consequently took ownership of what they were doing. Inclusion and equality, in terms of voice and authority, was evident in co-researchers' regard of a levelled playing field in terms of power relations. To teachers, collective equal efforts were a signal of synergy in partnership for change. For them, the partnership was grounded in values that allowed partners to define and take control of challenges they faced as a community, using their valued knowledge to facilitate change.

Based on my findings related to teachers as co-researchers in a participatory partnership, I now construct the concept of *power-sharing partnerships*. Constructing the concept of power-sharing partnerships, is innovative as it adds to an extension of Gaventa's power cube framework that goes beyond the forms, spaces and levels of power by arguing for inclusive participation in participatory projects. The study thus adds insight to participatory competencies which are critical to partnerships that enable participants to act as agents of change in PR.

I summarise this insight of power-sharing partnerships in a framework for effective power-sharing partnerships (Figure 6.1). This framework, with five interrelated elements (community of practice achieved through the power of leadership, identifying vision and mission, synergy, interdependent role of partners, and determination), incorporates themes that emerged in this study (see section 4.1) and provides insight into the way that teachers (as co-researchers) conceptualised power in PR. Power-sharing partnerships posit power as holistic and sustainable participatory partnerships due to synergies and unlocked power relations.



**Figure 6.1: Power-sharing partnership framework**

As explained in chapter 2, power-sharing partnership anchors the concept of power, partnerships and community capacity building within Gaventa’s power cube framework. Based on the findings of this study, I define power-sharing partnership as the ability of co-researchers to view themselves as a community of practice. This community of practice regards individual voices and experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge. The varied frames of experience and knowledge may be mobilised to provide leadership, aimed at transforming a community. Collectively, power-sharing partnerships are a platform for community capacity building and a catalyst for transformation, where partners can create synergy for collectively working together with the understanding that each partner can have equal influence in a partnership. The partnership will be guided by concerted vision and regard for the interdependence of each other’s strengths, assets, roles and capabilities. In a power-sharing partnership, participatory projects culminate in positive synergy in partnerships. Power-sharing partnerships emphasises equal participation. Similarly, in power-sharing partnerships the role of agency to implement decisions will result in partners achieving their vision. Partners in power-sharing partnerships will thus create inclusive spaces, levels and forms of power to become co-researchers. In this manner, the power-

sharing partnership framework can enable partners to leverage power relations at play to achieve equality as co-researchers.

In the following paragraphs, I unpack the new concept of power-sharing partnership. First, in PR partnership, developing sound *leadership* is important. By definition, leadership as power requires collaboration among the partners that promotes confidence, competence and regard for prior knowledge. Such leadership is based on having a deep, intuitive sense of passion about facilitating transformative change and fulfilling a role that builds communities to come together. Power as leadership is about being able to make a difference in a community, as mirrored by the aspirations of the participants in this study. For example, teachers as co-researchers played the role of facilitators, thus embracing leadership. They worked together in synergy with university partners, community and parents to provide guidance with the goal of community capacity building. The synergy of working together was demonstrated by their willingness to work with, and learn from, other individuals and the community at large. Each partner's role was thus recognised in promoting community interest.

In such a relationship, the core is to promote a non-dominating, transforming power with the ultimate goal of community development. Additionally, through this synergy, voices will be heard, spaces of co-empowering participation created and decisions acted upon. In this study, co-researchers indicated that they had leadership as power as they decided on activities, implemented and monitored projects, thereby indicating that their voice, experience and knowledge were valued. Members of the partnership became a community of practice where spaces of participation were open and everyone perceived themselves as equal co-researchers, armed with relevant skills, assets and strengths to contribute and thus provide guidance with the view to drive and achieve the vision of the partnership. Findings from this study therefore support the first element of power as leadership, as participants indicated that power is about having the capacity for leadership, based on the knowledge and experience that one possesses and ultimately making decisions which will translate into taking action.

Secondly, insight into power-sharing partnerships in PR implies the creation of a *vision and mission*, thereby staying focused on the big picture. Partnerships implies leaders who possess the power to look beyond the narrow interests of their own, beyond the interests of the partnership itself, and focus primarily on the needs and priorities of the community as a whole. In this study, co-researchers indicated that once their potential was unleashed, they could take charge of the project, providing the scope in terms of the vision and mission of the

project. Such a perspective embraces the variety of aspects of a community and will inevitably result in the desired social transformation. I propose that establishing the vision and mission of partnership, is an opportunity for both partners to ask themselves if they have the desire, capacity and structural support to engage in meaningful research partnerships. Additionally, such an opportunity allow for partners to develop a well-conceived vision based on an envisioned future, a future that is defined in terms of what the partnership stands for (core values) and why it exists (core purpose). A community of practice, through leadership, uses vision as the criterion against which to judge the suitability of a proposed course of action, because it clearly represents that which is central and enduring to the partnership. Findings in this study reveal that co-researchers' conceptualisation of partnership and power was based on the ability to have a vision for the partnership and establishing an enabling environment that could nurture and sustain the partnership to unlock its efficiency and realisation.

Thirdly, through power-sharing partnerships, leaders may create a framework for action-based partnership that aim to achieve high levels of *synergy*. A high level of synergy is based on synchronised responsibilities and actions of partners to create visible spaces of achieving the established vision of the partnership. Additionally, through vision and leadership, partners can communicate such a framework compellingly, mobilise resources, and guide action toward long-term aims. In a power-sharing partnership, vision is leadership's most powerful medium, not merely based on its message, but as a passage for achieving high-level synergy. I therefore argue that high-level synergy is about the power to find potential synergies to be empowered, to make decisions and take action, unlock potential and thereby facilitate transformation. Moreover, the success of a partnership will be judged by the ability and capacity to deliver on commitments. The findings of this study reveal that participants valued the role of agency in relation to power and partnership, by being able to achieve high levels of synergy among partners and deliver on commitments as espoused in a shared vision.

Fourth, I propose that power-sharing partnerships are based on the *interdependent role of partners*, who work within visible power structures that embrace a fresh perspective and knowledge. My argument, supported by findings of this study, is that in a partnership the need exists to create an enabling environment, through which all partners are valued as important stakeholders who generate enthusiasm and creativity, and keep members engaged and on task. Co-researchers in this study worked hand in hand with all partners and thus indicated that the skills that were brought in by others complemented theirs. In a partnership, the voice and

experience of each partner is critical and treated as valuable knowledge. Partners visibly acknowledged the complementary skills, knowledge and experience that they brought to the fore and further acknowledged that they needed each other's leadership as a community of practice to realise the vision of the partnership. As such, the findings of this study revealed the importance of forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships based on the complementary skills of each partner to contribute to achieving a broad goal.

Such a symbiotic relationship will promote and acknowledge the diversity that partners bring in, their capacity to mobilise resources, and the diversity of their interests, needs, and assets. Most importantly, all partners will be interdependent on each other's strengths, thereby complementing the systemic, visionary leadership exercised by each. Together, partners will thus become a community of practice who view partnerships as personal since they begin with, rely on and nurture personal contacts. Finally, partners will realise that their interdependence is based on loyalty and the continuous nurturing of trust, building relationships, and thus jointly facilitating the desired social transformation in PR.

Leadership as power is thus about having a well-conceived mission and vision, achieving high levels of synergy, interdependent roles of partners as well as *determination*, going hand in hand to achieve power-sharing partnerships. Of these five interrelated elements, I argue that determination is the core mechanism through which participatory partnership may create and build the broad base of power-sharing partnerships that multisectoral collaboration typically requires. Teachers in this study indicated that they had the drive and passion to persevere to the end, to ensure that they realised their dream and vision. Power-sharing partnerships should foster a sense of determination of all partners, joint ownership and collective responsibility, from which leadership emerges. With time and experience, determination of all partners will thus result in the insight that power is not a fixed quantity and that power sharing does not resemble a zero-sum game. Determination to achieve transformation will subsequently create a sense of power sharing, which will in turn create a sense of shared ownership and mutual benefits that may empower all partners. The nature of power in participatory partnerships is thus about the determination of all partners who view power sharing as an authentic move to achieve transformation. This study reveals that participants perceived themselves to be equal co-researchers and thus achieve their goals by means of agency of determination.

#### 6.4.2 REFLECTING ON LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I henceforth reflect on the limitations of this study with regard to differences in language, culture, selection of participants, researcher's background as an educational psychologist, complexity of teachers' competencies, facilitating group discussions and the topic of power relations and partnerships and limited to the perspective of teachers as co-researchers.

I entered the research field as an African from a foreign country (Botswana) speaking predominantly English and being a middle-class graduate woman. My culture, background and home language was thus different from that of the teachers who participated in the study. The manner in which I experienced differences from the participants, who mostly speak Xhosa and Zulu, could have affected my views and interpretations. Additionally, due to language differences, I occasionally had to rely on interpretations. In order to address this potential limitation of language and culture differences, I had to acknowledge it first. I also relied on regular reflections on my viewpoints and remained open on expanding my understanding of the participants' perspectives (as suggested by Moss, 2002; Sultana, 2007; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). I built an open relationship with the participants, which was based on trust and as such assisted me with verifying possible uncertainties. I also used member checking in an attempt to understand and represent the teachers' perspectives instead of my own.

All selected teachers participating in the study were purposely selected, due to their participation in the STAR longitudinal study. This could have resulted in a possible Hawthorne effect (Cohen *et al.*, 2003) in the sense that the teachers were familiar with the logistics and conduct within STAR. Subsequently, they could possibly have modified their behaviour and provided responses to please the research team. A possible positive response could thus have been influenced by the fact that teachers in this study have built and nurtured good relationships with the research team of the university. In an attempt to avoid the Hawthorne effect from occurring, I used a variety of data collection techniques, relied on reflexivity and employed member checking (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Creswell, 1988).

While the participating teachers were unique, they also shared similar characteristics in that they taught at schools faced with similar socio-economic challenges such as poverty, which may limit the generalisability of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). However, generalisability was not the aim of the study. Findings may be transferred to other similar

contexts based on the reader's judgement. The participants were also predominantly female teachers, meaning that the study is limited to a specific career (teaching profession) and possibly to a certain extent to gender. Again, I did not intend to generalise the findings. Yet, I included an audit trail so that similar and further research may be conducted in an attempt to obtain more findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

I further faced the challenge of facilitating group discussions on the sensitive topic of power relations. Power is usually used with descriptive words such as 'power over', denoting dominance of those of the upper class. The perceptions presented in this study are those that teachers themselves attributed to their experiences with PR, working with university researchers. An important limitation in this regard is the possibility that teachers might have presented a biased view. Teachers had invested considerable time in this project and developed positive relationships with facilitators who came from the university. However, I believe that the findings are trustworthy. I continuously reflected, adhering to the principles of conducting research from a feminist perspective. Feminists encourage reflexivity as an opportunity to critically examine power relations and politics in research and to assume responsibility and accountability during data generation and interpretation (Falconer Al-Hindi, 2007; Sultana, 2007).

In addition, this was my first experience using qualitative research applying PRA principles. At times I was not sure as to whether my communication was well conceived and understood by the participants. I addressed this potential limitation by means of continuous consultation with my supervisors and reflections in my research journal. In this regard, Chambers (1994b) encourages reversal of learning between researchers and participants, with the aim of sharing information and ideas among partners. During such role reversals, reflexivity can be relied on as important strategy.

In terms of my role, I had to differentiate between being a researcher and a trained educational psychologist. It was important for me to distinguish between these roles due to the sensitive nature of the research topic. I have been trained to read emotions and provide counselling. I faced the challenge of distinguishing between interviewing as researcher and as counsellor, particularly when I had to do group discussions and interviews on issues of power relations and trust. I addressed this challenge by borrowing from the concept of empathetic identification (Schwandt, 1994) by means of self-awareness, self-reflection and debriefing with my supervisors. Additionally, through the relationships that had been established in the

STAR project, teachers seemed comfortable with expressing their views and opinions and as such shared their experiences in an open and candid manner. In the same manner, I too remained open and welcoming.

Lastly, the scope of my study merely covered the perspectives of teachers as co-researchers. Partnering with all stakeholders as equal members is one of the principles and values of participatory research and researchers' choices about when to collaborate are multifaceted (Armstrong, Loomis, & Mairena-Torres, 2012). As a researcher, I had to decide when and how to collaborate. As a result, I did not include the perspectives of all stakeholders involved in the STAR intervention project, but narrowed my study to perspectives of teachers only. Even though participatory research is about working with all stakeholders in order for them to fulfil more active role in the process (Patton, 2002), the value of equal partnership should also be weighed in terms of other values (Armstrong *et al.*, 2012). In my case, I could not include teachers in the design of the study, as the participating teachers were already active participants of the STAR intervention. My goal was to determine the extent to which they experienced their role as equal co-researchers of the STAR project. My study was therefore limited to focus on the perspectives of teachers as co-researchers in the STAR intervention project only. Additionally, I could not include participants in the study design and planning since I wanted to investigate the degree to which they have been involved in the research design and planning of the STAR project.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the conclusion of this study, I offer some recommendations for future research, practice and training.

### **6.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Building on the findings of this study, future studies may focus on:

- Using participatory partnerships to map the structures of partners using the power-sharing partnership framework in understanding dynamics and interactions of partners.
- Involving other stakeholders such as the wider community that was co-opted by the teachers to partner with them and exploring their experiences of collaborating in addressing community psychosocial problems using the asset-based approach in PR.

- Investigating the meaning and understanding of power and partnerships from the perspective of university researchers and peers.
- Investigating the impact of empowerment and the gain for co-researchers in such a process of empowerment.
- Exploring contributions that teachers could make through scholarship by participating in collaborative research.
- The area of agenda and incentive conflict as a benefit for engaging in collaborative PR.
- Investigating to what extent teachers could be psychologically influenced to report on only positive experiences in a collaborative project.
- Exploring the feasibility of establishing committees within a collaborative project with the aim of efficient administration and management of partnerships.

### **6.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

When developing a power-sharing participatory partnership, the framework that I developed may be adopted as university researchers engage community (e.g. teachers) in PR. The framework may assist with understanding how equal power relations can be achieved in a manner that will benefit the partners. Special attention needs to be paid to the design of collaborative participatory projects in a manner that the vision and mission are clearly articulated and understood by all partners.

It is critical to investigate all partners' understanding and conception of power in collaborative projects. Many decisions are based on whether partners feel that they have the power to be equal members of a partnership, thus making them members of a community of practice. With the conception of power established, the use of participatory methodology can facilitate consensus-building and social interaction among co-researchers. The concept of power strongly emphasises the standpoint of voice and a sense of feeling valuable in terms of one's prior knowledge. Furthermore, by understanding all partners' understanding of power, social cohesion and trust may be built, which in turn is important for partnerships to flourish and achieve a mutually beneficial synergy that is based on power sharing.

Additionally, co-researchers should be given constructive feedback on their practice while using the asset-based approach in PR. Such feedback could enable them to reflect and ensure that they are still in line with the proposed framework on power-sharing partnerships.

Teachers should be regarded as possessing the necessary experience and knowledge for identifying psychosocial problems in communities and ultimately fulfilling a significant role in assisting with solutions. They are social change agents and should be valued as members of a community of practice that could contribute meaningfully to facilitate social change in communities.

Co-researchers should thus be seen as self-inquirers and reflectors of their practice. I regard the STAR intervention as a meaningful tool and model that could be used to implement the asset-based approach with the view of bringing about social change in communities. Therefore, the need exists to be intentional in the design of research efforts, to ensure that interventions such as the asset-based approach have positive effects among participants.

### **6.5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING**

The proposed framework I developed could be incorporated and adapted in teacher training curricula to teach teachers on implementing collaborative projects. This could equip teachers with competencies that may assist them in engaging in collaborative partnerships. Furthermore, the framework could be extended to the training of psychologists and people in other helping professions, equipping them with alternative intervention strategies for assisting communities to seek solutions while undergoing social change.

In addition, the power-sharing framework could be used to teach researchers and methodologists techniques and skills for conducting collaborative research projects with communities. This framework could serve as an introduction to PR methodology being incorporated with PRA principles. The framework may assist researchers and methodologists in avoiding challenges such as being referred to as outsiders when working with communities. Additionally, it could allow for researchers and methodologists to regard the voice, experience and knowledge of communities as valid, resulting in communities experiencing a sense of power and partnership as co-researchers.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

PR partnership implies the possibility of communities and university researchers working in a synergistic manner that could result in social change if both partners value each other's prior experience and situated knowledge as legitimate. In this study, I attempted to explore how teachers have perceived themselves in a collaborative project as co-researchers, with particular emphasis on issues of power relations and partnerships.

I determined that no neutral field of knowledge production exists and that all knowledge production is influenced by various standpoints in social class. It is through the various standpoints and collective experiences that the total sum of partnership may be achieved based on reciprocal empowerment. As such, co-researchers (teachers) in this study perceived themselves to be the collective ray of hope for their communities, where they could promote social change. They perceived themselves as having the power that unlocked realities. As an outcome of their determination and perseverance based on their collective experiences of being empowered, they created an environment that facilitated ease of addressing psychosocial problems, thereby transforming communities. Furthermore, they perceived themselves to be equal partners who could inquire, reflect and contribute meaningfully by breaking frontiers and taking action. They became the keys that unlocked potential that everyone could gain from, based on their equal participation.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates through the collective voices, experiences and situated perspectives and knowledge of the participating teachers, that achieving power-sharing partnerships in collaborative research is possible. The study further demonstrates that power-sharing partnerships is about power being fluid and positive, bringing about change in communities and providing opportunities for community capacity building. I end this journey by expressing my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the situated knowledge of the teachers' experiences as valuable knowledge that allowed me some insight into their participatory power-sharing partnerships.



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## APPENDICES

- Appendix A:** Video recordings \*
- Appendix B:** Video of photo poster \*
- Appendix C:** Video of PRA visual activity \*
- Appendix D:** Audio-recordings \*
- Appendix E:** Interview and interview schedules \*
- Appendix F:** Proceedings and transcribed conversations \*
- Appendix G:** Transcripts
- Appendix H:** Member checking
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- Appendix M:** Field notes

\* (Enclosed laser CD)



## **Appendix A-F:**

**(Enclosed CD)**



# Appendix G:

## Transcripts



## **TRANSCRIPTIONS: EC & MP**

**GROUP DISCUSSION; FOCUS  
GROUP, PRA-BASED  
ACTIVITIES, INTERVIEWS.**

# Transcriptions- Video/Audio

## Ngilandi 2010- 19<sup>th</sup> May

AUDIO-DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER NGILANDI

**REC 001- PHASE 1- DEFINITION- CONCEPTUALIZATION OF POWER & PARTNERSHIP**

**Interviewer- Beth:** Thank you for Adapting and accommodating us- Siyabonga- R is not here with us, she is attending a forum, but she will be here over the weekend on Friday- Dankie,.

Once again, we are in a room with people from the varsity. We appreciate and we hope we make an impact in your school- over to you B

**Int.:** thank you ladies; it's a pleasure to meet you again. Alright, thank you L. It's a pleasure to be welcomed here again, i kind of disappeared. I appreciate the time you have committed to meet with us and also working with L and R. I am back to ask about the project, how you have been interacting with the project. My purpose here is to find out how have been your experiences working in the project within the community and with the people from the university. In order to do that, we will do four activities, as we share our experiences and perspective on working in the project.

First of all I want you to help me understand something-here is a paper, I want to understand issues of power. You always use the word power all the time, don't you? In relation to this project that you have been working on since you started-remember the time when you met with H and T. What is your definition of "power"? How does power happen- describe power to other people. Brainstorm on that as a group- what do you think power is?

**Int.** - I am going to give you time so that you think about power. Discuss and write your thoughts on the provided paper. If you have got any questions, please do not hesitate to ask?

### DEFINITION OF POWER PHASE 1

**Int.:** if I came to you and asked what power is, how would you respond? In siSwati power is "Amandla"- could you tell us your understanding of the meaning of "Amandla"

**T1:-** when you first came here, we thought that may be you wanted to change something. So we think power is to follow our dreams.

**Int.-** okay, write that (what you said): bring change, dream, hope

**T1:-** Even if something is difficult on our side, with strength, power we will overcome-no matter how challenging situation. With power, we can achieve

**Int.:** - so you say P is hope, optimism, strength, overcome barrier? You see, we could have just used the word "amandla" from the beginning

**INT.:-** ok, thank you. Now, what is your understanding of the word partnership?

**T1- :** partnership is 2 or more groups working together

**INT.:-** what else. What is partnership all about?

**T1:-** it means, let's say in production, if you are working together, you share ideas, if one fail, then you all fail.

**T2-** Partnership is about what you both what wants to achieve-achievement

Power is achieving goals

Power is agency to bring change; overcoming challenges/problems

Positive attributes of power

Partnership as working in a team  
Partnership as consultation

**T1-** in partnership, you make sure that every time you combine your ideas as a team.

**Beth-** and what else?

**T2-** partnership is about achieving and having common goals. What we want to achieve. It's about commitment

**Beth-** T2, you said you are in a TLO. What else do you expect in TLO members?

**T2-** I think partnership is about cooperation

**Beth-** okay, thanks. Anything else you thinking of. Think of marriage?

**T2-** oh, yes, partnership we have to faithful, there must be trust.

**Beth-** I think that's enough for definition on our two concepts. Perhaps its time to move into our other activities.

Partnership  
as sharing  
information

Working as a  
team with same  
vision

being honest,  
trust and  
respect

## POSTER PHOTOS ACTIVITY-PHASE 2

**Beth-** You been working together with L and R since 2005, first with T and H from the University of Pretoria

**Beth-** since 2005, we have been working with Ngilandi

**Beth-** Now what I want to understand, you have so far given explanation or rather definitions of your understanding of what "power" and "partnerships" mean to you. You have mentioned "making decisions, hope, ability to change, etc, etc and in partnership you mentioned working together, trust, etc etc. Now I want to bring you back in memory lane through pictures which are in poster style since 2005-2010. (*Showing posters of pictures*) do you remember the pictures? When you look at these pictures, I want you to indicate when you felt you had power or felt powerless for each year. I want you to share with me your experience of what was going on in each year as you participated in the project and how you were feeling particularly in relations to power and partnership.

**Beth-** if you feel you had power in a particular year, use the power "tool" to indicate. You will see that on each poster, there is a straight line drawn, and on each end there are two words "power or powerless". The word power is to the far right while the word powerless is to the far left. So if you think you had power the "power tool" will indicate towards the far right if you had less power it tool will be placed towards the left. How much did you have for each year and don't mind to look at your definition of power and partnership. I want to understand in my study, if you had power, did you feel like you were making decisions. How did you educators experience power in a partnership?

(Educators look at the posters- they start with picture posters for year 2005-2010;- they brainstorm)

**Beth-** think about how you felt as you were part of the project over the years, what were your experiences

(Educators going over the pictures)

**T1-** WE WERE EXCITED TO BE Part of the project, but we were wondering why the two white ladies we here for? So were afraid because we were not confident, vey scared. We thought that may be what we would say will be wrong.

**Beth-** so you were scared in 2005, worried?

**Beth-** what else was going on in your mind? What did you think about the people from UP who were with you in the project?

Enthusiastic yet  
suspicious

**T1-** at first we did not know what is it they wanted from us? What was it that they expected from us> I thought it was a one time off visiting, I did not know that it would last long. After that they kept on coming.

Mistrust of academic researchers

**Beth-** what did you feel when they kept on coming?

**T1-** I was excited, it showed that they were serious, they kept coming because they were going to help the community coz it was the first time I felt I wanted to help the community- but I did not have strategies and what is it I can do for them (community). As time goes on my eyes were open, I knew what should have be done for the community. They helped us a lot, because this partnership with them opened our eyes.

Openness, begin to trust and gaining knowledge

**Beth-** okay, thank you. I want you to talk about 2005. Remember we discussing power. Kindly look at the 2005 poster photos again to remind yourself where you were in that project. Tell me how you felt and experienced in terms of power, were you bale to influence and make decisions at that time. I would like to know why you put the power tool on that point in the line. Why lots of power.

**T1-** okay, alright-mmmm, I think we put the power tool there because; first of all, we were not confident, not making much influence. We were not sure at that time if we could influence teachers and the community.

Not yet sure about intention, still silent, not making impact

**Beth-** you mentioned that power is decision making. So are you saying according to 2005 you were powerless and not making decision.

**T1-** mmm, yess, not able to decide.

**Beth-** partnership- you mentioned that partnership is when two or more people work together and other things.

In 2005, felt powerless since not in change of running the project

**Beth-** (repeats all the descriptive words of partnership as stated by the educators)

**Beth-** so in 2005, what were you thinking about partnership in the project?

**T1-** hahahaha(laughing)

**Beth\_** what was going on, share with us? What were your experiences, how was partnership like in 2005.

**T1-** yeah, there was partnership, but it was a new project and we were not sure about what we were expected to do. However, we had trust that what the UP people brought to us will take us somewhere, but we did not trust them. We thought, what is it that they wanted from us, especially from this area, they came far from Pretoria. We were asking, why, why, why, why. What is it that they wanted to achieve? We thought may be they wanted to expose us, or area because it's a rural area.

Not in control, but fear and mistrust of academic researchers, not feeling like equal partners. No voice.

**Beth-** how about cooperation?

**T1-** mmm, there was cooperation, we worked together as a team, we had a common goal- to, to to, to-what can I say, to say to help reduce problems of HIV/AIDS and help the learners who are affected and infected..

Team work

**Beth-** but would you say at the very beginning both of the two partners were really sharing ideas? Educators vs. UP people

**T1-**through their guidance, we were able to share ideas of what they wanted. In 2005 it was mostly the idea of UP people.

Project dominated/led by academic researchers

**Beth-** so are you saying the goal was of the UP people?

**T1-**yah, yah, goal of partnership came from the UP people, it was one sided.

**Beth-** ok, thank you. Are you happy or would you like to add something more?

Project initiative led by academic researchers

**T1-** no, we fine.

**Beth-** Ok, now we go to 2006. I see you power tool is large, moving more toward the power side on the right.

**T1-** yes, ok

**Beth-** and why are you saying lots of power in 2006. Why?

**T1-** hahahahaha (laughing).

**Beth-** share with us. Why are you saying lots of power, what is going on? How are you experiencing the whole project?

**T1-** oh boy, you know in 2006, we felt we were powerful because through the project we managed to divide the activities within the project on our own and able to manage the project, we were able to influence the community. As you can see from the pictures, there were lots of community people participating, for instance some were doing bead project. They we able to participate, even the garden. That is I say we were in control with lots of power, we decided on our course of action.

Agent of change- influenced and controlled direction of project. Capacity to coopt community members . level of responsibility increased

**Beth-** you mentioned that partnership is acting. Can you explain and elaborate that in relation to 2006.

**T1-** yah, we acted according to what we wanted. You know, one thing is overcome barriers; our community, most of them are not working, a lot of them, but in 2006, community members we able to do bead work through our initiative, items that we made we sold, these members stress were overcome, because what they did would take them far.

Achieving own dreams and vision & making impact in community

**Beth-** as educators, what we you doing and feeling such that you would say you overcame barriers.

**T1-** wow, we educators were excited, happy and confident

**Beth-** why

**T1-** what we wanted to do was achieved, we were able to achieve because power is about change, power is about making decision and we were able to influence.

Achieving goals,  
transforming  
lives

**Beth-** you mentioned that power is about achieving dreams, now were you able to live the dream in 2006?

**T1-** our dream came to be because we wanted a garden and reaped what we sore.

Exercising  
agency and  
acting on it to  
achieve goals

**Beth-** okay and...mmmm...oh, you mentioned that power is about instructing people to do what you tell them. Can you explain that experience in relation to 2006

**T1-** yes, yes, yes, 2006. We had community members in 2006 who came to here to join us in the project and we told them what to do and they complied. And they also took what they learnt here to their community.

Provided  
leadership,  
guidance and  
being able to  
bring in  
community

**Beth-** would you like to add anything on power in 2006?

**T1-** I think power is hope and strength; they are able to make a living. We were taking lead, mentoring others. Power is about, is about our voices being heard, we were heard, and we decided on the project. We picked the area(activities to do within the project) and we divided ourselves in activities.

Give others  
opportunity &  
leading them.  
Making decision  
& initiating

**Beth-** Ok, now lets talk about partnership in 2006.

**T1-** ok, trust was very very strong. You know when we produced; we took our products and gave it to them.

Mutual respect,  
trust for each  
other(researchers  
& educators)

**Beth-** how about commitment and cooperation

**T1-**yes, yah, yes. We are looking for change. Learners come from primary school. If they can be supported from there, I think they will continue what they are doing here.

**Beth-** Amm- 2009-10..mmm you say power is about acting. Can you share with us about your experience on acting in 2009-10. What we you doing to act?

Agents of  
change,  
providing  
leadership &  
capacity to act  
and influence  
Empowering  
others

**T1-** 2010, we went to the neighbour schools several schools, we were acting because we sat with primary school educators and explained what we were doing and why we decided they should join the group and again we managed to divided ourselves since big group now( language+ literacy, garden, career guidance and counselling, staff abilities)

**Beth-** being able to divide group into four sections, could you say its about decision making?

**T1-** yes, of course its part of decision making.

**Beth-** Am gonna do the last activity. Ok thanks.(chit chat). Ok now we have talked about partnership and power.

(Hand out clouds and suns as part of next activity)

**Beth-** on the sun rays, I would like you to state in which sun rays made you feel powerful and on the cloud one, state your challenges both in relation to power and partnership in your participation in your project. In the clouds, state the things that made you have power as a challenge, write the word and that experience and moment, and on the sun rays write things that made it possible that you have power and partnership. Think about the activities that you have thus done throughout the project

**T1-** okay so we write the challenges in the clouds and all good on the sun rays.*(educators brainstorm on the visual activity of clouds and sun rays)(group discussion on and they write as well on the visual activity)*

### **\*2006 posters on power**

**T1-** WE divided the project on how to manage it in order to influence the community- see- community members. They did a bead project here at school, participate. They participated in the garden, garden was blooming in 2006. We had lots of power in 2006

**Beth-** you are saying that power is acting. Can you explain in relation to 2006.

**T1-** yah, we acted according to what we wanted to do.

**Beth-** using the characteristics of power that you have mentioned could you go step by step and tell us what power is?

**T1-** you know another thing is overcoming barriers. We had community members not working in 2006. A lot of them came to school and they were able to participate in the project by doing the bead work project. Items were sold and we received the money from our project. These members of the community, their stresses were overcome. They knew that what they were doing would take them somewhere .

**Beth-**But then you as educators how were you feeling such that you overcame barriers

**T1-** We were excited, happy-what we wanted to do , we were able to do, we saw change- we were able to come with activities and do them

**Beth-** Is that so in 2006? You mentioned that Power is dreams. Can you explain that in 2006

**T1-** oh, dreams did come true. We wanted to have a garden and we were able to make a garden, that is achieving a dreaming. If you are able to dream about something and make it happen in reality, that's is power.

**Beth-** You also mentioned that Power is about making people do things that you instruct them to do. Could you explain that.

Initiating,  
leading &  
capacity to act

Achieving own  
vision & goals

Able to work  
with community  
social problems.  
Providing  
psychosocial  
support.

Sense of self  
identity,  
achievement

Capacity to act  
in achieving  
goals

**T1-** yes, yes, yes

**Beth-** Share with us about instructing people to do things

**T1-** we instructed them what to do , even now people are living out of what we showed them.

Providing leadership

**Beth-** anything on power-e,g, you talked about leadership

**T1-** Aaah, no

**Beth-** Anything else, you mentioned power as hope, strength

**T1-** Yeah, power is the strength to do things, like I said earlier, we were able to act

Capacity and capability to act

**Beth-** Alright

**Beth-** where is this picture. Think of the time, who was taking the lead in 2006 on the project?

**T1-** I think the leadership was coming from both of us(the group members here at school and the university researchers). The university researchers mentored and us and we were able to lead the community member and lead them

Empowering co-investigators, forging equitable & mutual benefiting p/ships

**Beth-** is leadership=decision who to do what?

**T1-** We the educators decided on what to do on the project. We decided which project was fir for our area and then we divided among us who will do what

**Beth-** would you say that in the partnership, is the power the ability to decide

**T1-** yes, yes, yes, of courses power is about deciding what to do, like we decided in this project.

Taking lead, deciding what to do

**Beth-** okay, thanks, lets now talk about **2006 in** relation to partnership. You defined partnership is a character of trust. Could you elaborate on that?

**T1-** the trust in 2006 between the educators and the university people was very very strong.

**Beth-** How and Why

**T1-** you know when we produced our beads in the project, we took our products and gave them to the university people to sell on our behalf. We trusted them, however by giving them our beads, we didn't know if they will come back again or what would happen to our products. But they did sell the products and gave us our money to the school. That was the building of trust. To believe that you can give someone your things and get what you ask for. For us trust was built through such experiences.

Building mutual rapport, based on strong relationships

**Beth-** How about commitment and cooperation. You defined these words as part of partnership. Did it increase or decrease? Please explain.

**T1-** aaahh, I can say it was strong commitment, as much as the people of Pretoria, we could see that they were committed to the project, they did not look into us only. They came kept checking the progress of the project, visited a lot here.

Consultation with members

**Beth-** so in that increasing in commitment?

**Beth-**So was partnership less or more strong?

**T1-** I will say partnership was stronger.

**Beth-** You defined partnership as working together. Did you work together or not and explain on that please?

**T1-** we worked together

**Beth-** The way you tell the story, its really good, its like I was there. I am picturing the whole process.

**T1-** ( she chuckles- laughs)- wow, really?

**Liesel-** when someone tells a story very well and clear like the way you do, we say its “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”(in Afrikaans), we say its like we are hanging on your lips.

**T1-** yah, okaayyy

**Beth-** Okay T1, this is now the pictures of 2008-2009. The project is continuing  
**Liesel-** yah, this is when Beth entered the picture.

**Beth-** yes, you met with me for the first time. The project is ongoing 2008-2009

**Beth-** in this phase the partnership changes- UP to now a certain partnership 2005-2007 existed. I feel we should talk more about the partnership. Can you remember who the partners are at this stage of the project. Initially you mentioned that a partnership is 2 or more members. So who do you think are all the partners now. Think of all the seminars we had in 2008-2009.

**T1-** mmmmh, I think here is Amazingwe- we met a group from Port Elizabeth and also a group from Pretoria Shoshanguve and met more people from the university and US. Now we have increased. It started with 2 groups , now it is 4 or more groups, the partners are many.

**Beth-** Okay, now that we are in 2008-209 and we have met at PE and at Amzingwe, you realized that there are other groups, how did you feel when you saw all these groups

**Beth-**In terms of power

**Beth-** yah, in terms of power especially that you had to interact with the larger group

**T1-** ooh, ooh, we had to make presentations in the large groups. It was a scary feeling, especially if you are not aaahh, used to present in a big group. First for me I was scared, meeting different people from different provinces- yaah I was scared, you power feel challenged.

**Beth-** okay, did you think you were making decisions at this seminar?

**T1-** aahh, yes- did you say “ I was making decision”

**Beth-** you have shown in the poster pictures for 2008-2009 that you had “less” power. Why do you think you had less power compared to 2006?

**T1-** I think here (2008) we were a big group. Yah, u know, when you are in a big group its not the same as in your small comfort groups where you are able to influence- But in a big group there are challenges. Sometimes you want to present, but are afraid that you will be asked questions left right centre.

**Beth-** you say there are more challenges in big group, its like you back to basics, make it difficult to have more power

**T1-** yes, yes, yes

**beth-** so what kinds of challenges are there?

**T1-** you know, I am thinking of of of—not being confident. It’s a challenge- you you think what will I be saying to a group. You are afraid not being able to answer questions that you might be asked: what will people say when you speak- will I be able to give correct answers?

**Beth-** Oh, T2, welcome back, we are sharing our experience-how we felt by participating in the project since 2005. We are telling a story- we thinking back. When did we feel we had power and when did we feel we were powerless-what we were going through

**Beth-** wait a bit, in 2005, T1 looked at the photos and the power tool “indicator” and decided when you guys felt power or less power beginning in 2004, she said in 2004 there was no power. Then she said the following she felt

Increase in networks-group enlarges

Self confidence challenged

Group dynamics in size pose challenges to attributes of power

Self confidence challenged.

power because she felt change, making decision and the structure of procedures in place. She said you had hope, that's why she said you felt power  
**Beth-** then she said in 2008 you felt less power because the group got bigger with more people involved- new things

**Beth-** is there anything you would like to add T2? Did we explain well what T1 said?

**T1-** ( explains to T2 in siSwati language)

**T2-** well, during this time(2005) everything was new to us, I did not know what was expected of us. But I told myself that, may be if time goes by, things will be unlocked as we continued. In 2006 I felt really engaged in the project. We came up with different activities for the project, garden, information centre, bead work. This is the only activities that survived, there were lots of challenges, for instance the community thought they going to gain cash fast- they didn't know that it will take time to benefit. In our community there is too much poverty. The community hoped to gain from the project, when they did not get money right away, they started withdraw

Novel situation, not sure of what to do and expected of us

**Beth-** are you happy that you experienced a lot of power in 2006

**T2-** yah, we experienced lots of power- the community also turned up in large numbers

**Beth-** now moving over to 2008-09

**T2-** it was a big group- sometimes, hei, the confidence, standing in front of people from different places and walks of life. You are not sure if what you say is appropriate- we were reserved- lack of confidence

Lack of confidence, not sure of what is expected

**Beth-** so you agree with T1, that power decreased a bit in 2008

**T2-** yah and look at the way other groups tells us about their activities they do like at Cebelihle-counselling centre-lots of good things and food hampers. Then you ask yourself what you doing for the community- you become tiny.

Group dynamics- intimidated by others achievement or progress

**Beth-** Yah, when you compare yourself

**T2-** yah, when you compare yourself-the way they do things- I feel like a small person

**Beth-**in that partnership- you feel a bit powerless

**Beth-** okay ladies, we continue. Remembers that your definition of power and partnership is guiding you on how you feel and experience things. We are now in 2009-10. Look at the pictures

**Beth-** partnership-power has changed. Look at the pictures, who are the partners. Who have you brought into the project?

**T1-** in 2009-10 we joined by more educators here in school. Before we were only four(4), now joined by 8-10 people in this group.

Increasing partners/members

**Beth-** so your family is increasing: As family increase- what happens when you look at characteristics of your defined partnership?

**T1-** mmm, I can say here, aahh, as a group we do share ideas, but the problem is we don't have enough time. Time is not on our side.

Lack of time to meet as a group

**Beth-** okay, is it a barrier in partnership

**T1-** we share ideas on one to one, not in meeting group.

**Beth-**I see that power is more again in 2006. Why? Why power more now.

**T1-** mmm, may be in 1<sup>st</sup> place we were able to influence educators before they were not able to see our vision and goals and managed to talk to them and explain; on how school will benefit in project. School benefit if all of us part of project.

Able to make others buy into our vision



**Beth-** so you say being able to make someone see your vision and believe in it and you felt powerful that

**T1-** secondly being able to influence our neighbor primary. We are giving to train them- this project not only be in Ngilandi, but start in neighboring schools. I think now we are in power.

**Beth-** could we say power is about bringing change because you are able to planta seed in other areas?

**T1-** yes, yes, yes( nodding)

**END OF VIDEO RECORDING/ TRANSCRIPTIONS**

Transferring /  
sharing  
knowledge to  
others

## Port Elizabeth: 3/19/ 10 : A

**Beth-**Can we start with group 1- S's group pliz- challenges for partnership- your stumbling block

**T1-** ok, we had fear of change- of colleagues who came from outside to meet new people especially white ones. We had fear of over load with work. Third, we asked ourselves, why and what are they coming to us for-may be they want to expose the area, the community. Why a black school, why not a white school. We wondered if they wanted to use us as a ladder for their own benefits. Why?

Our challenges now is rape cases, they are not attended well. Low learners attendance by SAPA. No social workers. We have to teach our own classes and in addition deal with problem of slow learners. There is no preparation we get from the department on how deal with this issues. There are no remedial classes, we are not employed as remedial teachers, we are employed as normal teachers. It is difficult to help low performing learners because we our own classes. We don't have social workers to help us, the rape cases have increased. OBC issues are not addressed well, we as teachers assist to a certain extent/.

**Beth-** if you think of stumbling blocks of power and partnership between R and I and teachers, what can you say? What is the challenges between teachers to have power now?

**T1-** aaah, there is no stumbling block between us now because if we want something from you, we come straight to you and also the principal is a link between us and you. We work together with principal and you. Its easy now to work with you, its easy for you to come to our school. Researchers have been eye opener to us, we are able to see challenges in our communities. We no longer blame anyone, like the government, now we are able to our power. We are able to use resources we have in our community, before we did not know that there are some resources within the community. We are at ground level. Now its easy to put it at the centre(power tool) because we had resources centre, visitng of community- feed of community, recognition by the learners and parents. Opening resources centre was the great achievement for us. Being facilitator is the greatest power we got, its more than a tool we got. We are supported by management, working with people that are not involved, but when you convince them, you get power, they understand.

We have facilitated workshops, we managed to plough back e.g. Charles duna, Xoleka P.S.....snr schl. We have babies, we have big "mabele"- community can suck from our breast. We are cows. Also being able to visit with learners homes, going to municipality( grants, RDC houses) grant they qualify for. We have volunteers and caregivers- visit learners give report.. we have beautiful school garden, we have attended workshops with HOPE world wide. All done we done during school holidays, so we are using our time, our family time. We are supports by other educators! Wow! They support us. Most of the educators support us fully, now we work with OVC, SASA, ABSA, muslim school.

WE working extra mile. Our school is a self renewing school. No school fund school

**Beth-** Ok, thank you. Lets give them a hand.

**T2-** all the achievements and challenges they mentioned are true. We agree with them 100%.

Mistrust of academic researchers, fear of extra work

Other social problems encountered by learners & educators

Easy to approach others, mutual respect; empowering others; environment enabling

Agents of change, being capable to initiate and bring about results

Providing leadership, sharing information with others. Transfer of knowledge and skills. Increasing networks and assisting others to receive social services. Support from other educators

**Beth-** oh, you agree 100%

**T2-** yes, 100%. We work hand in hand with community.

**T3-** I think she left out something if I may add.....recognition from the community and education department

**Beth-** may I ask something, you say initially some people were not sure about what you were doing? Tell us more please.

**T1-** we were not sure of what was expected us to do, we were afraid of you. Not sure what to do by then. By now it has all changed.

**Beth-** how is the relationship with the school and L and R? In 2003?

**Beth-** remember you said partnership is trust and loyalty. At beginning in 2003, did you feel trust and loyalty?

**T5-** no we did not want to ask them. We did not want to talk about anything. We thought they coming with something new, to tell us what to do, but to our surprise, everything came from us. They asked questions like what do you do, what do you do, then they wrote down what we said. It means we had the knowledge, we didn't know we had it. They didn't come up with the knowledge. We say ok, these are our friends now, we had simunye moment.

**T6-** before there was fear because people talking- people are coming here to do our studies, they want us to give them information and other things. We thought they wanted information to write a book and go and forget about us. But when we came there ...ok, there was language barrier, you spoke english to us and then talk to yourselves in " afrikaans' ...and then I said, oh gosh, this is what I heard, its happening(t6) laughing loud- my fears were confirmed? But as time goes by I saw honesty in you, you wanted us to grow. We were eager to work. You enlightened us, the disease (hiv/aids)was not part of us. We called the disease by referral names, we never talked about it, it was for others...and then you guys came here, ok, now we are free, we are owners. I wrote that in my sticker. And you know what, before you came, we didn't talk about HIV/AIDS. What is it..it had a name-"that thing". We referred to as "he died of what is it". Thank you guys. We are now learners in the community of govern Mbeki now we gong far. We want to thank you. Its not a joke.

**T7-** in other schools, researchers are not welcome.

**T8-** we see people who are going to help us.

**T1-** people who are helping, giving us strength, what we are doing to the community is benefiting, because now, our learners work with learners and community, things are easy.

**beth-** so those are the things that make power possible in partnership, when teachers come together to do something meaningful in the communities?

**T1-** yeah, yes, now its no longer about you guys, researchers and us, it's the community, it's the collaboration. Whole community collaborated

**Beth-** thank you so much

**T1-** talking about HIV/IADS was not part of our language, in those days but now its gone. It was new and scared, all those things, but gone are those days, people come and ask for our help, the number of parents and learners are interested have increased. I call it collaboration- its like a 3 legged pot. At school is learner and educator and parents but we add more, its researchers, educators, community, this 3 legged pot is growing. Its no longer few people, that is we are using many pots, we put more fire, that means we cooking ok. We are what we are because of you. We are where we are because of you. Thank you.

Support/recognition from others like

Not knowing what to do

Mistrust of academic researchers

Not open about discussing hiv/aids

Work as a system in empowering community

Working for community social transformation

Enabling environment to discuss any issues. Collaboration, working as a system

**T2-** and you know what, we are working in harmony as masizakheni group. We never tire, we are working together in terms, so when we work as a group it's a partnership. I know parents, other stakeholders and they know us. Even when we don't like something, you can voice it. You know what to say.

Team work, mutual consultation, coordinated structures

**Beth-** what are other things that make partnership possible- you already mentioned that fear to go away, there got to be trust and work together to accomplish goals

**T4-** yes, yes, mmm

**Beth-** you also mentioned communication, what other things make power possible in a partnership

**T4-** togetherness, communication, sharing information, having a common goal, no double standards, no one has final say, final say come from us all

Information sharing

**T5-** and the other thing is willingness, love what we do.

**T6-** partnership is "imbiza ye sixhosa" ( 3 legged pot). Also issue if language, accepting our own mother tongue. Sometimes its easy to explain in our language. We first explain to each other in our mother tongue, just like you explain to Ronel in Afrikaans, that is power

All of us having equal voices and working as team

**T8-** the problem of language barrier was there

**T9-** I like that word of imbiza ye sixhosa I ya nyamezela. You can put it on long hot fire, but it wont burn, it lasts long. We are going to be like that. Imbiza ye sixhosa iya nyamezela. You should know that it lasts long, always re use it. We are that pot masazakheni. Now I know you ( L, UP researchers, B from Bots), the pot keeps on adding, we know other teachers from shoshanguve, MP, dean of UP, amazingwe-wow!

Effective and coordinated structures

### **B 3/19/10 Cebelihle PE**

**T14-** ok, the question here is what do you think power is? Alright.....

Group-(they brainstorm in IsiXhosa)

**T14A-** we say power is being in control of doing things, to be able to do things in your way and brings confidence and boasts self esteem. Make one to see unforeseen things. Do you understand what I mean, when I say unforeseen things. Okay

Being initiative, capacity to act

**Group-** laugh-hehehehehehe

**T15-** power makes you strong and gives you respect. Power gives you courage , you don't fear to do things.power makes you to be independent, it gives you goal. If you are in power you should have goal, there will be someone who can come to you and try to change your mind, but if you got confidence and know what you are doing, having deep understand. Power must be about deep understanding, so that you argue, explains things, do research and come back with feedback. Do you understand what i say, when you are in power there is no one who can change you. Power gives you freedom of speech, when you got power you approach things with open mind and differently. Power is that high order thinking, you take things seriously.

Expressing ones opinion without fear, enabling environment

**Beth-** thank you

**Group-** clap hands

**Beth-** thank you so much. Now lets listen to Z group. Can you tell us what do you think power is?

**T2-** aah, power is to be well informed, able to follow ones reason, one is not afraid, capable of taking risk. Power is able to balance situation. Power is a leader who can reason and not take orders, thats all

**Beth-** thank you

**Group-** clap hands

**Beth-** okay

**T18-** capability to follow own reason, you work with someone with other people, you give them rules. Power is when you got vision and follow that vision. mmmm Mandisa talked about something not absolute and elaborated on that aahh.....(mandisa intervene), ok, ok

**T19-** what you think power is? Power is knowledge of knowing. How do you do it. You have to plan, when you have power you organize, take responsibility and must delegate, discuss and analyze. How? With power you must create better living and be passionate and pass iton to community-nation and country and the world(*am thinking levels of power as researcher*). Where? Power start within yourself and then empower your environment, community, nation. You have power you work with those around you.

**Beth-** wow! Lovely. Thank you. Anyone would like to add something

**T19A-** power is delegation. I like it. When you have power, you must know everything, so that when someone come to you, you must have deep understanding, it makes it easy to argue, when you have power you don't take any information as absolute. You evaluate.

**T20-** I don't think power is knowing everything, you can know some.

**T21-**I think power is not only about control, you have to listen to others ideas. Even in your house with your children. You listen to them. You don't work alone, you don't control or abuse power, that why here we define power as to organize, plan discuss in your group. It doesn't mean you now everything, so power is working with others.

**T21A-**I think she meant not to know everything per-say, but when power must be accountable, so that a leader in power look for more knowledge to avoid confrontation so that you learn more.

**T22-** what I meant is must have deep understanding, evaluate, discuss, explain do research about what you want, that's what I meant.

**Beth-** alright, thank you ladies.

**T1-** what do you think partnership is to you, ok. Partnership is working as group, share knowledge and ideas together, to share to agree, to be actively involved both parties there must be mature respect needed, consultation and decision making done by partners, not individual or certain groups.

**Beth-** thank you very much

**Group-** (clap hands)

**Beth-** alright

**T2-** to us partnership we mean to work together closely, aah, share ideas information as partnerships, you become brothers,when it comes to decision making, you are on the same level. No one is beyond other becoming one minded as you share information and exchange. Learn from each other.

**Beth-**Thank you

**Group-** clapping hands and laughing

Having knowledge and information and being able to act at different levels

Team work, mutual respect, sharing information and full participating, mutual consultation

Developing strong relationships

**T3-** aah, those parties are highly involved, you work together, reach agreement, good relationship. Both parties must be knowledgeable, confidentiality, loyalty that's is all.

**Beth-** thank you. Would you like to add anything else?

**T4-** in partnership, only time when you use "I" is when you contribute an idea, but when you make decision as a group/ partners.

**Beth-** alright- thank you.

Not about individualism

### **VISUALS- CLOUDS/ SUN ACTIVITY-**

Explaining the activity

**Beth-** we got drawings of clouds and suns. Group access to clouds (small, big, medium) share with us, when did you feel power using the sun, share experiences of when you felt you are powerful and use the clouds to to share the challenges as worked in the partnership in the project.

**Beth-** In the beginning it was L and R , now we have more people. When did you feel power, which incident, what happened. In the clouds, what clouded you, what made you feel powerless or no partnership? Share your experience. What made power possible, or partnership possible and what made it not. Use some of the good and cloud for the challenges.

**Beth-** this activity- now that you have defined power and partnership. you been working with L and R since 2003 in star project, working together

**T1-** and with each other

**Beth-** Yah and with each other. What do you think partnership is. Explain to me. Your experience with partnership. what do you think partnership is in the project

### **PE- VIDEO 3/19/10 (2)**

#### **2010-03-19 15:30 CLOUDS VISUAL ACTIVITY**

**Beth-** ok, will start with T's group 1- report to us your challenges for partnership. what clouded you, your stumbling block.

**Group1-** ok, in 2003, we fear of changes, especially meeting new people more especially the white one's. the fears of overloading of work on top of the one e already have and the third we asked ourselves, what were they coming to us for> may be they want to expose us the area, community, why a done a black schools instead of white schools there are lots of white schools but they chose this one, why> doing this as a ladder for their own benefit? Our challenge now is rape cases (this is repeat from the 1<sup>st</sup> one).

Esp the OVC issue, have baggage of problems at home

**Beth-** what is the stumbling block for you to have power in the project

**Group-** So far, no stumbling blocks, if we want to reach you, its accessible

**Beth-** so if I hear you, if there is a problem, we could talk

**Group-** success-formation of the working group, giving food hampers, feeding community with soup from Muslim. WE have opened the resources centre, we are now facilitators in this protect-oh, wow, greatest power we have-the tool. The support by the management. When you educate a woman, you educate a nation. We plough to the nation, all are women. We now have 5 babies(schools). We got big mabele lidhle in Xhosa. Everyone can suck- got a long breast, we are cows now. Visiting the teachers( visit them, know the

Fear of change brought by outsiders  
Overload of work responsibilities

No problems-free to discuss issues

Creation of networks, effective & coordinated structures. Agents of change

background of leaders), ), its our duty to inform. Organizing school clothes, buying food, money for transport, we buy meds(supplement). Cell buddies(learners to learner))- having volunteers and caregivers- great achievement, relief for us. They give us report, feedback, that is wow! Excellent. We attend workshops naming of learning centre by deceased learners. Working extramile self renewing school now. We overcame our fears. We felt power through these activities.

Providing  
leadership &  
empowering  
others

(1) POSTER PICTURE ACTIVITY

Remember the 1<sup>st</sup> day. Look at the picturers. Pictures will help you remember the things that you did in a long time.

POSTERS

How have you felt power in that relationship or there were this felt not. There were times in project you were lost or part of project from 2002. Times when you felt not sure, not making decision. To do that, we have photographs. I will give the pictures.

**END**

**TRANSCRIBE THE WRITINGS**

# PORT ELIZABETH- 19/3/10

## TRANSCRIPTIONS OF VISUAL ACTIVITY

### PHASE ONE: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MEANING OR DEFINITION OF "POWER"

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK POWER IS ?

##### GROUP1

To be able to do to things

To be in control

It brings back confidence and boost self esteem

It makes one to be bale to see unforeseen things

It makes strong and gives you resistance

It drives away fears

It gives you courage

It makes you independent

It makes you to face reality

When you have power it gives you backbone

It gives you freedom of speech

When you have power you approach things with deep understanding

##### GROUP 2

To be well informed

Not being afraid of taking decisions

Capability of following your visions

Not being afraid of facing any challenges

Capable of taking risks

Able to balance situations

Not easily moved

If you have power you become a leader who can reason (not boss)

##### GROUP 3

Power is the knowledge of knowing how to do things. Lead motivate, persuade people

Why do you do that thing

Where do you that

For whom you do that e.g.

e.g HOW

planning

organizing

resources

delegation

discuss

analyze/ evaluation

##### WHY

To promote better living

To develop a person , community, country, world

##### WHERE

With yourself

With your environment

Community

##### WHOM

To the people you work with (around you)

Capacity & capability to influence and act.

Making decisions, capability, act

Capacity, enablement, act

**PHASE ONE: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MEANING OR DEFINITION OF "PARTNERSHIP"**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK PARTNERSHIP IS ?**

**GROUP 1**

Both parties are highly involved  
You work together  
Debate  
Reach agreement  
Good relationship- will enhance  
It broadens awareness  
There must be trust and transparency  
Both parties must be humble and knowledgeable  
They must have confidentiality and loyalty  
Mediator when there is a problem  
Attend workshops, seminars etc to equip themselves

Building rapport, mutual respect, team work

**GROUP 2**

To work together closely  
To share ideas, information  
To have brotherly trust amongst partners  
To be on the same level when it comes to decision making  
In partnership you become open minded through exchanging of ideas  
Every partner contributes towards the wellbeing of the partnership  
In a partnership- you learn from each other

Working as coordinated system, sharing information

**GROUP 3**

Working together as a group  
Given chance to participate fully  
To share ideas and knowledge together  
You have to disagree in order to agree so as to come with solutions  
To be actively involved both parties  
Mutual respect is needed  
Consultation  
Decision making is done by partners not individuals

Team work, information sharing,

**PHASE THREE: REFLECTING ON FACTORS THAT HINDER POWER / PARTNERSHIPS INTERACTIVE VISUAL ACTIVITY USING CLOUDS**

Fears of change that come from outside (new people) 2003  
Fearing of overloaded work, by work on top of the one we already have  
Asking questions-why they are coming to us-may be because they want to expose the area  
Why this done on black schools instead of white schools  
Doing all this being used as ladders for won benefits  
Rape cases not attended well some being forgotten because of slow process or no attention at all. SAPS  
Not having social workers, school psychologists, remedial educators and getting no help from dept of educ  
In 2003, we were fearful, especially with language barrier  
Not sure of content-unsure  
Issues of trust in 2003

Fear/ mistrust of others. Lack of resources/ support

**PHASE FOUR REFLECTING ON FACTORS THAT ENABLE POWER / PARTNERSHIPS INTERACTIVE VISUAL ACTIVITY USING SUN RAYS**

Commitment, confidence, eagerness, acceptances, willingness  
Loyalty, caring, loving,  
Recognition- 1<sup>st</sup> December- counseling room, gardening  
Partnerships created- olive leave seed, peace, H.A.C., ABASA  
Created kitchen soup through Muslim  
Have had health volunteers  
Met other teachers from different schools (provinces)  
Became facilitators to two other high school and primary school  
At the end – owners- hurray!!!  
Were supported by management  
Being thanked for help by learners and parents (show gratitude)  
Able to open resource centre/ support centre  
Recognized by the community  
Attending workshops  
Addressing OVC problems- life skills programmes  
Able to visit child headed families  
Able to form working groups (information, support, and garden)

Being appreciated and recognized  
Offered support  
Opportunities for learning and growth  
Creating networks

## **PHASE TWO : LOCATING POWER RETROSPECTIVELY IN A VISUAL ACTIVITY USING PHOTOS**

### **GROUP 1-NOV 2003**

**The power tool on November 2003 poster was placed towards (lack of power)**

#### **Why?**

We knew nothing and we were not sure of what was expected of us.  
We were actively involved in discussion and answered what ever we know. We were not intimidated at all  
After informative meeting, we felt confident about issues affecting us for long  
At first we felt as if they came to add more on a lot of work we have but after that we found out they came with solutions  
We had a feeling that nothing would change, but were wrong. At the end most changed

Not sure of what to do.  
Pessimistic about outcome

### **2004-2006**

**The power tool on 2004-2006 poster was placed in the middle** (in between lots of power and lack of power)

#### **Why?**

We were confident because it was us who were actively involved as we know the problem facing the community we work in.  
Through working with us as educators, we were able to identify our problems and how to address them  
They were giving us changes to explore not to be stumbling block on what we know (experiences).  
They were supportive and gave us strength in what we were doing all the time.

Changing perspective, offered support

### **2007-2008**

**The power tool on 2007-2008 poster was towards lots of power**

#### **Why?**

We were very much sure of ourselves.  
The progress was unbelievable  
We were facilitators that were ready to help other schools and communities around

Being achievers/ optimistic and acting

We had more power- adopted two schools  
First we were unsure if could facilitate  
They let us to do everything- watching us  
They gave us strength and courage, confidence  
We were able to claim back that we “can”  
We were decision makers- we love that

Capable acting,  
leading,

### **MID 2009**

**The power tool on mid 2009 poster was towards lots of power**

**Why?**

We as educators, we felt in control and being decision makers, i.e. we managed to facilitate workshops with 2 high schools and 1 primary school of our community (on our own)  
We were able to introduce Liesel and Ronel that we are working with (making appointments, leading in conversations with the schools)  
The discussion with the schools progress was done by us in their presence  
We did follows ups and gave them suggestions were possible to cater for their challenges (as babies)

In control,  
capable,  
leading,  
initiating

### **GROUP 2-NOV 2003**

**The power tool on November 2003 poster was placed towards (lack of power)**

**Why?**

We felt unsure as to what are they bringing to us and what is expected of us  
After the introduction of the programme, we began to trust and open up more to R and L. They also on the other hand trusted us and had confidence on us, because they kept on visiting us and updating us  
Interacting with them we began to identify resources as well as challenges within our school community.  
The relationships are from time to time as they further introduced other researchers to the project.

Not sure of  
what to do

**The power tool on 2004-2006 poster was placed in the middle Why?**

They further introduced us to other researchers that is when we felt more powerful and trusting them.  
The bond with them began to be stronger.  
We gained a lot from them which couldn't do on own without them e.g. body map, how to make memory box, and how important is it to have it.  
More educators joined the group after seeing how good it is and how we interacted with researcher.

Partners  
increase,  
sharing  
knowledge from  
each other

### **2007-2008**

**Power tool toward “lots of power”**

We felt very powerful to introduce the programme to other schools. We ourselves decide on the schools we chose NOT the researchers.  
The bond is stronger than before, they just come and observe the progress  
We believe that they have faith in us to take this programme further.  
They introduced us to other educators from other provinces- we felt very honoured and powerful

Transmitters of  
knowledge and  
skills.  
Empowering  
others

**The power tool on 2008-2009 ( SEMINARS)poster was placed towards lots of power**

**Why?**

We felt more powerful when we went to a seminar in Amazingwe with other educators, universities, researchers.

There we shared our different experiences, learn from others and others gained from us.

We gained more relationships with other educators from other provinces.

We confidently made presentations in front of entire audience we have mentioned above

We felt very honoured. We had courage to talk to other people.

**NOVEMBER 2009**

**THE POWER TOOL ON MID NOVEMBER 2009 POSTER WAS PLACED NEXT TO THE “LOTS OF POWER”**

We had more power now that we trained other schools and they taking the programme further.

We have powerful relationships with the University of Pretoria, and with other educators from other provinces and other neighboring schools-they were eager to join the programme.

Knowledge transmitters, gaining self confidence

Being leaders, empowering others

**GROUP 3-SEMINARS 2008-2009**

**The power tool on 2008-09 posters was placed LOTS OF power**

**Why?**

This was a great time to present what we were capable of doing in eastern cape

We could reflect back on our achievement in programmes and projects we have done

We had opportunity to hear what others were doing(in other provinces) to learn from them

We were able to share our experiences with other provinces (teachers, universities) confidently. We felt in control

We managed to build relationships with other educators from different provinces. We could make powerful arguments (giving examples of how other schools do it e.g. males at high schools)

**MID 2009- lots of power**

**Why?**

We gave reflection to other researchers as to how the programmes has progressed back dating it from 203-2009.

How we have managed to overcome our challenges e.g. the OVS's ( their statistics, the donors, home visits, food parcels)

We visited our baby schools to see if they had progress, we had interviews with them, we were pleased to see the programmes progressed that far.

Being achievers, networking, agents of change

Leaders, capacity to bring change

**GROUP 4-NOVEMBER 2009**

**The power tool on November 2009 poster was placed LOTS OF power**

**Why?**

BY the end of 2009 we were able to make interviews with Emzomncane about their progress

Since we managed to get sponsors for soup ( to feed our community) we suggested to them as how to go about finding sponsors, the care giver and to open their own support centre for their community

Mentors and initiators of change

We were the facilitators sitting behind the table taking notes and asking questions (evidence) photos

We were in control (as educators) and confident.

We were doing everything- the researchers were the onlookers.

**2004-2006- power tool in the middle**

**Why?**

We started to have confidence as teachers

The interaction and the discussions made us strong and powerful

We as teachers were able to identify problems in our classes and whole school

The program itself created good relations between the teachers, learners and the community

The program led us to understand the potential weaknesses and strengths about decision making

Leaders in sharing knowledge

Self confidence, strong relationships with others

**2007-2008- lots of power**

**Why?**

During this time we re very powerful and clear

Educators name was changed to facilitators

We did not own the project we shared it with outside world.

Our powerful and strong minds made other teachers to see the need for help

Number of schools are flocking to our school for help

The department of education has confidence in our school and sending other schools to come and see the display of (masizakheni)

We are taking our own decisions and we are proud of ourselves

Taking the projects to other levels

# MPUMALANGA- 19/3/10

**TRANSCRIPTIONS OF VISUAL ACTIVITY**

**PHASE ONE: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MEANING OR DEFINITION OF "POWER"**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK POWER IS ?**

RATE OF DOING WORK (HOW FAST DO YOU DO WORK)

AMOUNT OF EBNERGY YOU PUT TO ANY GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY OR TASK

PEOPLE DO WHAT YOU INSTRUCT THEM TO DO

ABLE TO INFLUENCE

Sgb(FORMULATE POLICY)

POWER IS ACTING

MAKE DECISIONS IF WHAT TO DO AND NOT TO DO

POSITION GIVES POWER

LEAD

BRING CHANGE

HAVING DREAMS

HOPE, OPTIMISM AND STRENGTH

OVERCOME BARRIERS

Movers and shakers

Work as a team

**WHAT DO YOU THINK PARTNERSHIP IS ?**

TWO OR more groups working together

Sharing ideas

Production

Put effort- otherwise what you want to achieve can't materialize

Commitment

common goal

Cooperation

Faithfulness, reliability, trust

Shared vision,  
loyalty,  
equitable  
relationships

**PHASE FOUR REFLECTING ON FACTORS THAT ENABLE POWER / PARTNERSHIPS INTERACTIVE VISUAL ACTIVITY USING SUN RAYS**

Making decisions about the activities we wanted

Influential( able to increase the group members)

Commitment (the bead work project succeeded)

We managed to act. We took initiative to influence our neighboring school to join us.)

Common goal ( assisting the community to alleviate poverty)

Sharing ideas as group members

Support from the school principal ( he gives us time during school hours to engage with our partners)

Trust from the community members

Recognition by the department of education

Referring other schools

Involvement with the community at large

Head hunted by outsiders/ schools- our school is a light house

Training other schools, felt very powerful

Enabling  
environment,  
inclusiveness,  
equal voices,  
support

Facilitation,  
leadership

**PHASE THREE: REFLECTING ON FACTORS THAT HINDER POWER / PARTNERSHIPS INTERACTIVE VISUAL ACTIVITY USING CLOUDS**

In 2003- we were not sure of what was expected of us

2004- it was a learning curve

2005- Trying to understanding some of the learners problems

Not sure of  
what to do

**Version Jan 2011-01-22**

Power is achieving goals

Power is agency to bring change; overcoming challenges/ problems

Positive attributes of power

Partnership as working in a team; Partnership as consultation

Partnership as sharing information

Working as a team with same vision

being honest, trust and respect

Enthusiastic yet suspicious

Mistrust of academic researchers

Openness, begin to trust and gaining knowledge

Not yet sure about intention, still silent, not making impact

In 2005, felt powerless since not in charge of running the project

Not in control, but fear and mistrust of academic researchers, not feeling like equal partners. No voice.

Team work

Project dominated/led by academic researchers

Project initiative led by academic researchers

Agent of change-influenced and controlled direction of project. Capacity to co-opt community members . level of responsibility increased

Achieving own dreams and vision & making impact in community

Achieving goals, transforming lives

Exercising agency and acting on it to achieve goals

Provided leadership, guidance and being able to bring in community

Give others opportunity & leading them. Making decision & initiating

Mutual respect, trust for each other(researchers & educators)

Agents of change, providing leadership & capacity to act and influence; Empowering others

Initiating, leading & capacity to act

Achieving own vision & goals

Able to work with community social problems. Providing psychosocial support. Sense of self identity, achievement

Capacity to act in achieving goals

Providing leadership

Capacity and capability to act

Empowering co-investigators, forging equitable & mutual benefiting p/ships

Taking lead, deciding what to do

Building mutual rapport, based on strong relationships

Consultation with members

Increase in networks-group enlarges

Self confidence challenged

Group dynamics in size pose challenges to attributes of power

Self confidence challenged.

Novel situation, not sure of what to do and expected of us

Lack of confidence, not sure of what is expected

Group dynamics-intimidated by others achievement or progress

Increasing partners/members

Lack of time to meet as a group

Able to make others buy into our vision

Transferring / sharing knowledge to others

Mistrust of academic researchers, fear of extra work

Other social problems encountered by learners & educators

Easy to approach others, mutual respect; empowering others; environment enabling

Agents of change, being capable to initiate and bring about results

Providing leadership, sharing information with others. Transfer of knowledge and skills. Increasing networks and assisting others to receive social services. Support from other educators

Support/recognition from others like

Not knowing what to do

Mistrust of academic researchers

Not open about discussing hiv/aids

Work as a system in empowering community Working for community social transformation

Enabling environment to discuss any issues. Collaboration, working as a system

Team work, mutual consultation, coordinated structures

Information sharing

All of us having equal voices and working as team

Effective and coordinated structures

Being initiative, capacity to act

Expressing ones opinion without fear, enabling environment

Having knowledge and information and being able to act at different levels

Team work, mutual respect, sharing information and full participating, mutual consultation

Developing strong relationships

Not about individualism

Fear of change brought by outsiders; Overload of work responsibilities

No problems-free to discuss issues

Creation of networks, effective & coordinated structures. Agents of change

Providing leadership & empowering others

Capacity & capability to influence and act.

Making decisions, capability, act

Capacity, enablement, act

Building rapport, mutual respect, team work

Working as coordinated system, sharing information

Team work, information sharing,

Fear/ mistrust of others. Lack of resources/ support

Being appreciated and recognized; Offered support; Opportunities for learning and growth; Creating networks

Not sure of what to do. Pessimistic about outcome

Changing perspective, offered support

Being achievers/ optimistic and acting; Capable acting, leading,

Partners increase, sharing knowledge from each other

Transmitters of knowledge and skills. Empowering others

In control, capable, leading, initiating

Not sure of what to do

Knowledge transmitters, gaining self confidence

Being leaders, empowering others

Being achievers, networking, agents of change

Leaders, capacity to bring change

Mentors and initiators of change

Leaders in sharing knowledge

Self confidence, strong relationships with others

Taking the projects to other levels

Movers and shakers

Work as team, results oriented

Shared vision, loyalty, equitable relationships

Enabling environment, inclusiveness, equal voices, support

Facilitation, leadership

Not sure of what to do

"Imbiza ye IsiXhosa iya nyamezela"- Educators as agents of transformative social change		Educators construction of understanding and meaning of power and partnership	Educators expressing the capacity to act through the power they gained	Factors educators influencing power in participatory partnership(s)	
Agents of knowledge transfer	parents	forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	UP researchers	Capacity to empower others	Promoting power
	schools		peers		Hindering power
	Wider community		Wider community		
Agents of bringing resources		Enabling environment	Capacity for leadership and mentoring		
Agents of creating community networks		Capability and initiative	Taking action/lighting the fire		

<b>THEME 1: “Imbiza ye IsiXhosa iya nyamezela”- Educators as agents of transformative social change</b>	
<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>1. Agents of knowledge transfer</b>	parents
	schools
	Wider community
<b>1.2. Agents of bringing resources</b>	
<b>1.3. Agents of creating community networks</b>	
<b>THEME 2: Educators construction of partnership</b>	
<b>2.1. forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships</b>	UP researchers
	Peers
	Wider community
<b>2.2. Enabling environment</b>	
<b>2.3 Capability and initiative</b>	
<b>THEME 3: Educators expressing the capacity to act through the power they gained</b>	
<b>3.1. Capacity to empower others</b>	
<b>3.2. Capacity for leadership and mentoring</b>	
<b>3.3. Taking action/lighting the fire</b>	

<b>THEME 4: Factors educators influencing power in participatory partnership(s)</b>
<b>4.1. Promoting power</b>
<b>4.2. Hindering power</b>
<b>THEME 5: Educators understanding of power</b>
<b>5.1 Enabling environment</b>
<b>5.2 Capability and initiative</b>

## TRANSCRIPTION FROM NGILANDI- INTERVIEW NOVEMBER 2010

DUMI, BETH, RONEL

B- hi T, how are you doing? It's a pleasure to be back here again, remember we met last time and I asked about partnership and power on the project that you working on. When I got home I realized that there were things that I had to ask, that I needed more information on. So today I will focus on 3 things/questions. I just want to find out about how you see things and they way you have experienced being part of the project.

R- Want to find out about the power you been referring to since 2004, when Hermien and Tilda had the power, they told you the plan, decided what to do. Today you got the power; you take the lead and do everything. At the beginning T & H took the lead, you were not given direction to be in charge of the relationship. At the beginning T & H told you when to come –set up appointment BUT today you decide when to come, this day and that day, you decide on the date. How did you view power?

B- Let me remind of how you described power from the last time I visited (she narrates the definition from last interview).

D-then you want me to explain...okay, aahh! May be I can say, what I learned from H & T is that I managed to learn and I see its working now. When I facilitating the project I thought I wont be able to do that. Now that I have power you can make decision and lead other people to follow you when you request them. If you are in power, other people will follow instructions. I think power has influence, what we training them, they do, and they have managed. Moving from this point to higher level coz they present to us and explain steps that they took.

B- you talk of making decisions, very important, could you trace back and give me concrete examples of what you did, that made you feel you got power, give me examples of decision you made

D- relating to the two groups or the whole project

B- to the whole project since 2004

D- I will start at the school, we made decisions of having a counseling centre, we manage to influence other educators and they joined us. To be in charge of centre and help learners.

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T- aahh, aaa, mmmm(agree) the environment is good. The environment at school is great the support from my colleague, they explain. At workshop environment is excellent, there is support, you are free, everything is open, you don't feel left out. I am able because there is encouragement.

B- are you saying environment allow you to be who you are

T- the environment here is good, we focus on one thing that's why the focus when we are together we deal with one issue

B-you say environment is good, there were comments that were made by other participants during you presentation, saying that you are like a researcher. How would you treat that comment in relation to power gained in the project.

T- wow! I didn't know about that, am a researcher, they empowered me a lot. what I did was just read, which part of research. For me I was looking for information, and then I can say this is what am going to do. Really even myself I learnt a lot, I mustn't be scared. Today am empowered, at first I took research as a monster, but today am empowered, research=power. If I want more power, you must research, even when technical questions come, you will be able to respond because you got knowledge. It strengthens my power.

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T- one challenge is time , you know time is not on my side, as an educator, most of the time I need to research and prepare on what am going to teach, so I don't have time, creating time for research to help learners.

B- any other challenge

T- I can say for me this one is personal, I get tired too quickly especially when it comes to reading. My mind get stuck

B- (laughs off) yah it happens. Any other thing. How about challenges with community, learners, school. You have school garden, resources centre, any challenge in relation to the project

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B- at the beginning of the project in 2004, when you look back, at yourself and the things that you have done so far, for instance the commitment and learning and your role (facilitator). Do you think that at the beginning you had power that you have been referring to?

T- no I did not. That is why I say they helped us to open our eyes, open our mind, then after that we searched around, we started doing things ourselves. It was moving. But firstly I did not have power.

B- if you look at 2010 (showing pictures) and them at 2004. Do you see change?

T- there are two different people. At 2004 we were low, now we are high, now we are not afraid to face challenges, we are string. The four of us, now at school we got 10 educators now. Managed by us

B- this project gave you power you didn't realize you have, the ability to do things. You used words like "empowered" do you think you are empowered?

T- we are stronger, we have changed, now we make decisions and influence other groups (educators) they see what we are doing? They help us.

B- power gained changed you as well as your conduct?

T- yes, yes, you know different communities (work/schl). At work when I bring new ideas they just agree and deposit and try to start it. Am even requested to make presentations. They respond positively. At community where I stay and at church am a leader of youth. Every time you will find youth participating and they come to church as long as am there. I help them. Sometimes you don't see yourself yet other people can recognize that in you. I am confident and have good self esteem.

B- like you said, you see a new you in a positive manner. Would you say that is perhaps attributed to power gained by participating in the project?

T- yes I can say that its power gained since project started, step by step we started here and now we are here. If someone can say relate to me , I know these steps. This environment and training has made me realize who I am, I can now know when I have forgotten something and go back to remind myself step by step, now I have lots of information and knowledge, am able to stand in front of people being confident and present. I believe in me, because of the dedication, commitment and being positive in power. I would like to keep on moving and start a new project in Ghongwane (near MZ) not very long, in fact during holidays I will talk to some educator then i will inform R & L about way forward.

B would you say that by participating they have unleashed the potential in you, being able to plant the seed in other areas

T- yes, yes, I am prepared and able to do because I am empowered.

B/R- yep that is very very powerful. Beautiful, thank you very much. Do have inspired me. Do have anything else .

T-(laughs off) giggling, you are welcome. I want to take it from there. I was waiting for the presentations to finish.

## TRANSCRIPTION FROM NGILANDI- INTERVIEW NOVEMBER 2010

### HENRY, BETH

B- in your own words, what do you think power is

H-own und, if look at power, I will define it not using any reference-power is ability to do something, ability to something stems from a number of factors from vision, vision that you carry enable you to have more power, another factor is the people involved, enable you to do something, that vision of resources, enable you to have power, human resources, network as resource and also other factor is ability to carry out something, further mission, the vision and mission enable to carry you to have power: vision and mission as enable to carry you have power. Vision and Mission as factors and resources, network, how what enable to do is how you put places together, enable carry out whatever coordinate activities-you need people involved. You lay your vision end of day realize vision that gives you more power. Yah, may be I will be there.

B-okay you say power by you is vision and mission, resources, network. How do you think power has been like in this project since 2004 as part of group? Have you had these vision and mission research, were you able to network, did you feel power or not.

H yah, what I will say is I was powerful, to a great extent, we had vision to see our community become better starting from school community, through networking we have amassed a lot of knowledge into how to carry certain activities, like for instance the institution in Pretoria, have formed part of the vision, the resource centre launched because of resources-network provided us with more knowledge and more insights, in that way gave us more wings to fly. We have a lot of vision community to become better. The centre operating learning about hiv/aids, coping, that gave us power, to say we carry out more things. Network help to more inroads to our minds

B- you mention network, could you please give examples of such network, who

H-you know, the net work we have now is meeting other colleagues from other provinces, and they help us to see how far we are with the projects. Also our department and school to have it as a community. We have forge hands with local clinic, the learner get resources. Another network is social workers; they are involved with the school once a week. Also with Agriculture, Masibuele, how can they help with project- garden, to meet us half way? But they think that as educators we want to benefit- but we are facilitators, we want to bring in community members, so that they benefit. We also bring in more of our colleagues to get our vision, especially that we started as five. The school accepted us.

B- what are the factors that have helped you to gain power or to be in power. Of course you mentioned that you are in power because you have now counseling centre, garden. You have partnership with the community. But what factors enabled you to have that power to be where you are now.

P- one factor is that help me to have power is to be open minded, mobile in the mind, to think of alternatives everyday. I present an idea; I sit down and think about it. How can it better tomorrow? One

thing to **have power is research, read books** go into the internet. Also talk to people, share with people get more information and get power.

B- I think from you what you tell me I see Henry before the project and Henry during the project. You have changed. Could you share with me if you see yourself to have changed before and during the project?

H- yah, you know prior to the project I was reserved, a bit conservative, kept to myself, I had lots of thought but kept them to myself. With this one, I have changed a lot. I now speak out, able to modify a lot of things, like network am now capable. The project has changed me and it has helped me to be more dynamic, I move and make things happen and better, am growing and making whatever.

B- you have taken the project to primary. Would you say the project has made you to do more, realize that you have a lot to offer.

H- I would say more. I would say yes. I have changed a lot of people, other people are thinking differently. They also want to do more project, even my colleagues. **Working together people can do more.**

B- how have your relations changed with the researchers at UP. How has your relationship changed in the project in terms of power?

H- I think they are open, they advise us, and they help us to analyze ideas. They help is, they are open, allow us free movement, don't forget your vision. They helped us analyze our visions and situation. They helped to look at our situation and not to compare ourselves with others.

B- would you say they allowed you to be more powerful?

H- yes, we have weaknesses, but they have helped us to decide. They have an impact in our strength, analyze own situation and use own strength.

B-what do you think have been the challenges that face and been challenge from achieving your power. What factors impede you from getting there?

H one factor is time, why – because of the environment- not giving in 100% going extra mile in the project. We have not analyzed our sacrifices, how much time we are giving. We can't rely on department time alone, what we can do outside school time. Getting people to the project and align and fine tune the mind set within the vision and mission. Some get in but the mind is not set and level of understand of what getting in is attitude. Others get in for external motivation, some people contribution is zero, they have not moved an inch. We need a strategy of how to unlock the mind. Cooperation. The mind there must be a leader able to lead. Their input/participation need mind of person to be fine tuned to unlock it.

B- Any other factors?

H- yah, people lack the commitment and ownership of the project, they expect the initiator to always lead, always there running around, like today, this day was long set, to make an appointment, you know people should learn to scribble on diary. By the time you have reference, you should commit. Like I said this mind needs to be fine tune, mind set. I think this is challenge I can elaborate and quote some recent examples. We know that people make appointment, you have to show up except if its an emergency. Make arrangement. That come through mind tuning, let it not be responsibility for X n Y only. Time commitment. We need to network more, that entails commitment to vision and mission and fine tuning of mind. We have opened up UP partnership, they are open, they allow us to have extra network its not like when you have a major sponsor and there are conditions attached.

B- wow! Interesting, could you elaborate, you say you have partnership with UP and they allow you to have more partners with other.

H- you know UP is very open, they gain from us as well, it's a mutual relationship, we gain from them too. The school gained from UP, like help with library. They never stopped us from partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books. The volunteer's are able to get us free books. UP does not stop us from talking with Peace Corps. They have also put us on map of the university, like the department of engineering. Engineering students come here. I would say R n L are nice people, its matte of good working relations.

B- When you say, you remind of what you did with "snakes n knobkerries". May be one day you will do own "snakes n knobkerries" with own team.

H- there are people who are looking at what pioneers are doing. They talk out there. What is my input in whole project so that I can say here is the output. Our planning as a leader of group is to review to look at our achievements and challenges. We need to paint a different picture for 2011.

B- tell me about all kinds of partnerships.

H- one thing I forgot about in partnerships is organizations dealing with human issues, we have a project being run by a graduate from another university.

B- okay, besides challenges of sacrifice, time, fine tuning the mind, would you say you have a voice in your own participation. Is it UP telling you what to do or you are the one in change

H-yah, we are in change. Varsity just advise, we also have to sort out our challenges and just inform varsity. We have had a career day the other time, it was started by varsity students, it was successful. Then later we initiated, we started in 2009 by inviting police SAPS and invite people from different varsities. How do we involve the whole school? It has since become an annual event. We have a voice. We set agenda, initiate and propose ideas.

B-do you think that trough this project you have been able to learn how to solve problems that you encounter in the community.

H- yah, I would say starting from the “snakes and knbokeries” enabled to think about challenges of community and how to solve them. It has helped us to come up with ideas, it help to open us up, broaden my wings.

B-any other way that the project has increased your power.

H- my power has increased, being able to make mind change, use of resources that are available like HR, people part of the project. Get people to commit more.

B- do you feel more powerful comparing 2004 and 2010

H- I feel empowered on average basis, a, very empowered, because now I can make network with other people and commitment because of the number factors that I leant, working together with other. Working together we can do more. I have all these ideas. The project has empowered me a lot

B- okay H, thank you very much for taking time from your busy schedule to create time to talk with me. Ngiyabonga

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B/R- yep that is very very powerful. Beautiful, thank you very much. Do have inspired me. Do have anything else .

T-(laughs off) giggling, you are welcome. I want to take it from there. I was waiting for the presentations to finish.

## TRANSCRIPTION FROM NGILANDI- INTERVIEW NOVEMBER 2010

### HENRY, BETH

B- in your own words, what do you think power is

H-own und, if look at power, I will define it not using any reference-power is ability to do something, ability to something stems from a number of factors from vision, vision that you carry enable you to have more power, another factor is the people involved, enable you to do something, that vision of resources, enable you to have power, human resources, network as resource and also other factor is ability to carry out something, further mission, the vision and mission enable to carry you to have power: vision and mission as enable to carry you have power. Vision and Mission as factors and resources, network, how what enable to do is how you put places together, enable carry out whatever coordinate activities-you need people involved. You lay your vision end of day realize vision that gives you more power. Yah, may be I will be there.

B-okay you say power by you is vision and mission, resources, network. How do you think power has been like in this project since 2004 as part of group? Have you had these vision and mission research, were you able to network, did you feel power or not.

H yah, what I will say is I was powerful, to a great extent, we had vision to see our community become better starting from school community, through networking we have amassed a lot of knowledge into how to carry certain activities, like for instance the institution in Pretoria, have formed part of the vision, the resource centre launched because of resources-network provided us with more knowledge and more insights, in that way gave us more wings to fly. We have a lot of vision community to become better. The centre operating learning about hiv/aids, coping, that gave us power, to say we carry out more things. Network help to more inroads to our minds

B- you mention network, could you please give examples of such network, who

H-you know, the net work we have now is meeting other colleagues from other provinces, and they help us to see how far we are with the projects. Also our department and school to have it as a community. We have forge hands with local clinic, the learner get resources. Another network is social workers; they are involved with the school once a week. Also with Agriculture, Masibuele, how can they help with project- garden, to meet us half way? But they think that as educators we want to benefit- but we are facilitators, we want to bring in community members, so that they benefit. We also bring in more of our colleagues to get our vision, especially that we started as five. The school accepted us.

B- what are the factors that have helped you to gain power or to be in power. Of course you mentioned that you are in power because you have now counseling centre, garden. You have partnership with the community. But what factors enabled you to have that power to be where you are now.

P- one factor is that help me to have power is to be open minded, mobile in the mind, to think of alternatives everyday. I present an idea; I sit down and think about it. How can it better tomorrow? One

thing to **have power is research, read books** go into the internet. Also talk to people, share with people get more information and get power.

B- I think from you what you tell me I see Henry before the project and Henry during the project. You have changed. Could you share with me if you see yourself to have changed before and during the project?

H- yah, you know prior to the project I was reserved, a bit conservative, kept to myself, I had lots of thought but kept them to myself. With this one, I have changed a lot. I now speak out, able to modify a lot of things, like network am now capable. The project has changed me and it has helped me to be more dynamic, I move and make things happen and better, am growing and making whatever.

B- you have taken the project to primary. Would you say the project has made you to do more, realize that you have a lot to offer.

H- I would say more. I would say yes. I have changed a lot of people, other people are thinking differently. They also want to do more project, even my colleagues. **Working together people can do more.**

B- how have your relations changed with the researchers at UP. How has your relationship changed in the project in terms of power?

H- I think they are open, they advise us, and they help us to analyze ideas. They help is, they are open, allow us free movement, don't forget your vision. They helped us analyze our visions and situation. They helped to look at our situation and not to compare ourselves with others.

B- would you say they allowed you to be more powerful?

H- yes, we have weaknesses, but they have helped us to decide. They have an impact in our strength, analyze own situation and use own strength.

B-what do you think have been the challenges that face and been challenge from achieving your power. What factors impede you from getting there?

H one factor is time, why – because of the environment- not giving in 100% going extra mile in the project. We have not analyzed our sacrifices, how much time we are giving. We can't rely on department time alone, what we can do outside school time. Getting people to the project and align and fine tune the mind set within the vision and mission. Some get in but the mind is not set and level of understand of what getting in is attitude. Others get in for external motivation, some people contribution is zero, they have not moved an inch. We need a strategy of how to unlock the mind. Cooperation. The mind there must be a leader able to lead. Their input/participation need mind of person to be fine tuned to unlock it.

B- Any other factors?

H- yah, people lack the commitment and ownership of the project, they expect the initiator to always lead, always there running around, like today, this day was long set, to make an appointment, you know people should learn to scribble on diary. By the time you have reference, you should commit. Like I said this mind needs to be fine tune, mind set. I think this is challenge I can elaborate and quote some recent examples. We know that people make appointment, you have to show up except if its an emergency. Make arrangement. That come through mind tuning, let it not be responsibility for X n Y only. Time commitment. We need to network more, that entails commitment to vision and mission and fine tuning of mind. We have opened up UP partnership, they are open, they allow us to have extra network its not like when you have a major sponsor and there are conditions attached.

B- wow! Interesting, could you elaborate, you say you have partnership with UP and they allow you to have more partners with other.

H- you know UP is very open, they gain from us as well, it's a mutual relationship, we gain from them too. The school gained from UP, like help with library. They never stopped us from partnering with others, for example our library partnered with Peace Corps from USA, they brought us books. The volunteer's are able to get us free books. UP does not stop us from talking with Peace Corps. They have also put us on map of the university, like the department of engineering. Engineering students come here. I would say R n L are nice people, its matte of good working relations.

B- When you say, you remind of what you did with "snakes n knobkerries". May be one day you will do own "snakes n knobkerries" with own team.

H- there are people who are looking at what pioneers are doing. They talk out there. What is my input in whole project so that I can say here is the output. Our planning as a leader of group is to review to look at our achievements and challenges. We need to paint a different picture for 2011.

B- tell me about all kinds of partnerships.

H- one thing I forgot about in partnerships is organizations dealing with human issues, we have a project being run by a graduate from another university.

B- okay, besides challenges of sacrifice, time, fine tuning the mind, would you say you have a voice in your own participation. Is it UP telling you what to do or you are the one in change

H-yah, we are in change. Varsity just advise, we also have to sort out our challenges and just inform varsity. We have had a career day the other time, it was started by varsity students, it was successful. Then later we initiated, we started in 2009 by inviting police SAPS and invite people from different varsities. How do we involve the whole school? It has since become an annual event. We have a voice. We set agenda, initiate and propose ideas.

B-do you think that trough this project you have been able to learn how to solve problems that you encounter in the community.

H- yah, I would say starting from the “snakes and knbokeries” enabled to think about challenges of community and how to solve them. It has helped us to come up with ideas, it help to open us up, broaden my wings.

B-any other way that the project has increased your power.

H- my power has increased, being able to make mind change, use of resources that are available like HR, people part of the project. Get people to commit more.

B- do you feel more powerful comparing 2004 and 2010

H- I feel empowered on average basis, a, very empowered, because now I can make network with other people and commitment because of the number factors that I leant, working together with other. Working together we can do more. I have all these ideas. The project has empowered me a lot

B- okay H, thank you very much for taking time from your busy schedule to create time to talk with me. Ngiyabonga



# **Appendix H:**

## **Member Checking**

# MEMBER CHECKING

## LIMPOPO: JULY 2011

- 1. 15 participating teachers met in Limpopo to confirm findings of the study.**
- 2. We exchanged pleasantries and I subsequently explained the purpose of this exercise.**
- 3. Matrix of each individual theme written on manila paper.**
- 4. Explained each theme/subtheme/category in detail to participating teachers.**
- 5. For each theme/subtheme/category I had to find out if teachers confirmed that was a true voice, experience and knowledge of my interactions with them.**
- 6. I gave prompts and cues of the PRA-based activities we did together, thus leading me to conclusion by summarising what they said in a table form**
- 7. Teachers confirmed and agreed with each and every theme/subtheme/category and further offered more explanation.**
- 8. The summary of the below table is indeed a true reflection of what transpired during data generation activities; it is based on the stand point of teachers.**
- 9. My supervisors were in attendance to witness the member checking exercise.**

<sup>i</sup> Summary of themes, subthemes and categories

<b>THEME 1: THE NATURE OF POWER IN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>Subtheme 1.1: Characteristics of power</b>	Leadership
	Decision-making
	Empowerment
	Achieving personal goals
	Appropriating (owning) power
	Trust
<b>Subtheme 1.2: Factors impeding power and partnerships</b>	Time constraints
	Lack of commitment
	Work overload
	Limited confidence
	Lack of role clarification
<b>Subtheme 1.3: Power dynamics</b>	Trust and confidence
	Knowledge brings ability
<b>THEME 2: PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING AND MEANING-MAKING OF POWER AND PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>Subtheme 2.1: Forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships</b>	University researchers
	Peers
	Wider community
<b>Subtheme 2.2: Establishing an enabling environment</b>	Local level enablement
	National level enablement
<b>THEME 3: THE ROLE OF AGENCY IN RELATION TO POWER AND PARTNERSHIP</b>	
<b>Subtheme 3.1: Agency</b>	Capacity to empower others
	Capacity for leadership
	Taking action
<b>Subtheme 3.2: Participants as agents of social transformation</b>	Transferring knowledge
	Providing resources
	Creating community networks

10. Teachers were excited about the themes that developed out of our many months of working together.
11. In the end, teachers felt that I truly represented their experiences as is, as captured in all activities we did together.
12. Teachers look forward to reading the final document in thesis format.

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<sup>i</sup> 19 July 2011 Zebula Resort- Limpopo



# **Appendix I:**

## **Thematic data analysis**

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS/ CODING

Power is achieving goals

Power is agency to bring change; overcoming challenges/ problems

Positive attributes of power

Partnership as working in a team; Partnership as consultation

Partnership as sharing information

Working as a team with same vision

being honest, trust and respect

Enthusiastic yet suspicious

Mistrust of academic researchers

Openness, begin to trust and gaining knowledge

Not yet sure about intention, still silent, not making impact

In 2005, felt powerless since not in charge of running the project

Not in control, but fear and mistrust of academic researchers, not feeling like equal partners. No voice.

Team work

Project dominated/led by academic researchers

Project initiative led by academic researchers

Agent of change-influenced and controlled direction of project. Capacity to co-opt community members . level of responsibility increased

Achieving own dreams and vision & making impact in community

Achieving goals, transforming lives

Exercising agency and acting on it to achieve goals

Provided leadership, guidance and being able to bring in community

Give others opportunity & leading them. Making decision & initiating

Mutual respect, trust for each other(researchers & educators)

Agents of change, providing leadership & capacity to act and influence; Empowering others

Initiating, leading & capacity to act

Achieving own vision & goals

Able to work with community social problems. Providing psychosocial support. Sense of self identity, achievement

Capacity to act in achieving goals

Providing leadership

Capacity and capability to act

Empowering co-investigators, forging equitable & mutual benefiting p/ships

Taking lead, deciding what to do

Building mutual rapport, based on strong relationships

Consultation with members

Increase in networks-group enlarges

Self confidence challenged

Group dynamics in size pose challenges to attributes of power

Self confidence challenged.

Novel situation, not sure of what to do and expected of us

Lack of confidence, not sure of what is expected

Group dynamics-intimidated by others achievement or progress

Increasing partners/members

Lack of time to meet as a group

Able to make others buy into our vision

Transferring / sharing knowledge to others

Mistrust of academic researchers, fear of extra work

Other social problems encountered by learners & educators

Easy to approach others, mutual respect; empowering others; environment enabling

Agents of change, being capable to initiate and bring about results

Providing leadership, sharing information with others. Transfer of knowledge and skills. Increasing networks and assisting others to receive social services. Support from other educators

Support/recognition from others like

Not knowing what to do

Mistrust of academic researchers

Not open about discussing hiv/aids

Work as a system in empowering community Working for community social transformation

Enabling environment to discuss any issues. Collaboration, working as a system

Team work, mutual consultation, coordinated structures

Information sharing

All of us having equal voices and working as team

Effective and coordinated structures

Being initiative, capacity to act

Expressing ones opinion without fear, enabling environment

Having knowledge and information and being able to act at different levels

Team work, mutual respect, sharing information and full participating, mutual consultation

Developing strong relationships

Not about individualism

Fear of change brought by outsiders; Overload of work responsibilities

No problems-free to discuss issues

Creation of networks, effective & coordinated structures. Agents of change

Providing leadership & empowering others

Capacity & capability to influence and act.

Making decisions, capability, act

Capacity, enablement, act

Building rapport, mutual respect, team work

Working as coordinated system, sharing information

Team work, information sharing,

Fear/ mistrust of others. Lack of resources/ support

Being appreciated and recognized; Offered support; Opportunities for learning and growth; Creating networks

Not sure of what to do. Pessimistic about outcome

Changing perspective, offered support

Being achievers/ optimistic and acting; Capable acting, leading,

Partners increase, sharing knowledge from each other

Transmitters of knowledge and skills. Empowering others

In control, capable, leading, initiating

Not sure of what to do

Knowledge transmitters, gaining self confidence

Being leaders, empowering others

Being achievers, networking, agents of change

Leaders, capacity to bring change

Mentors and initiators of change

Leaders in sharing knowledge

Self confidence, strong relationships with others

Taking the projects to other levels

Movers and shakers

Work as team, results oriented

Shared vision, loyalty, equitable relationships

Enabling environment, inclusiveness, equal voices, support

Facilitation, leadership

Not sure of what to do

"Imbiza ye IsiXhosa iya nyamezela"- Educators as agents of transformative social change		Educators construction of understanding and meaning of power and partnership		Educators expressing the capacity to act through the power they gained		Factors educators influencing power in participatory partnership(s)	
Agents of knowledge transfer	parents	forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	UP researchers	Capacity to empower others		Promoting power	
	schools		peers			Hindering power	
	Wider community		Wider community				
Agents of bringing resources		Enabling environment		Capacity for leadership and mentoring			
Agents of creating community networks		Capability and initiative		Taking action/lighting the fire			



<b>THEME 1: “Imbiza ye IsiXhosa iya nyamezela”- Educators as agents of transformative social change</b>	
<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
1. Agents of knowledge transfer	parents
	schools
	Wider community
1.2. Agents of bringing resources	
1.3. Agents of creating community networks	
<b>THEME 2: Educators construction of partnership</b>	
2.1. forging equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships	UP researchers
	Peers
	Wider community
2.2. Enabling environment	
2.3 Capability and initiative	
<b>THEME 3: Educators expressing the capacity to act through the power they gained</b>	
3.1. Capacity to empower others	
3.2. Capacity for leadership and mentoring	

<b>3.3. Taking action/lighting the fire</b>
<b>THEME 4: Factors educators influencing power in participatory partnership(s)</b>
<b>4.1. Promoting power</b>
<b>4.2. Hindering power</b>
<b>THEME 5: Educators understanding of power</b>
<b>5.1 Enabling environment</b>
<b>5.2 Capability and initiative</b>



# **Appendix J:**

## **Research journal**



# **Appendix K:**

## **Ethics clearance certificate**



# **Appendix L:**

## **Consent forms**



## **Appendix M**

### **Field notes**

## Field notes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event/activity</b>
<b>March 2009</b>	<b>Amanzingwe</b>	<b>Seminar on partnerships: How teachers perceive themselves in a STAR project</b>

Get teachers to be in groups of at least 4.

1. Explain purpose of the exercise- request groups to draw pictures depicting their role in STAR- how do they perceive themselves.
2. Each drawing to be accompanied by narrative
3. Do group presentations (observed that all pictures portray a positive picture on community capacity building- they see themselves as change makers- doing this job from the heart, very passionate about being part of STAR- they have valuable assets , which they are tapping into)
4. Do journal reflection

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event/activity</b>
<b>March 2010</b>	<b>P.E.</b>	<b>Data collection using various PRA-based activities</b>

1. Get teachers to do various PRA-based activities.
2. Meaning making of concepts ( important to understanding teachers meaning of the words partnership and power); follow with group discussions.
3. Do the photo poster activity and the sun ray/clouds activity: follow with focus group (be mindful of guidelines for conducting focus groups)
4. Do get markers, plenty of paper, voice recorder, video recorder ( tape each activity both audio and video)
5. Do observe cues for behaviour
6. Prepare snack before getting to business ( good for creating rapport and ease of interaction)
7. Do reflections on research journal

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event/activity</b>
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<b>May &amp; November 2010</b>	<b>M.P.</b>	<b>Data collection using various PRA-based activities</b>
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Get teachers to do various PRA-based activities.

1. Start with photo poster activity- (its very time consuming)
2. Meaning making of concepts (important to understanding teachers meaning of the words partnership and power); follow with group discussions.
3. Do the sun ray/clouds activity: follow with focus group (what are lessons learned from P.E)
4. Do get markers, plenty of paper, voice recorder, video recorder ( tape each activity both audio and video)
5. Do observe cues for behaviour
6. Prepare snack before getting to business ( good for creating rapport and ease of interaction)
7. Do interviews
8. Do reflections on research journal

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event/activity</b>
<b>July 2011</b>	<b>Limpopo</b>	<b>Member checking</b>

1. Time to check out if findings are true representation of the voices, experience and knowledge of teachers as potrayed in the various data collection techniques.
2. Write themes/subthemes/categories on manila paper
3. Explain the purpose of the activity- since march 2009 to date, this is what they said ( do they agree or disagree)
4. Check if there are discrepancies, thus need to augment information (well, teachers confirmed and agreed with each theme-good\_
5. Do reflection on research journal