



**THE PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS ON FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO GRADE REPETITION IN
LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

by

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Dedicated to Mohale (my husband)
for his outstanding support, care, love and encouragement.
And to Itumeleng, Keneuoe and Neo (my daughters)
who have given me the joy of being their role model

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I give Honour and Glory to God Almighty for giving me the health, strength, wisdom and courage that carried me throughout this long journey which appeared to be short because of His Great Mercy.

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A final word of thanks for the support and motivation I received from my friends.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Albertina Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho (student number 27417532), hereby declare that this dissertation for the degree Magister of Education at the University of Pretoria, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that this is my own work in design and execution and that all material from published sources contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APTC	Advanced Primary Teachers' Certificate
CDTT	Curriculum Development Task Teams
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
DEP	Diploma in Education Primary
DPE	Diploma in Primary Education
DRT	District Resource Teachers
ECOL	Examination Council of Lesotho
EFA	Education for All
FPE	Free Primary Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IECCD	Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development
JC	Junior Certificate
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
LIET VI	Lesotho In-service Development of Teachers
LPTC	Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Council
NTTC	National Teacher Training College
PC	Personal Computer
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
PTC	Primary Teachers' Certificate
SMB	School Management Boards
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TSD	Teaching Service Department
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

KEY WORDS

Class size

Educators

Factors

Grade repetition

Parental involvement

Perceptions

Teacher training



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CHAPTER ONE Orientation

1.1 Introduction/statement of purpose

Lesotho is the smallest mountainous country in Southern Africa after Swaziland and completely landlocked by its neighbour South Africa. The country is one of the least developed countries of the world. It is divided into four regions namely Lowlands, Foothills, Senqu River Valley and Highlands. Each of these regions has a unique set of physical characteristics that have contributed to their settlement and economic development and thus influences the levels and conditions of education activities within them. The physical features and the productivity of these regions are among the key factors that determine the nature of communities and thus influence their willingness and ability to finance educational activities and projects (Isaacs, 2007: 2, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), 2006: 1, Lerotholi, 2001: 15, Stock-taking Review on Education in Africa, 1999: 4).

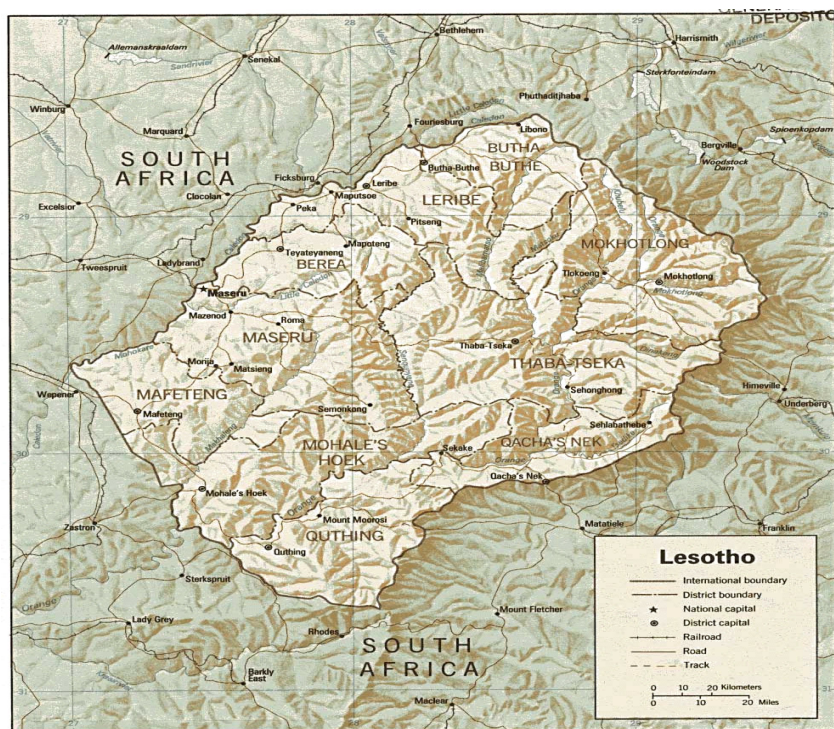


Figure 1.1: Lesotho – Shaded relief map

Source: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

The Lesotho educational system consists of a 3+7+3+2 structure. Thus, three years of Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD), seven years of primary education, three years of junior secondary education, two years of senior secondary education and four years of tertiary education. There is also a parallel technical vocational diploma course (senior secondary + or three years Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The system operates within a unitary state with ten administrative districts and four regions mentioned above (Isaacs, 2007: 1, MOET, 2006: 1, Lerotholi, 2001: 17, Stock-taking Review on Education in Africa, 1999: 4). Table 1.1 below provides a brief summary of the Lesotho Educational System.

Table 1.1: *The Lesotho Educational System (Stock-taking Review on Education in Africa, : 1999: 4)*

Level	Duration	Examination/evaluation/assessment
IECCD	3 years	Continuous assessment readiness level
Primary	7 years	Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE)
Secondary/High	3/5 years	JC/COSC
Technical/Vocational Education	3 years	Certificates and Diplomas
Teacher Education	3 years	Certificates and Diplomas
Higher Education	2-3 years	Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees

Table 1.2 shows the numbers of institutions at each level. The listed schools are largely those that are registered with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Lesotho. There are also institutions that are not registered with the ministry and they do not appear in the list.

Table 1.2: *Lesotho Educational Institutions, 2005 (Isaacs, 2007: 3)*

Level	<i>No. of schools/centres</i>
IECCD	622
Primary schools	1,477
Secondary/High schools	256
Skills training centres	21
Technical institutes	7
Polytechnics	1
Teacher training colleges	1
Universities	1

The primary sector provides instruction from standard/class 1 to standard/class 7 to learners aged 6 to 12 years. At the end of the seventh year cycle, a national Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), which all standard/class 7 learners sit, determines their progression into junior secondary school level (Lerotholi, 2001: 17, MOET, 2003: 74 & 2004: 45).

In Lesotho, where there is no policy of automatic promotion, the repetition rate is relatively high in the primary cycle (World Bank, 2005: 41). The report defines repetition rate as the number of repeaters in Year 2 over total enrolment in Year 1. According to this report, the average repetition rates in Lesotho primary education have hovered around 20% over the past five years. The rate at the primary cycle has worsened slightly in recent years because of high repetition rates in standards/classes 1 and 2 (World Bank, 2005: 41). Table 1.3 below displays the repetition rate by standard/class and primary cycle over the past five years.

Table 1.3: *Repetition rate by standard/class and primary cycle (School census and projected population in World Bank, 2005: 41)*

Cycle	Standard/class	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Primary cycle	1	23.6	30	23.4	27.1	29
	2	22.9	21.9	28.5	25.1	25.4
	3	20.3	20	18.5	25.5	19.7
	4	21.2	20.4	20.3	19.7	25.4
	5	16.8	15.8	15.7	14.7	16.4
	6	12.1	12.4	12	12.6	12.9
	7	19.9	17.4	11.3	11.9	19
	Average		19.5	19.7	18.5	19.5

Table 1.4 below shows the efficiency of learner flow in primary education in Lesotho, 2003 on 1000 learners entering standard/class 1. The table summarizes the calculations of the total efficiency ratio using the year 2003 as an example.

Table 1.4: *Efficiency of Learner Flow in Primary Education in Lesotho, 2003 (World Bank, 2005: 42)*

Standard/class	Reach standard/class	2003 Repetition rate	Learners years invested
1	000	0.42	1 710
2	905	0.35	1 393
3	885	0.23	1 157
4	802	0.33	1 189
5	765	0.19	948
6	702	0.15	824
7	655	0.22	835
Total	5 714		8 055
Learners years needed without repetition and dropout	4 585		
Efficiency ratio		0.71	
Due to repetition		0.80	
Due to dropout			
Total efficiency ratio		0.57	

Given the 2003 rates of cohort survival and repetition and calculating for a starting cohort of 1000 learners, the resources spent in Standard/Class 1 would amount to 1710 learner years ($1000/(1-0.42)$). Only 905 learners would be left in Class 2, so the resources spent would be 1393 learner years' ($905/(1-0.35)$). Continuing in this manner to Class 7, the cumulative resources spent would amount to 8055 learner years' ($1730+1393+1157+1189+948+824+835$). Given that only 835 learners would reach Class 7, the resources needed to produce them, without drop-out and repetition, would equal 4585 learner years' ($835*7$). Thus, considering both sources of waste (repetition and drop-out), the system currently operates only 0.57 ($=4585/8055$) times as efficiently as a system in which no one drops out or repeats class. If the calculation is conducted using repetition alone ignoring the drop-out rate, the efficiency ratio is .71%. If drop-out alone is considered, the efficiency ratio is .8% (World Bank, 2005: 42).

An education system that operates with a .57% rate of efficiency in 2003 is fairly inefficient. Learners repeating classes in Lesotho seem to put a heavier burden on the system than do those who drop out. Overall, an educational system operating at a .57% efficiency rate is not using its resources effectively (Public Eye Newspaper, 2006: 13, World Bank, 2005: 42, MOET, 2004: 74 & 2003: 45).

The purpose of this study is therefore to explore a selection of possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators' perceptions on possible but as yet much unexplored causes of repetition.

1.2 The research question

Why do so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools?

1.2.1 Critical questions

1.2.1.1 What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition?

- 1.2.1.2 What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size n grade repetition?
- 1.2.1.3 What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition?
- 1.2.1.4 What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition?

1.3 Aims of the research

In respect to the problem above, the aim of the study is to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators' perspectives on possible but as yet unexplored or underexplored causes of repetition. Therefore, the objectives of the research are:

- 1.3.1 To understand the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition.
- 1.3.2 To explore the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition.
- 1.3.3 To determine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition.
- 1.3.4 To examine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition.

1.4 Working assumption

Different contributing factors have been discovered, but grade repetition still remains a problem. I therefore assume that educators' perceptions will be that teacher training; class size, teacher planning, and inadequate parental involvement are all factors that may contribute to the high repetition rate in Lesotho primary schools. Below are reasons why I assume that these may be viewed as factors contributing to grade repetition although my findings may not confirm the assumption.

1.4.1 Teacher training

On daily basis teachers confront complex decisions that rely on many different kinds of knowledge and judgement that can involve high-stakes outcomes for learners' future (Francisco & Bass, 2005: 417). To make decisions teachers must be aware of many ways in which learners' learning can unfold in the context of development, learning differences, language and cultural influences, individual temperaments, interests, and approaches to learning. Teachers need to know how to take the necessary steps to gather additional information that will allow them more grounded judgements about what is going on and what strategies are helpful. They need a kind of preparation that enables them to go beyond 'covering the curriculum' to actually enable learning for learners who learn in very different ways (Francisco & Bass, 2005: 417).

Almost all teachers in Lesotho are trained in one state college, Lesotho College of Education. The majority seem to have failed to acquire knowledge about subject matter, learning processes and development of learners (Francisco & Bass, 2005: 418). They seem to lack skills needed to provide productive learning experiences for a diverse set of learners, to offer informative feedback on learners' ideas and to critically evaluate our own teaching practices and improve them (Francisco & Bass, 2005: 418). They also seem to lack the professional commitment needed to help every learner succeed and to continue to develop knowledge and skills, both individually and as members of a collective profession (Francisco & Bass, 2005: 418). Based on the reviewed literature, I assume improper training to be one of the contributing factors to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.

1.4.2 Class size

Class size affects the quality of the classroom environment (Glass & Associates, 1982: 64). In a smaller class, there are more opportunities to adopt learning programmes to the needs of individual. Chances are good that the climate is friendlier and more conducive to learning. Students are more directly and personally involved in learning. In a smaller class, pupils have more interest in

learning (Glass & Associates, 1982: 64). There is less distraction, less apathy, friction and frustration. Smaller classes tend to enhance teachers' morale. They like their pupils. They have time to plan and are more satisfied with their learners' performance.

Lesotho implemented Free Primary Education (FPE) in the year 2000. It was from this time that enrolment numbers grew higher in primary schools. A teacher is legally entitled to teach 45 learners, which seems to be practically difficult. Practically speaking, a teacher finds him/herself faced by more than 50 learners in a classroom. This frustrates them as they fail to attend to individual learners. As a result those with problems suffer more than those who do not have problems. With this reason in mind I assume that large class sizes contribute to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.

1.4.3 Teacher planning

I believe that a teacher plans effectively when he/she considers the following factors in his/her planning: outcomes, content, learners' different characteristics, and teaching and learning strategies.

- **Outcomes:** For every lesson the teacher must decide beforehand precisely the outcomes he/she wants his/her learners to achieve (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 315). He/she has to decide beforehand whether the knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or values he/she wants his/her learners to gain are within their reach; whether the outcome is in accordance with the syllabus requirements; whether they can be achieved within the set time; and whether his/her instructional materials are effective enough to help him/her to realise the intended outcome (Avenant, 1990: 79).
- **Content:** The teacher has to decide upon the appropriate content to deliver the intended outcomes. Proper teacher planning identifies learning experiences that can be integrated to enable learners to see

connections between knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or values they are learning and how to use them across many disciplines (Bickart, Jablon and Dodge, 1999: 12). It is also proper teacher planning when the teacher plans the sequence in which the content will be presented, the progressive degree of difficulty he/she has in mind, the connection between the known and the unknown, the concrete and abstract as well as a global view or summary of the loose bits and pieces of the content thoroughly (Avenant, 1990: 80 & Borich, 1996: 106, 2000: 212).

- **Learners' characteristics:** Children vary in their experiences, learning abilities, achievement, personality, interests, creativity, and self-discipline (Borich, 1996: 107). An effective teacher matches or adapts instructional methods to the individual learning needs depending on the outcomes the teacher wants learners to attain (Borich, 1996: 107, 2000: 212). By so doing it allows learners to use their own experiences and past learning histories, to bring their own meanings and understandings to what will be taught. It is in proper planning where mechanisms for the continual monitoring of learners' learning are decided upon (Anderson, 1989: 45). Multiple materials and resources that can be used to facilitate learning, and additional time to those who need it as well as the development of additional learners' responsibility for learning for the successful attainment of the aimed outcomes, are also decided upon (Anderson, 1989: 45).
- **Teaching-learning strategies:** Proper teacher planning selects the appropriate teaching strategies and materials that can be used to achieve the planned goals (Cruickshank, Bainer and Metcalf, 1999: 45). It selects the teaching materials (e.g. textbooks, workbooks, software, media and tests) that will be used to create meaningful learning opportunities. It is only during proper teacher planning where the teacher is able to decide on the pacing (tempo) of introducing new material, mode of presentation (e.g. story telling, demonstration, exploration), class arrangement (e.g. small

groups, whole class), and classroom management (rules, raising hands, speaking out) (Cruickshank *et al.* 1999: 45).

Teachers in most of Lesotho primary schools seem to fail to accommodate all learners in their planning, hence poor teaching and learning results (Lembo, 1971: 11). They tend to believe that it is appropriate for all learners in a particular grade to be instructed using the same content, at the same time and in the same manner. They seem to forget that learners differ in the rate they develop and in their physical, emotional, and intellectual capabilities (Cruickshank *et al.* 1999: 46 & Lembo, 1971: 11). Learners experience life differently. Their attitudes, values, concerns and ambitions also differ from those of their peers, parents and siblings. Above all, all of these characteristics interact differently. It is therefore the interaction of individual characteristics that results in the unique learning styles learners bring to the learning situation (Cruickshank *et al.* 1999: 46 & Lembo, 1971: 12). I consider ineffective teacher planning to be a possible contributing factor to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.

1.4.4 Parental involvement

Parental involvement is any activity that empowers parents and families to participate in the educational process either at home or in a programme setting (Rockwell, Andre & Hawley, 1996: 13). The family is the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child (Rockwell *et al.* 1995: 13). These authors further indicate that the involvement of the child's family as an active participant is critical to the success of any intervention program. Reaching parents early is the key because the process that contributes to school success begins at birth (Jones, 1989: 74). According to Epstein, Greenberg and Hester (1987: 124, 1989: 69 &, 1989: 24) parental involvement:

- Raises the academic achievement of learners.
- Improves the attitudes and performance of learners in school.
- Increases self-esteem and motivation.

- Reduces behaviour problems and lowers learners' repetition and dropout rates.
- Helps parents understand the work of the school.
- Builds school-community relationships in an ongoing, problem-preventing way.

Most of the parents in Lesotho primary schools seem not to understand how they should be involved in their children's learning. They believe that the teaching and learning process remains in the hands of the teacher. Her/his responsibility is only to pay fees and provide food in the case where there are no feeding programmes. This was approved by the findings of a study conducted by Wilson & Hughes (2006: 35) that parents' low sense of responsibility for their children's educational outcomes seems to be one of the contributing factors to grade repetition. The situation is clearly seen when learners are given home-work that requires their contribution. It is where teachers come across remarks such as, "I am not a teacher, and I pay him/her to teach you." Such situations really create a big gap between teachers and parents. As a result it is the child who suffers failure and repetition. I therefore assume that inadequate parental involvement has an impact on grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.

Some literature was reviewed in order to find out what other researchers, scholars, and practitioners have discovered to be factors contributing to grade repetition.

1.5 Literature review

Grade repetition/retention is the practice of requiring a learner to remain in his/her current grade level the following school year despite spending a full year in that given grade (Jackson, 1975: 633, Westbury, 1994: 246, Jimerson *et al.* 1997: 14). Different studies at different levels of education are reviewed to give an overall picture of what can be considered as factors contributing to grade repetition. My literature review could not focus on studies done only on elementary or primary schools because that would limit the findings. Schools are

likely to be structured the same way regardless of the level. Therefore what affects a primary school can as well affect a high school. As a result, different studies have identified different factors contributing to grade repetition.

In their study, Taylor & Bedford (2004: 382) used both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Questionnaires and interviews were engaged to investigate the perceptions of academic staff in relation to students' non-completion at a large Australian regional university. Research questions were based on the following categories:

- General student characteristics and environmental factors
- General student-institution interaction factors
- Teaching staff expectation factors
- Student-teaching staff interaction factors
- Course design factors

Questionnaires were sent to 402 academic staff from five faculties while 20 academic staff members were interviewed. This study discovered learners' level of preparedness, motivation, ability to manage their studies, a mismatch between student and university expectations, student-teaching staff interactions, and course design (assessment, feedback and personal support) to be the major factors contributing to this problem.

Stone & Engle (2007: 621) explored the intervention of retention including how teachers shaped the retained year for students and the nature and quality of instructional strategies. The qualitative study was undertaken in a middle school where 22 students in Chicago were interviewed. It was then found that instructional strategies are the most prominent factors contributing to grade repetition.

Witmer, Hoffman & Nottis (2004: 184) conducted a study in which they aimed to develop a knowledge assessment instrument to measure teachers' propositional

knowledge about retention (knowledge of research findings) that could be easily added to a pre-existing instrument. The following were their research questions:

- What are elementary teachers' beliefs about grade retention and do they differ by grade taught?
- What factors influence teachers' decisions to retain students?
- How much propositional knowledge do elementary teachers have about grade retention?
- Do elementary teachers have higher levels of practical or propositional knowledge about grade retention than middle school teachers?
- What is the relationship between teachers' propositional knowledge about grade retention and their practice of retaining students?

The problem was quantitatively researched where questionnaires were distributed to teachers from kindergarten to fourth grade. History records of retained students from 1996-2000 were provided. Overall retention rates were also collected from the elementary school principal as well as information about the current district's retention policy. This study attributed failure to student academic performance, students' ability, effort and identified social and emotional maturity as factors playing important roles in students' decision making.

In their study, Kalil & Ziol-Guest (2005: 199) explored the quality and stability of parents' employment because there are several reasons to think that these characteristics might impact on children's performance. This study addressed the question: Why might low-income mothers' employment experiences differentially affect adolescents' development? The study was home based since it was not undertaken in any educational institution. Both quantitative and qualitative research designs were utilised in this study. Questionnaires were distributed to adolescents who were also interviewed. It was discovered that there was a

correlation between maternal employment and grade repetition rather than with school dropout.

Neild & Balfanz (2006: 132) undertook a quantitative study that examined the key academic characteristics of 9th graders in Philadelphia high schools during the 1999-2000 school years. Questionnaires were distributed to 167 school principals. In this study educational policy appeared to be a factor contributing to high grade repetition rate.

In their study, Delgado, Vagi & Scott (2006: 301) aimed to investigate the importance of developmental delay as an exceptional category and to advance the understanding of the long-term implications of such delay. Questionnaires were mailed to twelve thousand seven hundred and eighteen preschools where 2046 children were discovered to have repeated grades due to developmental delay.

Wilson & Hughes (2006: 35) conducted a quantitative study on predictors of grade retention on grade 1. Research questions were built on the following categories:

- Academic competencies
- Social demographic characteristics
- Social, emotional and behavioural adjustment
- Resilience, school context and home environment

Questionnaires were mailed to 283 Hispanic children with literacy performance at entrance to first grade. It was discovered that 51 Hispanic students were retained in first grade. Low literacy skills, early age at entrance to first grade, low ego resilience, low support in the teacher-student relationship and parents' low sense of responsibility for their children's educational outcomes were found to have contributed to this problem.

Peer relations also appear to have a great impact on learners' academic performance (Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers & Kuyper, 2006: 496). The problem was quantitatively researched to examine whether peer relations within classrooms were related to students' academic progress. Questionnaires were distributed to 18, 735 students in 796 schools in Dutch Junior High Schools.

Sociocultural factors were discovered to be among the factors contributing to grade repetition (Chimombo, 2005: 156) in Malawi. The purpose of this study was to investigate difficulties encountered in implementing Education for All (EFA) in Malawi. The study addressed the question: What difficulties were encountered in Malawi in implementing EFA?

Five districts were chosen from three regions of the country. Two schools were selected within each district, one rural, the other less rural. The study combined a range of data collection methods: questionnaire surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, and class observations. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with policy-makers at Ministry headquarters, as well as with stakeholders at the different policy implementation level. These semi-structured interviews served the dual purpose of gathering information and identifying problems.

The first two days focused on the school, including the collection of quantitative data by means of questionnaires, focus group discussion with teachers, and observations. One class from the three sections of the primary cycle was observed. The observation schedule was designed to include classroom activities that involved interaction patterns and tasks distributed to learners while learning. Focus group discussions and interviews were held with parents, school committees and community leaders. Key informant interviews were also held with local leaders. These focus group discussions and interviews constituted the main source of ideas and views about the free-primary-education policy at local level.

In the study conducted by Boyle, Georgiades, Mustard & Racine (2007: 172) socio-emotional factors were reported to be prominent factors contributing to grade repetition. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of “distal” contextual influences (neighbourhood and family) on later educational attainment. The following research questions were used to collect data:

- What is the potential for early social context (i.e. neighbourhood and families) to influence educational attainment in adulthood?
- Are developmental influences originating at distal levels (neighbourhoods) mediated through factors operating at proximal levels (family, child)?
- After removing contemporaneous influences attributable to child health and school performance variables, what is the relative importance of specific contextual influences to explaining variability in educational attainment?
- Is there any evidence of effect modification between neighbourhoods’ affluence and family SES disadvantage on later educational attainment?

Mixed methods were used in this study. Home interviews were conducted and assessment data was collected from parents and adolescents aged 12-16 years. With parental consent, self-completed questionnaires were mailed to teachers who returned assessment forms of children and adolescents in school.

Summary

Correlations between grade repetition and the following factors were indicated: Student, family, and community factors such as learners’ level of preparedness, motivation, ability to manage their studies, social and emotional maturity, maternal employment, culture, peer relations, and parents’ low sense of responsibility for their children’s educational outcomes.

Other factors were education-related factors such as a mismatch between learners’ and school expectations, school administration, student-teaching staff interactions, curriculum design, instructional strategies, educational policy. The

third group of factors was health-related factors such as special health problems, learning disability, and developmental delay.

Despite extensive effort, I could not find literature on teacher training, class size, teacher planning and very little was said about parental involvement as possible contributing factors to grade repetition. Thus, the present study proposes to look at them as possible contributing factors. Another limitation of research on grade repetition is that most of the studies used only questionnaires and interviews as sources for data collection. A need therefore exists for more intensive studies where educators will be interviewed and literature will be reviewed.

A third limitation is that most of the previous studies are focused primarily on kindergarten, preschools, high schools, and universities. In contrast, the present study intends to investigate grade repetition in primary schools.

The fourth limitation is that, in previous studies, learners were the participants. The difference with the present study is that educators and education officers will be the participants.

The fifth limitation is that the majority of researchers in previous studies, including those in elementary schools, were academic staff from universities and colleges. This status would make participants feel unease and hold back some of the important information for the study. Very few were primary school teachers at the time the research was undertaken. However, this present study will be undertaken by a teacher on the same level as the participants in this study. Thus, my teaching experience at this level is an added advantage to my research.

The sixth limitation of the research I have reviewed is that most of it has been undertaken by foreign researchers who are in a particular country on an occupational basis. Thus, they lack experience of educational functioning in that country. However, I am a resident of Lesotho and my experience together with

the information collected will enrich the findings. The limitations above together with the reasons below have informed my desire to undertake this study.

1.6 The rationale

Lesotho is a small country of about 2.1 million people, a low GNP per capita, and a high level of poverty. Lesotho's economy is primarily based on subsistence agriculture, livestock, and remittances from miners employed in South Africa (though this work has declined steadily over the past several years). A small manufacturing base depends largely on farm products that support the milling, canning, leather, and jute industries. Proceeds from membership in a common customs union with South Africa and from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (which controls, stores and redirects water to South Africa) form the biggest part of government revenue (Isaacs, 2007: 2, MOET, 2006: 1, Lerotholi, 2001: 15, Stock-taking Review on Education in Africa, 1999: 4).

Lesotho is facing challenges of high poverty and illiteracy rates and low primary enrolment as well as *low completion rates* (Avenstrup, Liang & Nellemann, 2004: 15). Approximately 25% of children do not attend school, particularly in rural areas where families involved in subsistence activities need the help of their children to survive (Isaacs, 2007: 3-4). The costs of school attendance, books, uniforms, and educational materials are unaffordable for many families especially those suffering from stress, poverty, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and divorce. All of which has also led to a rise in child homelessness and abandonment, creating growing numbers of street children. HIV/AIDS has exacted a heavy toll on the education system. There are reportedly increasing numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children becoming heads of families (Isaacs, 2007: 3-4).

Lesotho's educators are also challenged by the lack of financial resources needed to meet the growing demand for well-educated local teachers, the need for literacy, and for vocational and technical training outside the formal academic setting. There has also been an increased demand for teacher supply because of

teachers lost through the HIV/AIDS pandemic in addition to other causes of attrition such as retirement or transfers to other sectors (Isaacs, 2007: 3-4).

Lesotho has a severely underdeveloped infrastructure. Table 1.5 below provides an overview of the country's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure indicators.

Table 1.5: *ICT infrastructure Indicators (Isaacs, 4: 2007)*

Indicator	
Fixed lines	48,000 (2005)
Cellular	245,100 (2005)
Radio broadcast stations	AM 1, FM 2, shortwave 1 (1998)
Television broadcast stations	1 (2000)
Internet hosts	168 (2006)
Internet users	43,000 (2005)

Approximately only 10 out of an estimated 1, 477 primary schools have any form of rudimentary access to ICTs, and sometimes this is in the form of only one personal computer (PC) with no internet access. Of the total number of schools (about 1,700) in Lesotho, only 20 have electricity. Some have solar panels used to power groundwater pumps (Isaacs, 2007: 4).

There are two reasons why I have decided to undertake this study. Firstly, I am concerned about the impact of grade repetition on the state. The country experiences great loss in terms of resources and human capital. When a learner repeats a class, it increases the probability of her/his dropping out, by signalling to the parents that their child is not progressing academically. It also reduces the efficiency of learner flow in that a repeater costs at least twice as much per class attained as a non-repeater, while yielding only modest gains, if any, in terms of learner learning (World Bank, 2005: 40-41).

Resources that are supposed to be spent on educating the 25% of children in rural as well as some in urban areas, to provide boarding facilities for those

school-going children are wasted on repeaters. Resources that are supposed to cater for those orphaned and vulnerable children who are becoming heads of families are spent on repeaters. Resources that could be catering for costs of school attendance, books, uniforms, and educational materials for those children out of school are wasted on repeaters. Such resources could be used to finance teachers to meet the growing demand for well-educated local teachers, the need for literacy, and for vocational and technical training outside the formal academic setting. These resources could be used to cater for those families suffering from family stress, poverty, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and divorce. This would reduce numbers of homeless, abandoned and street children. They are these resources that would be used to develop the country's infrastructure.

Secondly, I am concerned about the impact of grade repetition on learners. Learners experience emotions of fear, anger, and sadness when not promoted (Byrnes & Yamamoto, 1986: 210). This experience impairs their self-esteem, emotional functioning and peer relation. As a result there is a high degree of disengagement, absenteeism, and truancy (Jimerson, Anderson & Whipple, 2002: 450-451). Those potential mechanics, engineers, scientists, economists, and HIV/AIDS doctors have now turned into robbers, house breakers, drug dealers, street kids, sex workers, and HIV/AIDS carriers and they could become prisoners or die young.

1.7 Conceptual framework

My conceptual framework is made up of the following concepts: perceptions, educators, factors, and grade repetition.

1.7.2 Perception(s)

- Knowledge through the senses of the existence and properties of matter or the external world (World Tutor, 2004: 2).
- That which exists in the mind as the product of careful mental activity (Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, 1995: 1)

- Recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based chiefly on memory (American Heritage Dictionary, 2007: 2)

In this study perceptions are going to be explored and understood as the views, feelings, beliefs, ideas and opinions that educators have regarding causes of grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.

1.7.3 Educator(s)

- An administrator of a school or an educational institution (American Heritage Dictionary, 2007: 3).
- One who educates (Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, 1995: 3 & WordNet, 2001: 2).
- Teacher; Antonyms: pupils, students (Answers Corporation, 1999-2007: 1).

Teacher(s)

- One who teaches, especially one hired to teach (American Heritage Dictionary, 2007: 3).
- One who educates (Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, 1995: 3 & Answers Corporation, 1999-2007: 1)
- A person who helps others to learn, especially in a school or college (Encyclopaedia of Education, 2002: 2).

This study is going to use the noun educators instead of teachers. It is going to refer to teachers as people responsible for teaching whereas educators are hired particularly for the governance and management of schools. That is, teachers as classroom managers, school principals as school managers and education officers as system managers will be the core participants of this study.

1.7.3 Factor(s)

- An element that actively contributes to an accomplishment, result, or process (American Heritage Dictionary, 2007: 1).

- A circumstance, fact or influence that contributes to a result or outcome (US Military Dictionary, 2002: 1).
- An event, circumstance, influence, or element that plays a part in bringing about a result (West's Encyclopaedia of American Law, 1998: 3).

In this study factors will be regarded as conditions that educators will perceive to have a bearing on grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. Teacher planning, class size, teacher training and parental involvement will be investigated as possible factors contributing to grade repetition in this study.

1.7.4 Grade repetition

Grade repetition/retention is the practice of requiring a learner to remain at his/her current grade level the following school year despite spending a full year at that given grade (Jackson, 1975: 633, Westbury, 1994: 246, Jimerson *et al.* 1997: 14). This implies that learners repeat grades because there are elements that prevent them from being promoted to next grades. The majority of learners who fail grades more especially grade seven, never attempt to enrol for the following academic year. Instead they get engaged in other activities. Therefore in this study grade repetition will imply the failing of a grade regardless of repeating that grade or dropping out.

1.8 Theoretical framework

An explanation of causes of grade repetition has been given by many theories such as socioeconomic, socio-emotional, socio-cultural, and many others. I would like to find out if teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement, are not also significant contributing factors. These will add to the already existing theories.

1.8.1 Paradigm: Interpretive

This study will be following the interpretive paradigm. This will allow me to interact closely with the participants to gain insight and form a clear understanding as to what educators perceive to be the causes of grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova,

Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Plano Clark & van der Westhuizen, 2007: 58-60). The study will attempt to make sense of the participants' life-worlds by interacting with them through the interviews, appreciating and clarifying the meanings they ascribe to their experiences regarding grade repetition (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 59). Throughout the research process, I will aim to form a holistic view of the participants within their contexts by exploring their experiences, views and feelings regarding causes of grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 59).

1.8.2 Epistemology

This is a qualitative study. Qualitative researchers believe that the world is made up of people with their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 58). In order for me to explore the causes of grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools, I will explore educators' experiences to see how they have constructed reality by asking about it through interviews (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 58). I will then investigate their activities in terms of meanings – why they say, what will appear to be their perceptions regarding causes of grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. I will then interpret their meanings by linking them to other human actions to enable greater understanding. My interaction with the participants as well as their interaction with their own experiences on causes of grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools will enable me to construct reality regarding such causes based on participants' experiences (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 59).

1.8.3 Qualitative design

The goal of qualitative research is to explore and understand a central phenomenon (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 257). This approach will therefore enable me to explore and understand why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools. I will ask educators general and broad research questions to seek to understand their perceptions on possible but as yet very much unexplored causes of repetition in their schools (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 257).

A qualitative approach will allow me to have a small sample size that I will purposefully select from those individuals who have the most experience with causes of grade repetition. That is, it will enable me to collect the data from educators being people immersed in the setting of everyday life in which grade repetition has become a problem (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 258).

1.8.4 Instrumental case study

I have decided to study a single case being grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools; therefore a case study will be an appropriate research method (Stake, 1994: 267). In this case, an instrumental case study will be used. An instrumental case study is a study used to examine a particular case mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization in order to build theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 437). An instrumental case study will enable me to elaborate a theory on, and gain a better understanding of the perceptions of educators on factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools (Raymond, 1996: 162).

1.8.5 Data collection

This section indicates when and how I will gather data for this study. Creswell (2005: 202) suggests five steps I should follow before collecting qualitative data. I need to:

- Identify my participants and sites
- Gain access to data
- Determine the type of data to collect
- Develop data collection forms
- Administer the process in an ethical manner

1.8.5.1 Purposive sampling

This study will be undertaken in Lesotho primary schools in Maseru district. Of the 10 administrative districts, the capital, Maseru has the largest share of the population and therefore the highest number of schools (Lerotholi, 2001:16). These primary schools consist of both public and private schools. Other than the

fact that the salaries of some private primary school teachers are paid by parents, there is no other significant distinction between these schools because educators are trained in one state college, teach one national curriculum and there is one PSLE for learners at the end of the system.

In order to serve the purpose of this study, one education officer in the primary section of the education department with at least three years' experience in the position will be involved. The department will then provide me with such person. The reason for this is that his office has an overview of all that happens in this section – number of primary schools, teachers in each, the number promoted learners, drop-outs, failures and repeaters each year and the overall performance of every school for at least three years of his/her period of service. I also assume that, having these records, there must have been some follow-ups made to find the reasons why learners fail and repeat grades in such large numbers.

Five experienced school principals will also be hand-picked. This study regards experienced principals as those who have at least five years or above running the school. I will therefore ask the Department of Education to help me find such principals. The final decision on whether the learner has to repeat the grade or not, is made by the principal after getting the necessary evidence from the class teacher. Their period of service will give them the picture of what they have experienced to be factors contributing to learners they have evidenced to have failed and repeated grades. They will have an overview of their schools' performance.

Six experienced and well-qualified teachers will also be sampled for this study. Experienced teachers are teachers who are skilled and knowledgeable through active participation and long practice (American Heritage Dictionary, 2007: 2, WordNet, 2001: 1 and Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, 1995: 1). They will have five and more years' experience in the field in this study. Their years of experience will enable them to at least have a clear picture of what they have

experienced to be the reasons they have associated with learners who failed and repeated grades.

Qualified teachers are those who, after meeting certain standards, requirements and teacher training were certificated. In this study well qualified teachers are seen as those who hold Diploma in Primary Education or above. I assume that the training these teachers acquired has equipped them with skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that would enable them to diagnose problems that may contribute to learners' performance and end up impeding such learners to progress with their studies instead, fail and repeat grades. I will then ask school principals to help me find teachers of the above qualities.

Educators are those professionals entrusted to provide the intellectual and social experiences from which learners develop the skills, knowledge; interests and attitudes that characterize them as individuals and that shape their abilities to perform adult roles (Berns, 2001: 227). This allows them to be held accountable for the success of their learners. Therefore they have the biggest influence on grade repetition. For these reasons, they are people who can provide this study with appropriate information.

1.8.5.2 Interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews will be conducted with six experienced and qualified teachers. The same interviews will be conducted with five school principals and an education officer in the primary division. These interviews will provide me with opportunities to probe and expand the participants' responses for depth of feeling about factors contributing to grade repetition (Opie, 2004: 231). They will also allow for a deviation from a prearranged text and to change the wording of questions or the order in which they are asked.

Particular attention will be paid to body language during these interviews, not just to what was being said.

These interviews will enable me to:

- To understand the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition.
- To explore the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition.
- To determine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition.
- To examine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition.

1.8.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative data analysis is an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 461). As I will be recording participants' responses during interviews, I will assign codes to my first set of interview transcripts. I will also note down personal reflections observed or other comments. After the completion of every process, I will sort and sift through the materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences.

Additionally, I will identify the patterns and processes, commonalities, and differences and take them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.

In order to avoid bias when interpreting the data, I will first describe my own values and cultural framework for the reader and keep a journal or log book of how my perspectives changed throughout the study. This will enhance my ability to detect when my cultural lens is becoming problematic. It will also help me see where divergence in viewpoints may be based on culturally different interpretations.

1.9 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the accuracy and believability of the data (Mertler, 2006: 101). Glesne, 1999 and Hubbard & Power (2003 in Mertler, 2006: 101) note that there are three typical aspects of any qualitative research study that help to ensure the trustworthiness of the data, namely triangulation, member checking and prolonged engagement and persistent observation.

- **Triangulation:** It is a process of relating multiple sources of data in order to establish their trustworthiness or verification of the consistency of the facts while trying to account for their inherent biases (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glesne, 1999 in Mertler, 2006: 9). The rationale for triangulation is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another (Denzin, 1970 in Lancy, 2001: 16). In this study I am going to use individual interviews and a review of literature. The combination of information from individual and analysis of written material on the topic will make me more confident in the research findings (Glesne, 1999 in Mertler, 2006: 9). That is, educators' perceptions that I will get during interviews and what will be predicted by the literature review will most likely make me more confident in concluding that it is actually an accurate depiction of the educators' experiences. In other words, my interview data will be supported by data collected from the literature. Thus, the findings I will give will be supported by showing that its independent measures tend to agree with each other or at least do not contradict each other (Hubbard & Power, 2003 in Mertler, 2006: 9).
- **Member checking:** After transcribing the interviews I will submit transcripts to the participants to correct errors of fact (Glesne, 1999 in Mertler, 2006: 10). This will serve as an assurance that I will have represented my participants and their ideas accurately.

- **Keeping notes of research decisions taken:** I will keep a journal (memoing) of my decisions during the research process more especially as far as data collection and analysis are concerned (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). This will help others to follow my reasoning in case my initial research design changes as I conduct my study and new sources and data collection techniques are incorporated to strengthen my study (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113).
- **Greater trustworthiness in coding data:** Qualitative research is more defensible when multiple codes are used and when high inter- and intra-coder reliability is obtained (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). Inter-coder reliability refers to consistency within a single coder. Intra-coder refers to consistency within a single coder. I will then ask an independent coder to code some of my data. In this case I will provide him/her with the research objectives and some of the raw data. He/she will then code and develop categories from the text, which will then be compared to my own codes and categories (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113).
- **Stakeholder check:** I will enhance the credibility of my findings by allowing research participants and other people who may have a specific interest in the research to comment on or assess the research findings, interpretations and conclusions (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). That is, participants in the settings studied will be given a chance to comment on whether my interpretations are in line with the personal experiences that they tried to express during the interviews.
- **Verifying and validating my findings:** My findings are the essential outcome of my study and data analysis process (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). Therefore I will provide copies of a draft report to the participants and ask for written or oral comments on the report.

1.10 Limitations

My experience as a teacher in a reputable English medium school in Maseru and my enrolment as a master's student at a recognised university in South Africa may have an impact on the attitudes of school principals and they may feel that I chose their schools due to their underperformance in comparison to the school where I have taught. I therefore will have to take great care to establish a trusting relationship with them. I will go to their schools a few days before interviews take place. This will allow me to join them in several activities (i.e. sports, meals, meetings, planning sessions, and classroom situations). Since I will be an unknown adult to learners in these schools, this will enable me to win their trust from the beginning of the study. I will also have to ensure that my inputs in this study are honest and sincere and aim to improve education in these schools.

1.11 Ethical considerations

According to Busher (2002 in Kitshoff, 2006: 12) research should be designed in such a way that the needs of the researcher and respondents are met, without giving up or privileging the needs of some of the participants or stakeholders in the study. Proper channels to attain permission from those responsible for education in Lesotho will be obtained in writing. That is, I will consult the following personnel to grant me permission to undertake this study: the Department of Education, the concerned school principals and teachers as well as parents from different schools. The participants will be invited to participate in individual and focus group interviews. I will make the participants aware that they have a right to participate in this study or not. They will also be informed that, even if already engaged in the study, they can stop their participation at any time they may wish.

I will also assure them of confidentiality regarding anything that will be seen and said by anyone involved in this study. That is, the data they provide or which is observed, will be handled and reported in such a way that it cannot be associated with them personally. Anonymity will also be ensured. This means that no uniquely identifying information will be attached to the data, and thus, no one, even I the researcher will trace the data back to the individual providing it. I

will therefore arrange to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals in the research study by coding the data obtained and keeping a separate file with the code linked to unique identifying information. Once the necessary data collection has been completed, I will then destroy the separate file.

1.12 The significance of the research

This study is aimed to add more knowledge about teacher planning, class size, teacher training and parental involvement as crucial factors in children's education and in grade repetition. It is also aimed to develop new ideas on how teacher planning can effectively be done. Another aim is to explore the importance of teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement in children's education. Another aim is to enrich knowledge on factors contributing to grade repetition.

1.13 Conclusion

In this chapter I gave the orientation of the study. I explained the statement of the problem, research question and critical questions, research aim and objectives, the working assumption and literature review. The rationale, the conceptual and theoretical framework, methodology and trustworthiness were discussed. The chapter also addressed how data will be analysed, ethical considerations, the limitations of the research as well as its significance.

Chapter 2 deals with the literature review on teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement.

CHAPTER TWO

Teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement

2.1 Introduction

This study recognises that factors that impact on grade repetition can be classified into four groups namely learner related, family and community related, education related, and health related factors.

Learner-related factors include learners' level of preparedness, self-efficacy, motivation, ability to manage their studies, social and emotional maturity, and peer relations. Family and community-related factors include socio-economic factors, culture, and parents' low sense of responsibility for their children's educational outcomes (Boyle, Georgiades, Mustard & Racine, 2007: 168-189; Wilson & Hughes, 2006: 31-49; Lubbers, Van Der Werf, Snijders, Creemers & Kuyper, 2006: 491-512; Neild & Balfanz, 2006: 123-141; Kalil & Ziol-Guest, 2005: 196-211 and Chimombo, 2005: 155-172).

Education-related factors include a mismatch between learners and schools' expectations, school administration and management, learner-teacher relations, curriculum design, instructional strategies and educational policy (Stone & Engle, 2007: 621, Taylor & Bedford, 2004: 382 and Witmer, Hoffman & Nottis 2004: 184). Health related factors include learning disability, and developmental delay more particularly brain development (Delgado, Vagi & Scott, 2006).

In relation to the above stated factors, this study assumes that there is a relationship between teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement and learners' grade repetition. This chapter is therefore aimed at reviewing different studies with the purpose of examining such relationship.

2.2 Teacher training

This study considers teacher training, professional development, teacher development, and in-service education to mean one and the same thing. Fullan

(1993a); the Council of Chief State School Officers (1992 in Erickson & Anderson, 1997: 30-32); Fullan (1982) and Bradley, Kallik & Regan (1991 in Zepeda, 1999: 3) describe them as the processes of growth in a continuous, and never ending developmental activities intended to support and assist teachers through their teaching and learning lives (Orlich, 1989a in Zepeda, 1999: 3); to develop and encourage a teacher's desire to live a satisfying and stimulating personal life - by example as well as by precept a teacher can help learners to develop their potential (Glatthorn, Jones & Bullock, 2006: 6).

The main purpose of these processes as viewed by this study is therefore to equip both experienced and inexperienced teachers with skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values which enable them to plan, teach and manage their classrooms effectively, efficiently and productively. It is therefore of great importance that the contents of teacher training programmes should be developed so that they correspond more fully with the needs that newly qualified teachers have. This mainly involves skills that form part of social competence but also knowledge of the problems learners have and the ability to deal with them professionally (Paulin, 2006: 187 in Malm, 2009: 84).

Paulin (2006 in Malm, 2009: 84) suggests that previous experience and unconscious and latent models that students bring with them when they start their training programmes should be rendered visible, analysed, processed and developed in relation to theory and practice. She further contends that links between on-campus and in-school elements in the training programmes should enhance and cross-fertilise each other more thoroughly. The idea is also raised by O'Connell Rust (1994: 216) who says that teacher training institutions must find ways of using student teaching and other field experiences to help student teachers develop deeper understandings of themselves as well as the teaching context.

Since the study is more concerned about the teacher – the one who does the ‘teaching’ as the activity meant to encourage ‘learning’, it will be prudent for us to hear how other people view teaching, what it takes for one to perform this activity in a meaningful way, as well as how teacher training affects teaching as viewed by different researchers. In line with the above, a major focus will also be on issues like teacher qualifications, staff development programmes, mentorship programmes as well as schools as learning organizations since they are considered to play a crucial role in teacher training by this study.

Teaching is seen as ‘a profession that entails reflective thinking, continuing professional development, autonomy, responsibility, creativity, research and personal judgments’ (Association for Teacher Education in Europe, 2006: 7 in Malm, 2009: 79). These attributes are reflected by indicators that identify the quality of teachers. Qualified teacher status (QTS) is achieved through completing initial teacher training and demonstrating that the required standards have been met. Each set of standards builds on the previous one, thus clarifying progression in career development (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008: 2). The concept is further elaborated below:

After the induction year, therefore, teachers would be expected to continue to meet the core standards and to broaden and deepen their professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills within the context (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008: 2).

Hargreaves (1998: 835 in Malm, 2009: 85) sees teaching as an emotional practice. He points out that the reason behind his description is that emotions ‘are at the heart of teaching.’ Hargreaves explains that emotions comprise the most dynamic qualities of teaching, literally, for they are fundamentally about movement. They are essential to sustaining teachers’ sense of self (their sense of value and worth in their work). For that reason, they are the psychic rewards of teaching. They act as the power to make independent judgements as well as exercise personal discretion, initiative and creativity through teachers’ work. Hargreaves found that the emotional bond teachers have with their students is the central influence with regard to their choice of method, teaching context and practice. He describes this connection thus:

..., and the social and emotional goals they wanted to achieve as they taught those students, shaped and influenced almost everything they did, along with how they responded to changes that affected what they did. Teachers wanted to become better so they could help their students more effectively.

He further stresses that this bond (emotional) is so strong that it affects both the content and the form of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998: 845 in Malm, 2009: 85). In line with previous findings, Jersild (1955 in Malm, 2009: 85) asserts that emotions such as anxiety, fear, loneliness, helplessness, meaninglessness, and hostility in relation to understanding the self are prevalent in teachers' lives in schools and classrooms. Whitehead (2009: 242) and Day (2002: 677-97) also suggest that overcrowding of classrooms; job stress and burnout appear to be amongst many reasons teachers giving for dissatisfaction, which can contribute to teacher absenteeism.

Jersild (1955 in Malm, 2009: 85) therefore suggests that such emotions need to be addressed as part of teachers' professional education. Cole (1997: 14 in Malm, 2009: 85) further argues that 'until these issues are addressed, teachers will not be able to freely and meaningfully engage in the kind of reflective practice and professional development that brings meaning to their own lives and those of their students'.

This argument is confirmed by Paulin (2006 in Malm, 2009: 83) in a Swedish study that teachers had difficulties understanding and handling problematic pupils, with discipline, with relations and co-operation with colleagues and parents. She contends that these difficulties are due to both the content of their training programmes and their induction as beginners into school domains where they are left alone without the support they need.

In the same vein, the McKinsey report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 31) expands that:

Teachers develop the bulk of their instructional capability during their first years of training and practice. In several of the school systems we studied, the evidence suggest that the support given to teachers during this period (both in their initial training and their first years

of practice) was rarely as effective as it should have been. Research shows that in the US many teacher education programmes have little impact on teacher effectiveness.

Teacher commitment as the effect of their emotions could in my opinion be a crucial predictor of teachers' work performance, absenteeism, retention, burnout and turnover, as well as having an important influence on students' motivation, achievement, attitudes towards learning and being in school (Day, 2002: 110). Crosswell & Elliot (2004: 7) found that teacher commitment is one of the most critical factors for the future success of education and schools. Their findings reflect that the level of teachers' commitment is considered a key factor as it heavily influences teachers' willingness to engage in cooperative, reflective and critical practice. The results of their study suggest that while teachers do articulate a commitment to external centres such as students, they also make significant links to personal passions which including ideology, beliefs and values.

The latter study identified six interrelated categories representing different ways that teachers perceive understand and conceptualise teacher commitment as a: "passion" with students; focus on the individual needs of students; responsibility to impart knowledge, attitudes, values; "maintaining professional knowledge" and engagement with the school community.

Day (2002: 111) illustrates that:

Enthusiasm for teaching, learning and pupils is not something that can be sustained without personal commitment to the pupils who, through force of circumstance or past experience, may not always be highly motivated; whose confidence needs to be encouraged and who need to be challenged and cared for; and to the moral purposes of conditions to work for the betterment of both individual and society as a whole.

Research indicates that "the quality of teachers and their teaching are the most important factors for student outcomes" (OECD, 2005 in Malm, 2009: 85). Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 15) elucidate the fact that:

The main driver of the variation of student learning in school is the teacher. They further point out that even in good school systems, students that do not progress quickly during their first years at school, because they are exposed to teachers of sufficient caliber, stand very little chance of recovering the lost years.

Malm (2009: 78) summarised the important findings from the International report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 43):

- The quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers;
- The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction; and
- Achieving universally high outcomes is only possible by putting in place mechanisms to ensure that schools deliver high-quality instruction to every child.

In the same respect, Malm refers to other important findings in the McKinsey report:

- All the better school systems integrated practicum into their training programmes (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 32);
- School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on learning (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 32);
- Salary is rarely stated to be one of the most important reasons for becoming a teacher, however, the survey also shows that unless school systems offer salaries which are in-line with other graduate starting salaries, these same people do not enter teaching (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 23); and
- New teachers consistently reported that the status of the profession is one of the most important factors in their decision to become a teacher (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 25).

In his data analysis from the evaluation of the Swedish compulsory school, Skolverket (2006: 41) addresses the importance of the teacher for teaching outcomes, both cognitive (achievement, skills) and emotional (attitudes, values).

The most important aspects that came up in this study in relation to the importance of the teacher are as follows:

- The teacher has teacher education and is also trained in the specific subject s/he teaches;
- The higher the teacher evaluates his/her didactic competences, the better the conditions are for students' learning; and
- The more enjoyable the teacher describes their own teaching to be, the better the conditions are for students' learning.

Skolverket (2006: 42) confirms that the finding in this Swedish report clearly correlates with the students' desire to learn and the teachers' desire to teach:

Teachers' own confidence in their methodological and didactic competence and the fact that they enjoy teaching are factors which, irrespective of the student's gender, socio-economic background and level of performance, correlate positively with the students' assessment of who is a good teacher and what characterizes a good learning environment.

The importance of adequate teacher training is confirmed by Darling-Hammond (2000: 167) when she contends that:

..., reviews of research over the past 30 years have concluded that even with the shortcomings of current teacher education and licensing, fully prepared and certified teachers are generally better rated and more successful with students than teachers without this preparation.

Darling-Hammond also contends that teachers admitted with less than full preparation were found to be 'less able to adapt their instruction to promote student learning and less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming students if their teaching is not effective. These teachers were rated less highly on their instructional skills by colleagues and principals. They had a higher-than-average leaving rate and their students learnt less in important subjects such as maths, writing and reading. In contrast, Sjöberg & Hansen (2006 in Malm, 2009: 9) argue that the high achievement rate of Finnish students in international comparative studies has been explained as being a consequence of a firm pedagogical stand within an academic teacher training.

Studies by Stein & Wang (1998, Allinder, 1994 and Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990 in Karaca, 2008: 1113) show that teachers' qualifications influence the quality of

education and that the success of the education system is mainly dependent on the efficacy of the teachers who are delivering it.

Malm (2009: 79) summarized other significant findings in the Swedish report:

- Within the teacher group, there were different ways of defining and experiencing tasks and the requirements of teaching;
- There was a general tendency of stress and an increase in workload;
- Pedagogical collaboration, specifically between teachers within the same subject area, does not develop in line with, or to the same extent as, other parts of the teachers' work;
- Opportunities for in-service training are lacking. One third of teachers feel that they do not have the necessary competences to assist students with special needs; nor do they feel confident working with students with different social and cultural backgrounds;
- There are evident discrepancies between teachers and students concerning what constitutes a pleasant atmosphere as being much more positive, compared to what the students' experience; and
- Boys' judgements of a good teacher are influenced by whether the teacher is a male or female. Boys' assessments of male teachers are high. Girls' judgements of a good teacher are influenced by age. Girls assess younger teachers higher.

Williams, Shibamura, Matsuzaki, Kanayama & Ito (2009: 309) confirm that pedagogical knowledge, strong subject area knowledge, effective communication skills, understanding of human growth and development, effective skills in teaching as well as classroom management, and a sense of ethics are the essential attributes of effective teachers. However, they argue that these attributes cannot be developed simply by taking courses in an academic setting.

They suggest that it is during the period of teaching practice, and then through the ongoing, and reflective classroom experience, that teachers can move from

the theories learned in their education courses to obtaining many skills necessary in the actual teaching environment. Paulin (2006 in Malm, 2009: 83) and the McKinsey report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 31) have confirmed that the support given to teachers during this period (both in their initial training and their first years of practice) was unfortunately rarely as effective as it should have been.

Studies conducted by Hurd (2008: 19-36) and Ross, Luepker, Nelson, Saavendra & Hubbard (1991: 31) revealed that learner achievement improved after teachers received staff development opportunities. This indicates that teacher training develops personal subject knowledge and has an impact on the pedagogic knowledge to underpin effective classroom practice (Edwards & Mutton, 2007: 503-519; Parker, 2004: 819-831). This knowledge therefore increases teachers' "job satisfaction" in terms of learners' performance, performance appraisal and incentives in some cases and their teaching and learning experience. As a result this has a great impact on their learners' performance (Jarvis, Hingley & Pell, 2008: 27-46).

Browner, Trela and Jirnenez (2008: 206-219) also indicate a relationship between teacher training, teacher lesson planning and learner increase in both overall successful learning. It is during teacher training that teachers develop skills that develop understanding of reading problems (Lovett, Lazerenza, Palma, Benson, Steinbach & Frijters, 2008: 1083-1097). This was also evident in other studies that teacher training programmes raise learners' achievement in reading and mathematics (Myrberg, 2007: 145-165; Gimbert, Cristol & Sene, 2007: 245-272; Gilbertson, Witt, Singletary & Von Der Heyden, 2007: 311-326; Lee, Baik & Charlesworth, 2006: 935-945; Verschaffel, Janssens & Janssen, 2005: 49-63; Brookhart, Andolina, Zuza & Furman, 2004: 213-227; Angrist & Lavy, 2001: 343-367).

In addition to the above, Franklin, Moore & Hopson (2008: 15-26); Wright, Mayer, Cook, Crews, Kraemer & Gale (2007: 89-106) found that learners' performance positively changed after professional behaviour training was offered to teachers.

This leads to the view that professional behaviour is a crucial factor in improving teacher education and promoting education reform. For example, learner achievement in mathematics, science and social studies improved after the training teachers received (Honawar, 2007: 1; Gimbert, Bol & Wallace, 2007: 91-117; Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006: 205-235).

In contrast to the above findings, Jacob & Lefgren (2004: 60) found that teacher training has no statistically significant or academic effect on either reading or mathematics achievement. No influence on learners' academic understanding was found and as a result, teacher training is not seen to affect learners' performance (Hardman, Abd-Kadir & Smith, 2008: 55-69). Generally, teacher development programmes have least impact on learner performance (Wiley & Yoon, 1995 and Cohen & Hill, 2000 in Jacob & Lefgren, 2004: 61).

Nevertheless, I support the argument that teacher training plays a major role in teaching and learners' learning. I base my argument on the findings above as well as the assumptions to be discussed below.

Besides the training teachers get from the Lesotho College, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) offers teacher support through the District Resource Teachers Programme (DRTs). Its mission is to provide school-based professional teacher support in almost 70% multi-standard/grade schools. These are small schools, the majority of which are situated in isolated remote areas of Lesotho. These are schools with only one to three teachers and one teacher teaches more than one standard/grade.

The problems faced by the above schools cannot be overestimated when one considers the fact that curriculum provision in schools does not cater for this type of teaching. In case of qualified teachers, their pre-service training programme does not prepare them for this situation either (World Bank, 2005: 110 and Stock-Taking Review on education in Africa, 1999: 13).

The programme is reported to be very successful. Strategies such as grouping, paired learning, peer tutoring, use of occupational tasks and use of learning centres and science corners have become a common practice in these schools. The real breakthrough in this programme lies in the time-on-task issue that ensures that every pupil is effectively occupied at all times (Stock-Taking Review on education in Africa, 1999: 21). A survey in which questionnaires and interviews were used was carried out in March 1999 as part of the stock-taking review. The survey revealed the highest ratings to be on planning, teaching and learning techniques, parental involvement, and school administration respectively.

Contrary to the above findings, an evaluation of the programme in 2002 noted that the results were “most disappointing” and the schools served by DRTs showed little gain in performance. Moreover, the DRTs served only a limited number of schools while initially it had been the intention that they would move to different clusters after a period (Multiserve, 2002 in World Bank, 2005; 125). The World Bank report (2005: 109-110) also mentions that since there was no official policy on multi-grade teaching, very little support is provided. The report goes on to say that the National Curriculum Development Centre does not provide for multi-grade teaching in the development of curriculum materials. The Lesotho College of Education also does not train teachers for multi-grade teaching. It further states that professional support to teachers does not distinguish between multi-grade and mono-grade teaching (World Bank, 2005: 110). This therefore does not have any positive impact on the reduction of grade repetition. Planning, teaching and learning techniques, parental involvement, and school administration remain a problem in the majority of the schools within the country.

I assume that the training and development Lesotho primary school teachers acquire seem not to raise awareness of the ways and means in which the profession works, the terms and conditions of employment and the law as it affects them. In most cases they find themselves performing duties that are not professional because they are threatened that they will lose their jobs if they do

not abide by instructions. In her research, Malm (2009: 83) found that in England, a framework of professional standards for teachers' forms part of wider framework of standards for the whole school workforce. She explains that this framework defines the characteristics of teachers at each career stage and comprises three interrelated elements:

- Professional attributes: Developing professional relationships, communication with others, and understanding relevant legal documents;
- Professional knowledge and understanding: Demonstrating confidence in subjects taught, contribute to the well-being of children and young adults; and
- Professional skills: They are underpinned by the above two elements and concerned with establishing clear expectations related to the promotion of positive attitudes to learning, discipline and safe learning environments.

Teachers seem to be given what Research Starters (2009: 1) calls traditional staff development instead of professional staff development. Research Starters outlines that traditional staff development opportunities for educators usually take the form of one-size-fits-all, one-day workshops. Topics of focus are usually determined by the administrators. Teachers are expected to attend workshops in order to take away key understandings about teaching and learning or specific instructional methodologies and strategies they can employ in the classroom for immediate positive results (Research Starters, 2009: 1).

Research Starters (2009: 1) continues by saying “the ideology behind traditional staff development opportunities seem to be rational and seems as though it yields positive results for teachers and students”. However, many teachers find these workshops to be a waste of time because of the lack of correlation between their perceived needs as professionals and what is actually offered through staff development opportunities.

In his research Lock (2006: 664) found that most teachers find little value in one-size-fits-all, one-day workshops. Such workshops seem not to be connected to their current, everyday practice and experience. They generally rely on transmission of knowledge from experts to teachers. He further asserts that traditional staff development opportunities fail to meet school-specific needs and do not provide sufficient time for teachers to plan or to efficiently learn new teaching methodologies and strategies.

The results of the study by Wycoff, Nash, Juntune & Mackay (2003: 34) proposes that teachers often indicate that traditional professional development opportunities do not optimally match the variety of knowledge and skill levels in a group of educators. Wycoff *et al.* (2003: 34) point out that, just as students come to the classroom with different learning needs, teachers also come to workshops with different skill sets and learning goals. Schools need to consider teacher expertise in order to maximize the value and transferability of knowledge to teachers.

I therefore assume that teachers lack detailed information about their job, where they fit into the school and what is required from them. They seem not to be trained on school philosophy and policies; patterns of responsibility and communication channels. As a result they have very limited knowledge on organization and pastoral care patterns; routines; patterns of assessment for learners; ways in which their work may be assessed; normal contacts with parents and with other institutions and bodies; and information about individual pupils which is relevant for teaching-learning and pastoral care. This therefore hinders their teaching-learning process, as they don't have direction of where they are striving to and as a result has a great influence on their learners' performance.

Even though the old primary teaching certificate programmes are being faced out both in pre-service and in-service programmes, the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) has resulted in a shortage of teachers and the number of

untrained (those with secondary education and C.O.S.C) primary school teachers has increased rapidly rising from 1, 809 in 1999 to 3, 035 by 2003 (World Bank, 2005: 116). The National Report on the Development of Lesotho Education (2004: 11) states clearly that the introduction of FPE necessitated a review of the teaching-learning strategies that seem to be teacher-centred and emphasize knowledge over skills. It also notes that this tends to be particularly true in an environment where teachers have little if any training and are handling ever larger classes. It further suggests that Lesotho's existing teaching force requires regular and continuous professional development to help them cope with these large classes.

The same point is made by Ball, Hill and Bass (2005: 35) and Ma (1999 in Inoue, 2009: 47) that:

To help students develop a deeper understanding of new concepts, one popular advocated approach is to transform traditional teaching towards a more student-centered teaching where students' sense-making process plays a central role. They conceptualise that in such attempts, we should not forget that students' sense-making process needs to be carefully guided by teachers, and the success of such attempts depends on the quality of guidance and explanations that teachers provide their students.

The training Lesotho primary school teachers receive does not equip them with skills that enable them to create a learning atmosphere and environment, select appropriate teaching methods, identify and solve problems in the classroom, help learners to become independent and plan ahead. They do not seem to be prepared for the challenges they meet during their daily teaching-learning experience. As a result they try skills and strategies that do not comply with the needs of the learners and this affects learners' performance.

Blandford (2000: 83) illustrates that in the context of teaching and classroom management, qualified teachers are required to demonstrate the ability to:

- Ensure effective teaching of whole classes, and of groups and individuals;
- Monitor and intervene (making clear the structure and purpose of the learning experience; informing, describing and explaining; and questioning

and discussion to facilitate and explore learning) when teaching to ensure sound learning and discipline;

- Establish an environment conducive to teaching-learning;
- Use diverse teaching methods to engage the interest of all learners and sustain an increasing momentum of their work;
- Apply the code of practice on special educational needs; and
- Ensure that learners acquire and consolidate knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding in the subject.

On the same note, Mapolelo (1998 in Inoue, 2009: 48) argues that though it is certainly true that teachers need to go through high quality subject matter training in their teacher training programme, the acquisition of this knowledge does not necessarily translate into the ability to provide effective explanations of the new concepts. She further explains that what constitutes effective explanations is not only the depth of content knowledge, but also 'how' they could present it in a pedagogically meaningful way. The same issue was confirmed by Paulin (2006 in Malm, 2009: 83) and the McKinsey report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 31 in p. 34).

Children vary in their experiences, learning abilities, achievement, personality, interests, creativity, and self-discipline (Borich, 1996: 49). I therefore assume that Lesotho primary school teachers give little attention if any at all, to the core clients - the learners – people for whom the teaching and learning is planned. In their teaching experience, Mokhtari, Rosemary and Edwards (2007: 354) found and continue to find that although teachers spend a lot of time collecting assessment data, they do not take time or perhaps know how to organize and use them consistently and efficiently in instructional decision making. When asked, most teachers often admit that:

One of my weaknesses has always been documenting a student's progress, because I always found it such an overwhelming task. I would assess students, hand in the scores to an administrator, and file them away. I literally would assess here and there, never use the results, and concentrate on whole-group instruction. Individual needs based on

assessment were never taken into consideration (Calderon [a kindergarten teacher], Reilly, 2007: 770 in Mokhtari *et al.* 2007: 354).

The assumption, therefore, is that the teacher is unable to adapt instructional methods to the individual learning needs depending on the outcomes s/he wants learners to attain (Jacobs *et al.* 2004: 315; Borich, 2000: 211, 1996: 105). By so doing, s/he prevents learners from using their own experiences and past learning histories. As a result, learners are unable to bring their own meanings and understanding to what is to be taught and this affects their performance badly.

The study conducted by Pitfield and Morrison (2009: 25) discovered that amongst the teacher training sessions there is one called 'needs analysis'. The session provides student-teachers the opportunities to learn pupils' names and 'how the individual needs of pupils are identified'. They then start to recognise different teaching styles to suit pupils' individual needs. It is at this stage where they demonstrate reflective skills as well. Teacher trainees become more comfortable in the classroom situation, become sensitive to learners' needs as well as gain more confident in their own teaching skills (Williams, Shibanuma, Matsuzaki, Kanayama & Ito, 2009: 310)

In addition, I assume that teachers in Lesotho primary schools are not trained and have not developed mechanisms for the continual monitoring of learners' learning (Anderson, 1989: 45). This then makes it difficult for them to identify the experience each learner brings to the learning process. They therefore are unable to assess the stages learners have reached and then organise to meet learners' varying needs. This as a result makes teachers expect all learners in the classroom to do the same work. This practice makes learning difficult since each learner is unique.

Another assumption is that teachers in Lesotho primary schools are unable to identify multiple materials and resources that can be used to facilitate learning, provide time to those who need it as well as to develop additional learners' responsibility for learning for the successful attainment of the aimed outcomes

(Anderson, 1989: 45). Knowing ones' own learners appears a cornerstone in the teaching and learning situation (Borich, 1996: 105, 2000: 211). This has become unpractical with the Lesotho primary school teachers due to the large classes they have been facing since the introduction of the FPE.

My assumption is that teachers in Lesotho primary schools lack mastery of teaching–learning material; therefore they are not truly effective. Teachers are neither enthusiastic about the material being learnt nor are they particularly sensitive to the learners; recognising what motivates them and relating this knowledge to the material they are being asked to learn. Those who have this sensitivity are unable to use it to decide how to present material to be learnt so that it motivates in its own right. This research therefore regards them as unskilled teachers. Dean (1991: 12-13) views a good teacher to be a skilled motivator, one who helps learners construct their own knowledge by guiding their experiences, rather than transmitting ready–made knowledge to them (Piaget,1974: 89). The action research study by Mester (2009: 1-18) suggests that “unless children are actively and socially constructing learning themselves, they are merely recipients of a teacher’s perceptions of knowledge that she or he deems is relevant for children to learn”.

The results of the study undertaken by Lapadat (2000 in Mester, 2009: 1-18) indicate that educators who adhere to a transmissive style of teaching believe that:

The teacher’s role is to transmit those facts, principles, and theories directly to students’ minds, then to measure the accuracy of the reception. The students’ role is to receive, understand, and remember information that is transmitted.

Another assumption is that higher order skills namely classifying, ordering, sorting, organising knowledge and applying them in new situations, are lacking among teachers in Lesotho primary schools. They are unable to lead discussions, question learners, and elicit responses from individuals. They are also unable to explain, to select appropriate material and to help learners to see what is significant in what is under consideration. This as a result makes them

unable to teach learners how to learn through the process of structuring learning and the development of skills. Teachers are there to strengthen the learners' own process of reasoning in all realms – in classification, in paper folding activities, in symbolization, in physical knowledge, instead of imposing and reinforcing the “correct” answer (Schwebel & Raph 1973: 90).

Research has shown that learners' confidence is strengthened in a trusting environment that downplays competition among its members and supports collaboration in purposive work (Cusack, 1995 in Mester, 2009: 1-18). He further maintains that children learn more with an intrinsic motivation to learn. The same point is made by Bryant (1999 in Mester, 2009: 1-18) that for students to learn more, they must be able to assess their own learning. To evaluate their learning, they have to be able to share and then receive verification of their knowledge from fellow classmates in an environment in which the students already “feel safe, valued, and supported by feedback”.

Leinhardt & Steele (2005: 142) argue further that teachers' explanations serve as an essential pedagogical component in scaffolding the students' reflective construction of conceptual knowledge. They emphasize that effective explanations are known to include:

- Attempts to build students' understanding on prior knowledge and intuitions;
- Use of visual representations connecting abstract and concrete models; and
- Use of appropriate assumptions and students' prior knowledge and understanding in instructional dialogues.

However, Kinach (2002: 62) reports that it is not an easy task for new and unqualified teachers to learn to give conceptually rich and meaningful explanations. He contends that many new and unqualified teachers possess problematic attitudes towards teaching, characterized by procedural, 'show-and-

tell' approach that ignores students' sense-making. Many new primary school teachers tend to rely on personal and/or previous educational experiences, and fail to make conceptual connections between content knowledge and instructional actions discussed in teaching methods classes (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996 in Inoue, 2009: 48).

For teaching and learning to take place, teachers are expected to diagnose each learner's emotional state, cognitive level and interests by carrying a theoretical framework in their heads (Piaget, 1973: 90). It is therefore a requirement for teachers to first master how learners learn (Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 517). Many learners are not aware of how they learn because teachers do not know how they learn. Many teachers teach "the way they were taught" not realising that the prescription was not good for them when they were students (Stevenson & Dunn, 2001 in Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 518).

In the case of Lesotho primary schools, the teacher has to plan for sixty or more learners with different learning characteristics, needs, backgrounds and interests. Some of these learners live with violence, are affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. Others have become orphans, and are sexually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically abused. Teachers have not received any training in psycho-social care and support techniques such as play therapy (Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2004: 11). They are not exposed to or trained regarding learning styles, their learning styles cannot influence their teaching learners with different learning styles, and they cannot identify learning styles in students (Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 518).

As a result instruction in general elementary and special education resource rooms tends to be a 'one size fits all' approach. There is little or no differentiation of lesson planning or individualization of materials in response to student instructional levels or needs (Schumm, Moody, & Vaughn, 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159). Whole-group instruction is the primary

mode of instructional delivery, with few instances of ability grouping of students (Baker & Zigmond, 1990, Schumm *et al.* 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159).

Despite the differential academic skills of mainstreamed students with learning disabilities, these students receive little instructional adaptation in general education classrooms. When adaptation occurs, it is generally geared to the whole class as a 'blanket' modification, rather than specifically focused on struggling students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Fuchs, Fuchs & Bishop, 1992a and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159).

Within the teacher training process there is a concept called 'mentoring'. Mentoring is seen as a tool used to guide and support trainees to ease them through difficult transitions (Fletcher, 2000: 1). It is about smoothing the way, enabling, reassuring as well as directing, managing and instructing. Fletcher adds that mentoring is meant to unblock the ways to change by building self-confidence, self-esteem and a readiness to act as well as to engage in ongoing constructive interpersonal relationships. The latter goes on to illustrate that mentoring is concerned with continuing personal as well as professional development not just continuing professional development.

The same point is made by Anderson & Blandford, Erickson (2000: 83, 1997: 1-2) that the professional development of trainee teachers should be firmly rooted in partnerships between local schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). They assert that it is in this partnership where mentoring of teacher trainees is required.

Blandford (2000: 86) has outlined the role of the mentor in teacher training and this will be discussed in subsequent sections of review namely planning, teaching and evaluation. A mentor in this regard can be described as the cooperating teacher – the one whom the student teacher is attached to during his/her teaching practice period.

Planning

Planning is central to all forms of teaching (Blandford, 2000: 87). Mentors can help trainees to plan more efficiently, for example, by explaining how the content of their own previous lessons relates to the National Curriculum. This can be used to lead into what will be taught in the trainee's lesson, and what targets need to be set for learners in terms of process and skills. Trainees will also require guidance on how to make the lesson effective, the best approaches to classroom organisation, management and teaching (Blandford, 2000: 87).

Teaching

Mentors are required to regularly observe teacher trainees' lessons, with an agreed limited number of factors on which to focus and give feedback on. Blandford also notes that the mentor may wish to make detailed notes and the comments' section for the key points extracted. The same author suggests that mentors should work with teacher trainees collaboratively to share the teaching of some lessons or classes. The mentor may introduce the lesson and the teacher trainee then leads an activity, before handing back to the mentor for the next phase (Blandford, 2000: 88). This is done to expose the student teacher to the real teaching situation. This exposure is meant to equip the student teacher with teaching-learning experience, skills, knowledge, values and different attitudes from those that s/he had before.

Evaluation

Without the support of a mentor, teacher trainees can easily find themselves at a loss over how to progress in their teaching (Blandford, 2000: 86). This tendency of performance to plateau-out can happen with any trainee teacher, irrespective of the ability level. If not assisted, trainees can end up with only a limited range of ideas and approaches. This limitation is the result of limited experience and can have a negative effect on both their own teaching development and on learners' attitude and expectations. Trainees who are given constructive feedback by a mentor who observes them teach, find it easier to see how they might develop

their strengths and seek alternative strategies in areas where they are experiencing difficulty. Assessment and evaluation procedures will also need to be considered in mentoring (Blandford, 2000: 86).

Pitfield & Morrison (2009: 25) confirmed that it is through mentoring process where student-teachers get opportunities to learn how to identify and analyse the individual needs of learners. The process gives them a chance to recognise different teaching styles to suit pupils' individual needs. It is at this stage where they demonstrate reflective skills as well.

2.2.1 Summary

Teacher training appears to be playing a significant role in teacher and learners' performance. It is in teacher training where concepts such as personal and career development are addressed. With the utilisation of trainees' previous experiences, teacher training programmes can effect a well-grounded balance between the cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning to teach (Malm, 2009: 87).

2.3 Class size

The American Heritage Dictionaries (2007: 1) defines "class" as a group of learners who are taught together because they are at approximately the same level of academic development. Mateo and Fernandez (1996: 771-778) offer a classification system based on categorization in the international literature. They classify class size as follows:

- 3-9 learners as very small;
- 10-29 learners as small;
- 30-59 learners as medium;
- 60 -149 learners as large; and
- More than 150 learners as very large.

This study will review the literature to explore research findings on how class size can affect learners' performance. Issues such as classroom environment,

classroom management, instructional variables, teacher/learner interaction as well as learning styles will become part of the review.

Bonesronning, Hoxby and Rice (2003: 952; 2000: 1240; 1999: 215) note that teachers tend to prefer smaller classes for workload reasons. Teachers perceive smaller classes as easier to manage. They believe that smaller classes involve fewer disruptions and behaviour problems as well as less paperwork and grading responsibilities. Parents also tend to view smaller classes as an indication that their children receive more attention from teachers than they may in larger classes (Bonesronning, Hoxby and Rice, 2003: 952; 2000: 1240; 1999: 215). School Governing Bodies (SGBs) favour small classes because they presumably improve school climate and make parents and teachers happy. Policy makers also argue for smaller classes suggesting that they have the potential to improve learners' achievement.

The question of whether class size affects learners' learning has long been debated by educational policy makers and practitioners (Hallinan & Sorensen, 1985: 71; Maasoumi, Millimet & Rangaprasad, 2005: 333-368). In their study, Maasoumi *et al.* (2005: 333-368) found that class size has an impact on learner performance. More learning takes place in smaller classes than in larger ones. Smaller classes give the teacher an opportunity to interact with individual learners. This opportunity enables him/her to identify those learners with learning problems whereas it is difficult in larger classes. In this regard, Moyles, 1992: 19) provided the figure below to highlight the idea that it is only in smaller class sizes where learner/teacher interaction is possible.



Figure 2.1

The child is essentially unique but still one part of a whole in terms of classroom and curriculum needs (Moyles, 1992: 19)

Research findings suggest that the normal practice of the majority of schools internationally, is to allocate learners into classes based on their performance. This gives the teacher a chance to move at a pace that suits a particular class. When the class is of mixed ability, there is less teacher-individual interaction and that results in poorer learner performance (Jirjahn, Pfeifer & Tsertsvadze, 2008: 1-4, Leufer, 2007: 322-327, Browning & Heinesen, 2007: 415-438, Foreman-Peck & Foreman-Peck, 2006: 157-171, Wossmann & West, 2006: 695-736, Lindahl, 2005: 375-394 and Arias & Walker, 2004: 311-329).

In addition, Bourke (1986: 558-571) and Blatchfort, Goldstein, Martin & Browne (2002: 169-185) found that teaching practice varies with class size and affects learner achievement. Levels of participation vary in quantity, quality, and duration, depending on class size. Encouraging participation can facilitate the learning process and promote deep learning in learners. Such participation, however, may not be easily achieved in a large class setting (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002: 27-52). In large classes, learners tend to have a more passive role but are more likely to interact in an active way with the teacher in small classes (Blatchford, Bassett, Brown, Martin, & Russel, 2004: 709-730).

The cognitive level of interactions among groups of learners declines as group size increases, inevitably impacting the quality of learning that takes place. Large

classes may discourage involvement, providing opportunities for “social loafing” and a less active role in the educational process. It is then possible that the lack of motivation results from the low value learners attach to their individual contributions, a fact that is accentuated in a large class setting (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002: 27-52).

Strong, Silver and Robinson (1995: 8-14) argue further that learners engaged in their work, particularly those in smaller groups, are motivated and/or energised by four essential goals that must be satisfied: success, curiosity, originality, and relationships. Intrinsic and extrinsic elements can also serve to motivate learners and a combination of both may be seen simultaneously (Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14). They also note that learning and performance goals can be considered integral to providing meaning and direction to learning activities. They further suggest that such goals may contribute to the sense of personal responsibility for learning that certain learners manifest (Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14).

Other factors thought to affect motivation include the physical layout of the classroom as it affects participation in class discussion (Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14). Teacher behaviours, including speaking voice and movement, also contribute to levels of learner participation in large class settings and have a major influence on the learning process (Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14). Factors found to inhibit learner participation in large class settings include low levels of learner-teacher interaction, teachers that are not motivated, and difficulty in paying attention (Strong *et al.* 1995: 39). The opportunity to interact with peers and class was perceived as not readily available in large class formats, and noise and certain seating arrangements were considered inhibitory to the learning experience (Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14).

Rice (1999: 215-229) and Shapson, Wright, Eason & Fitzgerald (1980: 141-152) indicate that class size had an impact on mathematics classes. In this regard, class size significantly affected three key instructional strategy variables in mathematics classes: The amount of time spent; innovative instructional

practices; and on whole-group discussions. In all three cases, the effect of class size is negative particularly in larger classes (Bonesronning, 2003: 952-965). Blatchford, Bassett, Goldstein & Martin (2003: 709-730) also note that there is a clear effect of class size differences on learners' attainment over the (first) reception years. According to them, the lowest attainers on entry to school, in the case of literacy, benefit most from small classes, particularly below 25 learners.

Although class size may not be significant in courses best suited for lecture learning style, courses geared toward promoting critical thinking and advanced problem solving are best taught in a smaller classroom environment. Learners' motivation and attitude toward learning tend to be more negatively affected by larger classes (Spahn, 1999; Feldman, 1984; McConnell & Sosin, 1984; Bolander, 1973 in Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy, 2008: 221-233). They emphasise that, though learners may have learned the material, they do not feel as satisfied with the classroom experience as they would have in smaller classes, suggesting that some learning opportunities may have been lost.

Furthermore, Forness & Kavale (2001: 5-81) note that smaller learner-teacher ratios result in more positive student outcomes than larger ratios do. They report that a reduced class size in primary grades results in a less hectic atmosphere, better teacher morale, more individualised instruction, and improved learner achievement, particularly by at-risk learners and learners with learning problems.

The decisions a teacher makes regarding the physical arrangements of a classroom have an important effect on the success of instructional activities and classroom management (Mercer & Mercer, 1993: 104). Research has found that teachers who perceive themselves as competent use more positive approaches in classroom management (Emmer & Hickman, 1991 in Karaca, 2008: 1113). Woolfolk & Hoy (1990: in Karaca, 2008: 1113) add that there is a relationship between teacher efficacy and a healthier school atmosphere and a healthy school environment contributes to the teachers' beliefs influential in students' learning. Thoughtfully designed classrooms enable teachers and learners to

easily access materials and move around the room without creating congestion. Also, in well-designed classrooms teachers can easily see learners and, in turn, learners can easily see and hear teacher presentations (Mercer & Mercer, 1993: 104). This point is well explained by the figure below.

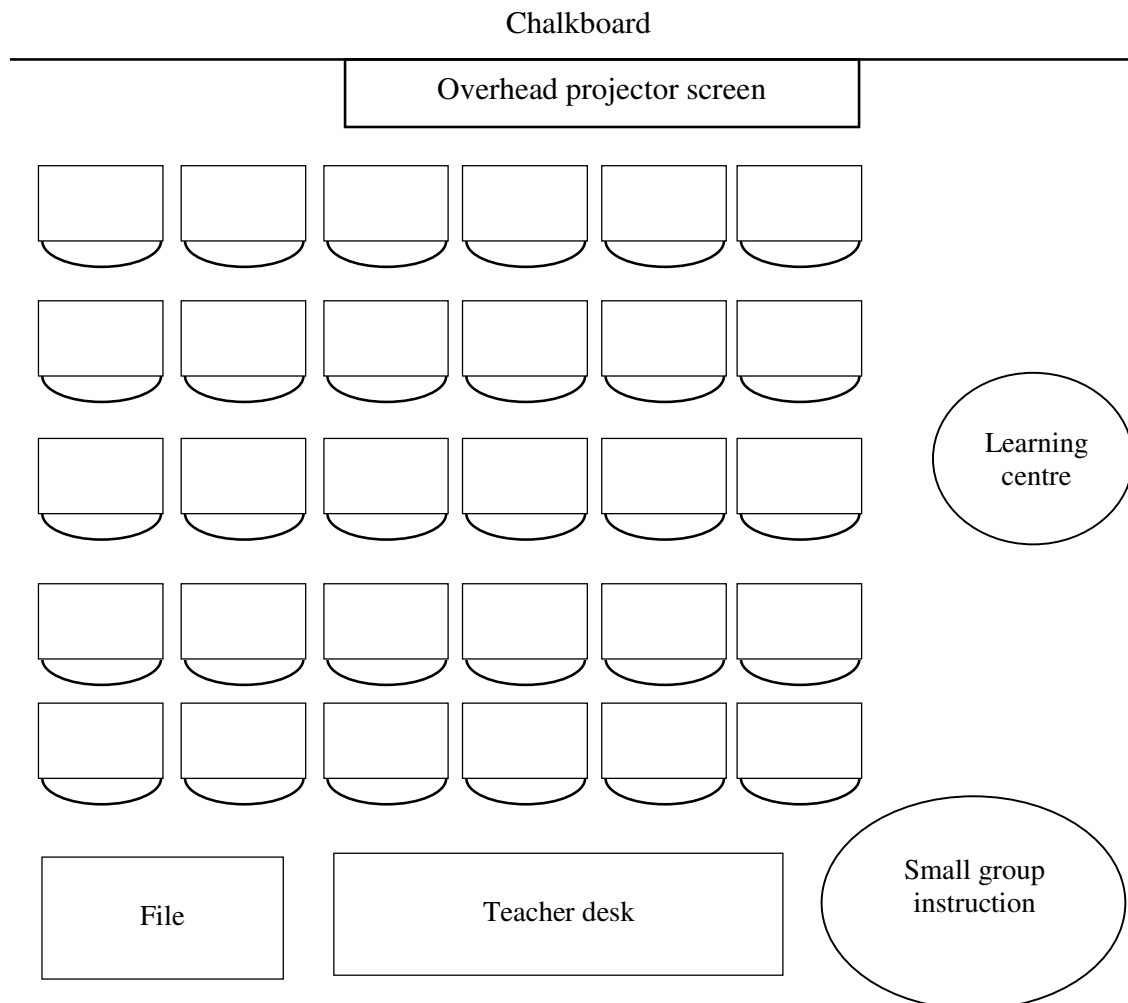


Figure 2.2: *Sample floor plan for a regular classroom (Mercer and Mercer, 1993: 107)*

The current study views the above situation as the classroom environment. According to Merritt in Research Starters (2009: 1) classroom environment refers to the general and overall climate and atmosphere of the classroom. He points out that the range of attributes constituting classroom-environmental contextual factors and variables can be characterized as physical, material,

personal/interpersonal, school/institutional and social/psychosocial. He explains that the classroom variables of a classroom environment refer to all the features that influence the nature of teacher and student performance. Merritt also explains that a classroom should stimulate purposive student activity and allow for a depth and range of activities that facilitate learning (Merritt in Research Starters 2009: 1).

Research has found that teachers who have established orderly and enabling classroom learning environments are most likely to teach for understanding and learning (Knapp, Shields & Turnbull, 1992 and Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006 by Merritt in Research Starters 2009: 5). Research also indicates that the classroom discourse that is effective in promoting students' achievement is highly interactive and actively involves students in the production of knowledge (Nystrand *et al.*, 2001 by Merritt in Research Starters 2009: 5). Classroom environments supporting student learning are highly personalized, encourage active participation in the learning process, and use investigative skills in learning activities (Dart *et al.*, 1999 by Merritt in Research Starters 2009: 5).

Contrary to the above findings, Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain (2005: 417-458) found that the effects of class size on learner performance are smaller than the benefit of moving one standard deviation up the teacher quality distribution. Parents' choice of school depends on preference and resources. This remains the reason why learners are not randomly distributed across schools (Tiebout, 1956: in Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005: 417-458). It is also in these schools where learners are placed according to their characteristics including assessments of ability and achievement. As a result, large differences among teachers in their impacts on achievement rather than class size affect learner performance. It is therefore high quality instruction throughout primary school instead of class size reduction that can substantially offset disadvantages associated with low socioeconomic backgrounds (Jirjahn, Pfeifer & Tsertsvadze, 2008: 1-4 and Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005: 417-458).

In the same vein, Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy (2008: 221-233) concluded that learners' outcomes are not affected by class size but by diseconomies of scale. Schools often look to spreading the costs over more learners by increasing class sizes or workload (number of courses/subjects taught). Resources that are supposed to be spent on staff training and development, improving the teaching and learning environment, staff benefits, improving and standardizing teaching and learning equipment, are used in staffing unnecessary sections and/or on infrastructure (Hancock, 1996 in Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy (2008: 221-233). Class size is the primary environmental variable with which every school must contend when developing effective teaching strategies (McKeachie, 2004, McKeachie, Iran-Nejad & Berliner, 1990 and McKeachie, 1980 in Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy (2008: 221-233).

Borland, Howsen & Trawick (2005: 73-83) found that the relationship between class size and learner performance is not only non-linear, but also non-monotonic. Increases in teacher salary, learner innate ability, teacher rank, teacher experience, attendance rate, and college variables rather than large or small class size, are expected to lead to higher learner achievement (Borland, Howsen & Trawick, 2005: 73-83). Hanushek (2001: 24-28) also notes that, to the extent that learners learn from each other and from teachers, two effects are expected as the number of learners in a classroom increases. With the increased number of learners, and the implied increase in associated learner skills from which an individual learner may benefit, peer effects on learner achievement are expected to be positive.

In addition, to the extent that learners compete with peers, there is an additional positive effect associated with increased class size. Simultaneously, with an increased number of learners, but no additional teacher, the teacher contribution to individual learner achievement is expected to be reduced (Hanushek, 2001: 24-28). Additionally, larger schools may simultaneously enjoy economies of consolidation that results in greater amounts of money being spent on classroom instruction that in turn leads to higher learner achievement. The transfer of

learners from one school to another due to the courses offered, quality teachers, and availability of resources also has an impact on learners' performance (Hoxby, 2002: 1239-1285).

Furthermore, class size did not show a significant impact on measures of reading vocabulary, or mathematics problem solving (Shapson, Wright, Eason & Fitzgerald, 1980: 141-152). No changes were also observed on measures of art or composition; for learners' attitudes towards school and for their self-concepts; as well as in methods of instruction used by teachers in different class sizes (Shapson, Wright, Eason & Fitzgerald, 1980: 141-152). Grouping size in grouping instruction rather than class size affects learners' achievement in larger ability groups learning less than in smaller ability groups (Hallinan & Sorensen, 1985: 71-89).

According to Leufer (2007: 322-326), some learners see large classes in a positive light. They associate large classes with the opportunity to undertake group work with learning in large groups. They have a view that group work would provide opportunity to interact with others and contribute individually.

Learners' perceptions of factors affecting the learning experience focus predominantly on classroom layout and organisation (Leufer, 2007: 322). Aspects such as seating arrangement, location of equipment, and the position of the educator are thought to be the contributing factors. Teaching strategies are also perceived to be influential in this matter. The style of presentation and content delivery is thought to have an impact on learners' learning experience. Noise level is of particular concern to some and appears to have a significant impact on concentration levels and learners' ability to hear both educator and other learners (Leufer, 2007: 323).

Even though some studies challenge the evidence that there is a relationship between class size and learner performance, I hold the assumption that such relationship exists in Lesotho. High teacher/pupils ratios and multi-grade teaching

particularly at primary-school level have had a negative impact on teachers' performance, resulting in a decline in the quality of teaching-learning activities (World Bank, 2005: 137 and Lerotholi, 2001: 19). The World Bank and Lerotholi also state that high drop-out rates, average repetition rates, and low transition/completion rates from primary school to secondary school, are a reflection of the quality of education the system offers.

Lesotho's Education Planning and Policy Formulation indicates that the primary schools system is characterized by a high pupil/teacher ratio and that the target is to reduce it to 40:1 (Stock-Taking Review on Education in Africa, 1999: 9 and Phamotse, Mapetla, Khechane, Monaheng-Mariti, Phatela & Mulkeen, 2005: 2). Lerotholi (2001: 20) also outlines that the official pupil/teacher ratio for primary schools in Lesotho is 40:1, but according to her findings, the actual ratios have been significantly higher, ranging between 45 and 50 in the statistical period 1989-1998. Lerotholi (2001: 21) further suggests that the problem of overcrowding in primary-school classrooms has been identified as one of the key negative factors contributing to the quality of teaching and learning and it continues to exist in some schools.

It is the responsibility of every teacher to know each and every learner in the classroom as this allows him/her to plan accordingly (Blatchford & Martin 1998: 118-137). A primary school teacher in Lesotho is entitled to teach ten subjects in a week – this makes it even more difficult for them to know their learners. Each teacher is faced with sixty or more learners (see figure 2.3). I therefore assume that this situation also has a negative impact on instructional planning, organisation and practice of proper classroom layout (seating arrangement, location of equipment, and the position of the educator). This as a result hinders the teaching and learning process (Blatchford & Martin, 1998: 118-137).

I also assume that large classes of about 60 and more pupils found in Lesotho primary schools promote more learner inattentiveness and off-task behaviour. There also seems to be less individual teacher contact with learners and less

support for learning in these classes. The figure below gives better a picture of what classrooms in Lesotho primary schools look like since the introduction of the FPE. Even though these learners are seated on desks, they are too crowded. The desk that is supposed to be shared by two is used by more than two learners. This makes them lose attention. Towards the back of the classroom, some are fast asleep.



Figure 2.3: *Ha Nqabeni Primary School (Lesotho) (Fihliwe on Flickr)*

When situations are like the one above, the teacher is unable to see those that are asleep and inattentive. It makes it difficult for the teacher to notice learners that are absent. It is tempting to pay attention only to those learners who seem to be active and leave the majority of learners unattended. Learners also tend to be disengaged most of the time. They therefore engage themselves with issues irrelevant from the plans of the day. As a result learning does not take place. The

fact that some learners are sleeping and disengaged might be the results of poor classroom management.

Research indicates that behaviours are a form of communication. When students misbehave, become distracted, have difficulty handling in assignments on time, or experience any other common difficulty in the classroom, they communicate to teachers that some element of the experience is not working for them (Loeser in Research Starters, 2009: 2). The study conducted by Bullock & Brown (1972) pinpointed ten challenges teachers face in the classroom settings. These include: acting out, aggression, hyperactivity, poor social relationships, defiance, immaturity, poor academic performance, poor attention span, and inadequate self-concept (Wilhite et al., 2007 by Loeser in Research Starters, 2009: 2).

Rizzo *et al.* (1970 in Michael, Court & Petal, 2009: 268) describe the above incident as a result of 'role overload'. Role overload is defined as incompatibility between the role requirements and the amount of time and resources available to comply with these requirements. Glisson *et al.* 2006 and Kahn & Byosiere, 1992 in Michael, Court & Petal, 2009: 268) add that role overload is related to number of sick days, feelings of anxiety, frustration, depression, decrease in self-confidence, job burnout, attention and concentration problems and work accidents. On the same point, Pelletier (1992) and Rahim (1992 in Michael, Court & Petal, 2009: 268) further discuss that role overload poses a threat to the employee in performing his or her role and also increases withdrawal behaviour patterns including early retirement, striking, leaving, absenteeism and more from the employing organisation.

I also doubt the fact that teachers were ever made aware of what was going to face them as the result of the introduction of FPE. Was there any in-service training of some sort to prepare them for these large numbers of learners? Were they ever informed of this situation and all what is expected from them? I doubt it and if this is the case, I would expect a negative impact in the teaching-learning situation.

This situation is said to be the result of 'role ambiguity'. Role ambiguity expresses the ambivalence that is to be expected when role expectations are not clear due to lack of information about the role and the work it entails (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985 in Michael, Court & Petal, 2009: 267). The employee does not know where to direct his or her efforts, and moreover, whether his or her superiors will deem the results of the role performance as a 'success' or a 'failure'. Karasek (1979 in Michael, Court & Petal, 2009: 267) further stresses that another aspect of role ambiguity is the employee's inability to predict the results of his or her actions. This gives the worker a sense of lack of control, which has been identified as a strong contributor to stress.

I assume that the issue of large classes has resulted in conflicts between teachers and principals as well as amongst teachers themselves. These stakeholders seem to differ as to what and how exactly teachers are expected to do with these large classes. Teachers may have a feeling that they are there to make teaching and learning take place whereas principals are expecting something else (i.e. their schools to beat the rest of the schools). Such conflicts may also have an impact in the teaching-learning.

Kahn and Byosier (1992 in Michael, Court & Petal, 2009: 267) believe that role conflict concerns incompatible role expectations. They explain that such conflict is related to conceptual differences between workers and different supervisors regarding the content or importance of required job tasks. They further explain that this creates conflict: the commitment to a number of supervisors versus the individual's values pertaining to the organisation's requirements.

2.3.1 Summary

The reviewed literature found that there is the relationship between class size and learner performance. Smaller classes rather than large classes were found to be easy to manage. There is teacher/learner interaction in smaller classes than in large classes. Smaller classes were found to enable teachers to identify learners' different learning styles whereas it is difficult in large classes. Learners

in smaller classes were found to be motivated and energised by success, curiosity, originality and relationships. These essential goals were not discovered in large classes. Smaller classes rather than larger classes increase teacher morale, performance and job satisfaction. The classroom environment in smaller classes rather than in large classes appeared to invite both the teacher and learners' participation.

However, some studies found the effects of class size on learner performance to be smaller than the benefits. Regardless of their findings, based on experience, I maintain that class size has negative impact on both the teacher and learners' performance.

2.4 Teacher planning

Teacher planning is sometimes referred to as instructional planning in this study. It is a process of selecting educational objectives, diagnosing learner characteristics, and choosing from alternative instructional strategies in order to achieve certain learner outcomes (Peterson, Marx & Clark, 1978: 417-432). In line with this, Cruickshank, Bainer & Metcalf (1999: 127) define teacher planning as a process teachers use to decide how to select, organize, and deliver a learning experience to maximize both their achievement and satisfaction and those of learners. Instructional planning is said to be one of the most important professional activities teachers engage in (Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998: 65 and Dean, 1991: 11). Major reviews of the instructional planning literature indicate that much of what takes place in classrooms is based on the planning activities of teachers (Clark & Dunn, 1991 and Clark & Peterson, 1986 in Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998: 65).

Some studies describe instructional planning as one of the areas of "teacher efficacy". Teacher efficacy is said to be a teacher's ability to do his/her duties or work related with the teaching profession, skills, or a concept pertaining to the qualifications that a teacher needs to possess (Hacioglu & Alkan, 1997 in

Karaca, 2008: 1111). Areas of teacher efficacy have been described as “evaluating learner behaviour, instructional planning, organisation and application, performing administrative tasks, communication and interaction, improving personal skills and enabling learners to improve themselves (The SFED in Karaca, 2008: 1111).

Dickson (1981 in Karaca, 2008: 1111) defined these areas as “planning the instruction material, choosing and implementing the teaching strategy, interacting with the learner, ensuring the learner’s participation, supporting the learner and preserving professional standards”. Allinder (1994 and Stein & Wang, 1998 in Karaca, 2008: 1113) point out that teachers who perceive themselves as competent are better organised, spend more time in planning, try to provide a high quality of teaching and are more eager to search for new approaches and methods to use in fulfilling the needs of their learners.

Looking at the above definitions, the purpose of planning is mainly to guide the teacher. Careful lesson planning maintains learners’ attention and participation (Mercer & Mercer, 1993: 100). The lesson proceeds smoothly without interruptions, digressions, and diversions. Mercer and Mercer (1993: 100) further note that effective teaching and classroom management do not just happen but require relevant planning.

In this regard, Kruger and Adams (1995: 17) outline the importance of planning. They mention that it:

- Provides a link between the curriculum or learning programme and the actual teaching in a classroom situation.
- Serves as a reminder of the successes and failures of previous lessons, and therefore forms the basis for modifying and shaping future lessons.
- Helps to reduce, but not eliminate, teacher stress and uncertainty.

Blandford (2000: 83) notes that a qualified teacher must display competence in tracking learners' progress by:

- Identifying clear teaching objectives and content;
- Setting tasks which challenge and interest learners;
- Setting appropriate and demanding expectations;
- Setting clear targets for learning which build on learners' prior attainment;
- Identifying learners' needs;
- Making effective use of assessment; and
- Planning opportunities that contribute to learners' personal, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Teacher planning develops conceptual and procedural knowledge that enables teachers to identify specific learning goals. It allows them to move with more confidence between characteristics of different teaching and learning concepts and specific learning outcomes. Learners also begin to identify knowledge gaps on their own and this increases their motivation and interest as well as improving their overall performance (Jones & Moreland, 2005: 193-206; Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159-174).

It is during the planning sessions that the teacher selects particular concepts from the curriculum depending on the outcomes (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) s/he would like his/her learners to exhibit at the end of that particular lesson. Borich (1996: 184) emphasises that it will be improper for the teacher to decide upon the content to teach before s/he is familiar with his/her learners' characteristics. These characteristics include level of achievement, motivation, cultural diversity, family and community backgrounds.

With this in mind, let us find out from other researchers if teacher planning has any impact on learners' performance. Leikin & Kawass (2005: 253-274) found that there is a significant relationship between the way teachers plan their mathematics lessons and their learners' achievement while Peterson & Bond

(2004: 345-367); Churchill & Churchill (2008: 1439-1450) and Kollias, Mamolougos, Vamvakoussis, Lakkala & Vosniadou (2005: 295-315) observe the relationship between teacher planning and learners' general performance. In order for the teacher to teach effectively and productively, s/he must know where s/he intends to go and when and how s/he intends to get there (Jacobson *et al.*, 1981: 59).

Hyun-Kyung (2007: 41-52) examined the development and implementation of integrated instruction in the first-grade music curriculum and what effect it had on learner performance. The six steps in the development of integrated music classes: scheduling, determining the topic, teachers' planning meeting, preparing for class activities, implementation and evaluation were found to have an influence on learners' achievement. Firth and Winter (2007: 599-619); Yaldirim (2003: 525-543) and Hickey (2004: 77-86) have also indicated significant differences between learners' achievement through a planned and an unplanned curriculum. Avenant (1990: 79) describes teaching as not just being a "hit and miss affair". By this, he implies that the teacher must plan his/her year, term, week and day's goals in advance.

Teacher planning requires thorough knowledge of the expected outcomes, content to be taught, learners' characteristics as well as teaching-learning strategies (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 315; Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999: 12; Borich, 1996: 105, 2000: 211; Cruickshank and Bainer & Metcalf, 1999: 46). Questions on who, what, when, why, and how to teach are answered in the lesson plan (Jacobs *et al.*, 2004: 315; Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999: 12; Borich, 1996: 49; Avenant, 1990: 79; Anderson, 1989: 45 and Jacobson *et al.* 1981: 59).

However, I assume that Lesotho primary school teachers like other teachers, do not take this fact into consideration. A number of researchers have found that rather than focusing on goals and objectives at the beginning of the planning process, many teachers begin their planning by thinking about the instructional activities they will employ (Bullough, 1987, Kagan & Tippins, 1992 and Sardo-Brown, 1988 in Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998: 66). The results of several studies

indicate that, for most teachers, objectives play a relatively small role in instructional planning (Clark & Peterson, 1986 and Kagan & Tippins, 1992 in Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998: 66).

Zahorik (1975: 215) indicates that (a) content to be taught seems to be one of the most important planning decisions teachers make; (b) selection of learner learning activities is mentioned frequently by teachers as an important planning decision, but rarely the first decision made; (c) planning decisions involving choice of materials is also mentioned by about half of the teachers; (d) specification of learning objectives is mentioned only infrequently by teachers as an important part of planning; and (e) planning decisions about evaluation, diagnosis, organization of the learning environment, and instructional strategies are made by one-third or fewer of the teachers.

Goodlad, Klein, and Associates (1974: 78) add that most teachers neither plan nor teach with specific learning objectives in mind. Rather, teachers' concerns are with "coverage of certain material" (Goodlad, *et al.* 1974: 78) and this has a great impact on learners' performance. Joyce and Harootunian (1964: 420-427) further contend that few elementary science teachers use behavioural analysis as they prepare their lessons, and that they most depend heavily on instructional materials for selection of method, content, and sequence of activities. This also has a negative influence on learners' achievement. The results of the study conducted by Young, Reiser & Dick (1998: 65) show that teachers did not place much emphasis on specifying objectives, creating objective-based tests, or making other instructional decisions in light of objectives.

Research has shown that teachers' planning is influenced by a variety of factors including textbook content, curriculum guides, students' interests, teachers' prior experience, classroom management issues instructional constraints and availability of materials (McCutcheon, 1983, Leinhardt, 1983, Sardo-Brown, 1988, Brophy, 1982 and Bullough, 1987 in Yildirim, 2003: 527).

The results of the study by Yildirim (2003: 525) indicate that the main sources of influence on daily and unit plans are teachers' experience, the national curriculum and textbooks. In the same study, teachers assigned the highest level of importance to student characteristics and availability of learning materials. The lowest level of importance was assigned to evaluation procedures and writing objectives. The latter revealed the main problems faced by teachers to be: the gap between the national curriculum; the classroom needs; difficulties in using the standard format for preparing plans; shortage of time and resources; insufficient support from principals and inspectors, and lack of cooperation among teachers.

Instruction in general elementary and special education resource rooms tend to use a 'one size fits all' approach. There is little or no differentiation of lesson planning or individualization of materials in response to student instructional levels or needs (Schumm, Moody & Vaughn, 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159). Whole-group instruction is the primary mode of instructional delivery, with few instances of ability grouping of students (Baker & Zigmond, 1990, Schumm *et al.* 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159).

Despite the differential academic skills of mainstreamed students with learning disabilities, these students receive little instructional adaptation in general education classrooms. When adaptation occurs, it is generally geared to the whole class as a 'blanket' modification, rather than specifically focused on struggling students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998, Fuchs, Fuchs & Bishop, 1992a; and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005).

Concerning experienced and inexperienced teachers, studies have indicated that experienced teachers differ significantly from inexperienced teachers in planning (Yildirim, 2003: 527). Experienced teachers tend to consider objectives and performance indicators more whereas novice teachers pay attention to students' interests and classroom activities (Arends, 1987 in Yildirim, 2003: 527). Experienced teachers' planning tends to be more detailed, and contains a

greater number of instructional and management routines (Egeler, 1993 in Yildirim, 2003: 527).

2.4.1 Summary

The literature found that teacher planning plays a crucial role in learner performance. It found that the teacher who plans his/her instructions is able to evaluate his/her learners' behaviour, organise and apply, perform administrative tasks, communicate to learners, colleagues and the community, ensure learners' participation, support learners and preserve professional standards. I have not come across studies that seem to have a negative view of the relationship between teacher planning and learner performance. I therefore maintain that such relationship exists.

2.5 Parental involvement

Parental involvement is any activity that empowers parents and families to participate in the educational process either at home or in a programme setting (Rockwell, Andre & Hawley, 1996: 175). Several studies demonstrate that parental involvement is significantly associated with student achievement. Research in special education also stresses the benefits of parental involvement in producing quality outcomes in the education of young children with disabilities (Machen, Wilson & Notar, 2009: 13-16; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 328-335; Harris & Goodall, 2008: 277-289; Sirvani, 2007: 31-43; Fields-Smith, 2005: 129-135 and Perla & O'Donnell, 2003: 103-108).

According to Epstein (1995: 112), parental involvement in education should include the following activities:

- Parenting: parents providing a home environment that supports education;
- Communicating: schools communicating with parents and parents communicating with schools;
- Supporting: parents participating, supporting, and attending school events;
- Volunteering: parents participating as school volunteers and aides.

- At-home learning: parents creating and carrying out educational activities at home;
- Leading: parents participating in leadership roles and school governance; and
- Collaborating: schools collaborating with the community for the benefit of schools and families.

Petit (1998 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 104) identified three dimensions of parental involvement as discussed below:

- Monitoring: Parents become aware of school activities and programmes through having informal conversations, reading bulletins, attending open houses, and similar activities;
- Informing: It is more direct and involves parent-teacher communication in conferences, phone calls, and home visits; and
- Participating parents: Parents become actively involved in the education process, either in their children's classrooms or in the home by providing supportive instruction using methods similar to those of teachers.

The figure below gives a clear picture of the roles parents are expected to perform in their children's schools.

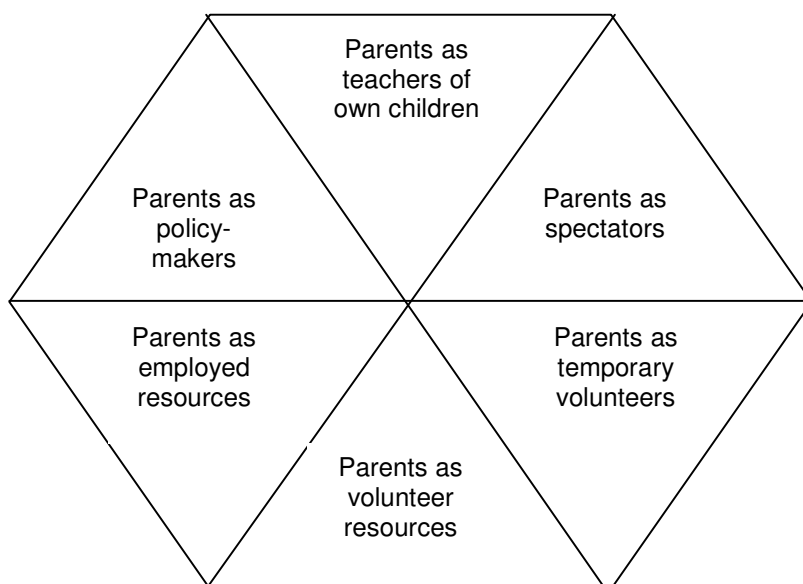


Figure 2.4:
Possible roles for parents in schools
(Berger, 2000: 152)

The figure above makes it clear that parents are teachers of their own children (Berger, 2000: 152). They are the continuous force in the education of their children from birth to adulthood. Berger also notes that an increasing awareness of the link between informal and formal instruction is now emerging. Parents can enhance the informal education of their children by understanding the formal education process, although they are encouraged to teach in an informal manner. Daily incidental teaching of language, critical thinking, decision-making and problem solving, for example encourages intellectual development in the young child (Berger, 2000: 152). Infants learn as they listen, look, touch, and are touched. Therefore parents who are aware of their roles in the educational development of their children from the infant to the adolescent stage promote the successful completion of their formal education.

Parental involvement has a number of advantages in children's schooling, including increased learners' achievement, parent empowerment, improved attendance, and lower dropout rates. Epstein (1992: 122) also notes that learners at all levels do better academically and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviours if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved.

In their studies, Regner & Loose (2006: 777-797); Alomar (2006: 907-922); Egbochuku (2006: 169-179); Driessen, Smit & Slegers (2005: 509-532) and Pong, Hao & Gardner (2005: 928-950) found that parental involvement displayed the strongest contribution to learner performance. Parents participate in various ways to make child's schoolwork successful. The approach to homework was found to be one of the strategies to promote student learning, parent-child interactions, and parent-teacher communication (Epstein, Salinas & Jackson, 1992, 1995 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 326). Epstein (1988), Leone & Richards (1989 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 325) suggest that learners who enjoy talking with their parents about their homework and school tend to perform well at school.

Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong & Jones (2001 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 324) investigated the ways in which parents participate in the home work process. Parents provide general oversight by monitoring child's school/homework or motivating him/her to complete assignments. They respond to school or homework efforts by praising or rewarding. Parents engage actively in the child's school work by helping or tutoring. At times when the task demands are at variance with the child's skill level, the parent breaks the task into smaller units to help understanding. Parents engage interactively with the child and the homework either by modelling, demonstrating, or helping with problem solving. They help the child learn processes that will benefit achievement in school by helping him/her cope with distractions.

Hosin (2007: 31-46) also argued that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and learners' mathematics achievement. Studies have found that, through enhanced communication and collaboration between parents and schools, parents develop a better understanding of difficulties their children experience in mathematics learning (Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 412 and Mistretta, 2004: 70). They therefore support school efforts to reform mathematics curriculum and instruction (Peressini, 1997 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 412).

In addition, Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & Holbein (2005: 99-124) and Urdan, Solek and Schoenfelder (2007: 7-21) commented on the relationship between parental involvement and learner motivation. Almost all the studies uncovered important relationships between parent involvement and specific motivational constructs. When parents are involved, learners report more effort, concentration, and attention. Learners are more inherently interested in learning, and they experience higher perceived competence. As a result they do well in their learning.

Moreover, Spera (2005: 125-147) reviewed the research that indicates parents' significant influence on the school achievement of their children. In terms of parenting practices, the research suggests that when parents are involved in

their children's education and monitor their children's after-school activities, they facilitate their children's academic achievement and educational attainment.

Furthermore, Fan (2001: 27-53) examined the effects of parental involvement on learners' performance, and the findings indicate a significant influence. The relationship was also discovered to be strong in early childhood intervention and learners' reading achievement in kindergarten and eighth grade, as well as of grade retention and special education placement through age 14 (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999 in Machen, Wilson & Norta, 2005: 13-16).

When parents and teachers have open discussions on children's special needs, health problems, and any home circumstances, it helps the teacher to develop approachable attitudes towards the learner. The same openness gives the teacher the opportunity to contact them if s/he suspects that the child has a problem of any kind. Such discussions also guide the teacher as to make allowance for individual differences between learners as well as, to identify and attempt to remedial learning difficulties. Parental involvement opens doors for teachers and parents to discuss their children's progress at effective parent-teacher conferences (Hornby, 2000: 16-17; Rudney, 2005: 37).

Machen *et al.*, (2005: 13-16) note that although the relation between family factors and children's success is complex, the positive influence of parent involvement promotes a family-school partnership that increases constructive child outcomes. Learners whose parents are involved are more likely to take personal responsibility for their learning. When parents show an interest in their child's education by getting involved, learners adopt a mastery goal orientation to learning where they are more likely to seek challenging tasks, persist through academic challenges, and experience satisfaction in their schoolwork. Finally, when parents become involved with learners' reading activities, learners demonstrate greater self-efficacy as readers, are more motivated to read, and voluntarily participate in literacy activities (Machen *et al.*, 2005: 13-16).

The figure below demonstrates clearly how parental involvement engages learners in their daily learning.



Figure 2.5

Parents who listen to and talk, read and play with their children help their children learn (Berger, 2000: 24)

Ballantine (1999: 170); Karther & Lowden (1997 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002); Sussell, Carr & Hartman (1996: 55); Rockwell, Andre & Hawley (1996: 13) have summarised the benefits of parental involvement in the education system:

- Improved communication between parents and children and teachers as well;
- Higher academic performance of children whose parents are involved;
- High school attendance and less disruptive behaviour;
- Increased likelihood of completing high school and attending college;
- A sense of accomplishment for parents;
- Higher parental expectations of children;
- Improved study habits among children;
- Improved teacher morale;
- Improved school climate; and
- Increased likelihood of parents deciding to continue their own education.

However, Hawes & Plourde (2005: 47-57), determining the relationship between reading achievement and parental involvement for sixth grade middle school learners, found a slight positive correlation but failed to reject a null hypothesis

that there was no relationship among parental involvement and reading comprehension and achievement of sixth grade learners. This might have resulted from findings below.

Even though research has indicated positive findings of parental involvement in learners' achievement, negative findings were also made. There seem to be a number of barriers facing certain parents in supporting their children's learning. It is clear that powerful social and economic factors still prevent many parents from fully participating in schooling (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 277). Research showed that schools rather than parents are often 'hard to reach'. It is also found that while parents, teachers and learners tend to agree that parental engagement is a 'good thing', they also hold very different views about the purpose of engaging parents (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 277). It is also clear that there is a major difference in engaging parents in learning. While involving parents in school activities has an important social and community function, it is only the engagement of parents in learning in the home that is most likely to result in a positive difference to learning outcomes (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 277).

Several studies highlight parental frustration and embarrassment when they help children with skills that they (parents) do not remember, never learnt, and/or explain differently from the teacher (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 328-334; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 323) and National Commission on Children, 1991 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 104). As a result, parents provide a form of help that is negative or inappropriate such as helping in order to finish more quickly; helping despite knowing that the work has to be completed independently; or helping with the knowledge that the help makes the work harder for the learner (Cooper, Lindsay & Nye, 2000 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 325). Teachers provide little or no explanation about helping children with homework, or helping them with reading or mathematics (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331).

People with limited English ability like me cannot help their children with their work. Others are so busy working to feed, clothe, and house their families. They therefore do not know whether their children have completed their home works or not. As a result they have to trust what their children tell them (acknowledges Christine, a parent).

Lack of time was also found to be an obstacle to parental involvement (Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 104). Many family structures consist of single-parent families, two-parent working families, or families in which one or both parents hold more than one job (Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 425; Harris & Goodall, 2008: 280 and Buttery & Anderson, 1999 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 104). Working parents are therefore reported not to have sufficient time for helping their children.

Teachers also report that reaching out to parents and developing effective home-based activities require time and effort (Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105). For the at-home parental efforts to be successful, teachers need to provide parents with instruction, develop meaningful and interesting home activities that children and parents can do together, coordinate schedules with parents, and maintain regular communication with them (Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105). Lack of instructional resources is reported to constrain teachers' time and energy to communicate with parents. This leads to a weaker sense of responsibility among teachers for the school mission of developing positive relationships with parents and the community (Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak, 2005: 61).

Additionally, teachers report that they want more communication with parents but they need more instruction and encouragement to develop high-quality home work assignments (Epstein & Becker, 1982 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 323). This indicates that many teachers are not well prepared for, nor are they being trained to communicate effectively with parents/caretakers from different backgrounds and culture with whom they will interact (Epstein, 2001 in Dotger, 2008: 93).

Past experience was also found to affect parental involvement in one way or the other. Some parents have had difficulties at school as children and have negative

memories that make a visit to school an uncomfortable experience (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 279 and Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105). Other parents, who themselves were not successful in school, feel intimidated and anxious about interacting with teachers (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 279 and Karther & Lowden, 1997 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105). Also, if in the past schools have only contacted parents to discuss problems, parents feel justifiably defensive and unwilling to become actively involved (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 285 and Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105).

In the study conducted by Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse (2009: 331) one of the parents indicated that:

Teachers often send home notes about my children but the notes only indicate negative things/deficiencies about the children's performance. Teachers never state anything positive and most of the times my daughters see the mail before my wife and I because we work long hours. When my children see these negative statements and nothing positive, they develop resentment for the teacher. Their resentment poisons their classroom learning environment and they do not perform well (Abraham).

Moreover, parents' "sense of personal efficacy" was found to be a barrier to parental involvement. This refers to the degree to which they feel able to make a difference. Parents will be involved if they see that supporting and enhancing their children's school achievement is part of their 'job' as parents and if they feel they have the capacity to contribute (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331; Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2001 and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 324-325). Parents see their roles as encourager/supporter, disciplinarian, provider and cultural historian. It is in these roles that they convey their expectations for the education of their children (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331). They therefore feel hesitant to communicate with teachers due to the cultural and/or language barriers or the fear of being labelled as problem parents by reporting children's problems at home (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003: 424).

Many parental involvement policies fail to recognise the ethnic diversity among parents. Such parents seem to know little about the education system. This

contributes to widening the gap between the involved and the uninvolved parents, and the achievers and the underachievers among their children. As a result these are the parents that are often seen as indifferent or difficult and considered by schools to be 'hard to reach' (Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 and Crozier & Davies, 2007: 297).

Low teacher expectations of parents also increase the communication gap between teachers and families (Dodd & Konzal, 2000 and Karther & Lowden, 1997 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105). Studies in the United States have shown that parental involvement is high when teachers have positive attitudes toward parents and work collaboratively with them (Bauch & Goldring, 2000 and Griffith, 1998 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414). Schools' attitudes to parental involvement and an inviting climate influence parents' decisions of becoming involved in their children's schools (Eccles & Harold, 1993 and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 412). Zhao & Akiba (2009: 412) found that schools expect parents to provide home-based support such as preparing students' lunchboxes, making sure home work is completed and communicating with schools about students' problems at home. They are not expecting parents to assist teachers and to participate in school governance.

The argument that parental involvement plays a crucial role in learner performance still stands. However, I assume that parents in Lesotho primary schools are not aware that they matter as far as their children's performance is concerned. I also doubt it if schools (teachers, learners and principals) are aware of it. My assumption is based on findings by Isaacs (2007: 2); Avenstrup, Liang & Nellemann (2004: 214).

Findings indicate that Lesotho is facing challenges of high poverty and illiteracy rates and low primary enrolment as well as low completion rates. Families in rural parts of the country are involved in subsistence activities in order to help their children to survive. Many families are suffering from stress, poverty, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and divorce. Lesotho's educators are also challenged by the lack of

financial resources needed to meet the growing demand for well-educated local teachers, the need for literacy, and for vocational and technical training outside the formal academic setting.

2.5.1 Summary

Parental involvement was also found to have an influence on learners' performance. Parenting, communicating, supporting, volunteering, at-home learning, leading and collaboration were found to be activities that empower parents and families' participation in the educational process. The literature also found that parents' illiteracy level, lack of time, sense of personal efficacy, past negative experience and low schools' expectations of parents are barriers facing certain parents in supporting their children's learning. Lack of instructional resources, skills, time and encouragement to communicate with parents were reported by teachers to be weakening their sense of responsibility for the school mission of developing positive relationship with parents and the community.

I have not come across studies that seem to have a negative view of the relationship between parental involvement and learner performance. I therefore assume that due to the above findings and many others, parental involvement is not seen the way it is supposed to be seen in Lesotho primary schools

2.6 Conclusion

The reviewed literature indicates a significant relationship between teacher training, class size, teacher planning, and parental involvement. However, some studies did not reveal such relationships. While many studies have been conducted on the relationship between teacher training, class size, teacher planning, and parental involvement and learners' performance hence grade repetition, little has been done that specifically seeks educators' experiences on the impact of these factors on learners' achievement.

In addition, although the reviewed studies tried to investigate knowledge in both qualitative and quantitative research designs; more attention was given to

students in qualitative studies. This study is planned to focus more on education officers (as policy makers), teachers and principals. This will add to the knowledge derived from students.

Principals, parents, and teachers appeared to be the participants in most of the studies, whereas the present study has included education official representing policy makers. This will enable them to identify the gaps in their education policies concerning parental involvement and try to close them in future.

Moreover, due to the high interest in science and technology worldwide most of the recently reviewed studies had more interest for this field of study. This study is not confined to a specific subject area but investigates the teaching and learning process in general.

Furthermore, while many studies have been conducted on the relationship between the above-mentioned factors and learners' achievement and grade repetition, very little has been done that specifically targets primary schools. Studies that involved primary schools were basically conducted internationally. More focus was seen to have been on kindergarten, middle schools, high schools, and universities. Little research seems to have been conducted on the African continent. Therefore, the present research will concentrate on primary schools, in an African country. The majority of previous studies considered a class of 16 learners to be a minimum class size and 36 learners to be a maximum class size. Contrary to this, the present study will take place in the situation where 50 learners are considered to be a minimum class size.

The next chapter will cover the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

When conducting any study, the researcher should be clear about what s/he wants to research and how that must be researched. The purpose of this chapter is to outline how the current research was done. The research design and methodology applied will be explained. This includes research instruments, the purpose for which they were created; the participants in the study, the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis techniques, and reporting as well as ethical issues considered.

3.2 Research design

A research design is a plan or strategy, which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques used and the data analysis done (Creswell *et al.*, 2007: 70). Nachmias and Nachmias (1976, in Kitshoff, 2006: 115) define a research design as a plan, which guides the researcher to collect, analyse and interpret observations. These scholars also note that the research design gives direction and boundaries to research activities and focuses on a specific phenomenon. They further argue that the research design alerts the researcher to possible problems regarding the research.

In line with the above definition, McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 157) describe a research design as a strategy of selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research question. They further state that the research design defines the circumstances in which the subjects will be studied.

3.3 Literature review

With respect to the current study, a literature review was done to explore, among others, the research designs used in studies related to the present study. This was done in order to learn from other scholars how they have theorised and

conceptualised issues, what they have found empirically, what instrumentation they have used and to what effect (Fink, 2004: 125). According to Gay and Airasian (2003: 46) a literature review is a systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem. The documents can include articles, abstracts, reviews, monographs, dissertations, books, other research reports, and electronic media (Fink, 2004: 125 and Gay & Airasian, 2003: 46). Journal articles, books, abstracts, reviews, dissertations, electronic media and other documents that describe the past and current state of information were reviewed in this study.

There are three ways in which research can be approached. Those are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods where both qualitative and quantitative approaches can be used. A qualitative approach was used in this study.

3.4 Qualitative research

Based on the general aim and the specific objectives of this study as stated in Chapter 1, a qualitative research design was identified as suitable for the current study. Qualitative research is research that emphasizes elaborate description of social or instructional settings (Slavin, 2007: 8). Creswell (2007: 257) defines qualitative research as an inquiry of understanding where a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

A qualitative research design was used in this study because it reveals the nature of situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 134-135). Leedy and Ormrod note that a qualitative research design enables the researcher to: gain insights about a particular phenomenon; develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon; and discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon. In addition, Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 134-135) suggest that a qualitative design allows the researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories, or generalizations

within real-world contexts by using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. Furthermore, a qualitative research design provides a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practices, or innovations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 134-135).

There are different forms of qualitative research design namely case study, ethnography, phenomenological, grounded theory, content analysis, and interpretive study. Based on the nature of the study, a case study was used to conduct the current study.

3.5 Case study research

Case study research is a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events that aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest (Bromley, 1990 in Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75) being the reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools.

Yin (1984, in Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75) further describes case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life (naturalistic) context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case study research allows the investigations to strive towards a comprehensive understanding of how the participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under study (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75).

Based on the above description of a case study method, the present qualitative study was conducted as a case study because a single case being grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools was studied. In this regard, participants were interviewed amongst other activities. By interviewing the participants, the case study research offered a multiple-perspective analysis in which this study considered not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also the views of other relevant groups of actors such as policy

makers and School Governing Bodies and the interaction between them (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75). This research method also opened the possibility of giving a voice to learners (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75).

While the case study design was chosen in the current study, it does have disadvantages. For instance, the case study research method is claimed to be incapable of providing a generalising conclusion because it tends to depend on a single case (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75). However, in the present study, the case study was aimed at gaining greater insight and understanding of the dynamics the grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 76). The literature also provides evidence of the acceptance of a single case as the object of study. Hamel *et al.* (1993, in Creswell *et al.* 2007: 76) characterised such singularity as a concentration of the global in the local.

In this case, an instrumental case study will be used. Instrumental case study is study used to examine a particular case mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization in order to build theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 437). An instrumental case study will enable me to elaborate a theory on, and gain a better understanding of the perceptions of educators on factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools (Raymond, 1996: 126).

3.6 Data collection

In the following sections, the strategy used in the selection of sources for the information is described as well as procedures used to gather the information is clarified and then the methods used to collect the data to answer research questions are discussed (Eichelberger, 1989: 118).

3.6.1 Sampling

Sampling decisions were made to obtain the richest source of information to answer the research questions (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 79; Gay & Airasian, 2003: 115). Educators – an education officer, school principals and teachers were decided to be the richest sources of information in this study. Sampling is a

process of selecting participants for a study in such a way that they represent the large group from which they were selected (Trichim & Donnelly, 2007: 34; Slavin, 2007: 114; Gay & Airasian, 2003: 101). The study could not encompass all education officers, school principals and teachers in Lesotho due to the time factor, cost effectiveness, and accessibility of participants. One education officer, five school principals and six teachers employed in the central part of Maseru were sampled.

3.6.1.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used in the current qualitative data collection to develop a detailed understanding that would provide useful information; help people learn about the phenomenon; and give voice to those assumed to have been left out during education policy planning (Creswell, 2008: 214). Purposive sampling is the sampling strategy in which researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon based on the availability of information, time factor, and cost effectiveness (Gay & Airasian, 2003: 115; Creswell, 2008: 214).

In view of the above definitions, the interviews targeted teachers and principals with at least five years' experience and more in the field/position and who hold at least a Diploma in Primary Education and/or above; and an education officer with at least three years of experience in the position. All these participants are employed in the central part of Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho. The reasons why this specific site was chosen are that: schools are situated close to one another so it is easy to reach them; and participants reside in the same area and this gave me a chance to interview them even during holidays. The sample consisted of the people that have teaching and learning experience and are in a position to provide relevant information.

In respect of the identification of an education officer, the Department of Education identified one. Principals were identified by the education officer ensuring that the local church; community, government, and private schools are

represented in the study as these schools are managed differently. Their principals identified teachers. All these participants were identified after the aims of the study were discussed.

3.7 Methodology

The nature of this study allowed me to use individual semi-structured interviews to collect data from the sample given above. The data gathering techniques used in the study, are discussed below.

3.7.1 Interviews

In qualitative research, there are three different types of interviews used to collect data depending on the purpose of the study and they are described below (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 87).

- **Characteristics of open-ended interviews (sometimes referred to as unstructured) are:**
 - they are spread over a period of time and consist of a series of interviews;
 - participants may propose solutions or provide insight into events; and
 - they focus on participants' own perceptions of the event or phenomenon being studied.
- **Semi-structured interviews:**
 - they seldom span a long period of time;
 - they require the participant to answer a set of predetermined questions;
 - they allow for probing and classification of answers; and
 - the line of enquiry is basically defined by the schedule.
- **Structured interviews:**
 - questions are detailed and developed in advance;
 - are frequently used in multiple case studies or large sample groups to ensure consistency; and
 - inhibit probing if overly structured.

The aim of the qualitative semi-structured interviews in the present study was to “see the world through the eyes” of the participants (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 75). Interviews therefore are a valuable source of information. Interviewing was an occurrence where I asked one or more participants general, open-ended questions and audio tape recorded their responses (Creswell, 2008: 225; Gay & Airasian, 2003: 209). Through interviews I examined attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns, and values of participants more easily by probing their responses (Gay & Airasian, 2003: 210). I was able to obtain important data I could not acquire from other data collection techniques. Interviews allowed me to obtain rich descriptive data that could help me understand the participant’s construction of knowledge and social reality (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 87).

Although interviews were considered to be the best data collection instrument in this study, they also have disadvantages. They provide only information percolated through the views of the interviewer. Interview data sometimes deceive the interviewer in the sense that they provide the perspective interviewees want the researcher to hear. Additionally, the presence of the interviewer affects how the interviewees respond and their responses may not be expressive, penetrating, or clear (Creswell, 2008: 225). However, I managed to probe their responses to gather more in-depth data.

Having given the above types of interviews, semi-structured interviews were seen to be the best type based on the nature of this study.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with carefully planned questions for the education officer; school principals and teachers were used to gather relevant information in the present study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006: 43). Hancock & Algozzine (2006: 43) suggest that the flexibility for relating the interview to specific individuals and circumstances is limited in semi-structured interviews. Such limitation was not experienced in this study because individual interviews were used instead of focus group interviews. Micro cassettes were therefore numbered and the route

in which they followed from the first participant to the final one was noted down. Specific incidents that took place in each interview were also recorded in writing to ensure that there is no omission of any type related to the interviews. The standardized wording of the questions would also limit variation in answers if it was not because of the probing technique the researcher employed (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006: 43).

3.7.3 Individual interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with all the participants to obtain information. An individual interview (sometimes referred to as one-to-one interview) is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions to and records answers from only one participant at a time (Creswell, 2008: 226).

These interviews provided me with the opportunity to obtain elaborate responses to questions that could not be answered simply by other data collection techniques. The interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes and work places. This gave me important context information and also helped the respondents to feel more comfortable. In addition, I was able to see nonverbal behaviours, such as hesitations or smiles that indicated how the respondents felt about the issue (Slavin, 2007: 106). However, the interviews were time consuming due to interruptions by children, visitors, and phone calls and difficult to schedule.

3.7.3.1 Teachers' interviews

Teachers were interviewed in the same period as principals and the education officer but on different days, also at convenient times for them. The same procedure as for principals and the education officer was followed.

The interview this time focused on how teachers perceive their training, class sizes they handle daily, their daily planning as well as parental involvement in their learners' education. Their perceptions were also examined to get their views on the impact of these factors on learners' performance and grade repetition (See Annexure A). There were more teachers willing to participate in these

interview sessions. I assume that they heard about them and were willing to express their feelings and opinions about their teaching-learning experiences.

3.7.3.2 Principals' interviews

Principals were also interviewed during the same week but on different days. The same procedure as for the education officer was followed. The interviews focused on how the principals perceive the training of their teachers and class sizes in their schools. Their perceptions were also explored to find out how they view their teachers' lesson planning as well as the involvement of parents in their children's education (See Annexure A). Five principals participated in this study.

3.7.3.3 Education officer's interview

The interview also took place at a time convenient to the participant. The interview took place at the education officer's work place during working hours as he made some time only for that. The session started with a brief introduction of myself. The purpose and significance of the study were disclosed to the interviewee (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006: 43; Creswell, 2008: 226).

In addition, the education officer was informed that the interview was going to be recorded. The participant was also told that he was still not compelled to participate; he could withdraw his participation any time he wanted to (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 298). Furthermore, he was informed that his participation would be confidential and his identity would be anonymous and not disclosed to his teachers, parents, other education officers or the Ministry (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 298).

The same semi-structured interview questions as those of principals and teachers were asked. The interview session lasted for one hour and five minutes.

3.7.4 Interviewer's role

My role was complex and multifaceted (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007: 112). The following tasks were included as my role in this study:

- **Locate and enlist cooperation of respondents:** It was my responsibility to find the participants, their addresses, contact numbers, and convenient time, place and date for the interviews.
- **Motivate respondents to do a good job:** The participants were convinced of the importance of the study and this made them proceed.
- **Clarify confusion/concerns:** Unanticipated objections or concerns raised by the participants were responded to candidly and informatively.
- **Observe quality of responses:** The quality of the information being recorded was judged.
- **Conduct a good interview:** Assuring a consistently high-quality interview was a challenge that required my constant effort (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007: 112-113).

As the researcher, I was imposing on the life of my respondents. I was asking for their time, their attention, their trust, and often, for their personal information. Therefore, I had to keep the following in mind (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007: 112):

- Thank the respondents at the beginning for allowing me to conduct my study.
- Keep my survey as short as possible – including only what was absolutely necessary.
- Sensitivity to the needs of the respondents.
- Alert for any sign that the respondent was uncomfortable.
- Thank the respondents at the end for participating.
- Assure the respondents that I will send a copy of the final results – and make sure I do.
- Write down any notes about how the interview went immediately after leaving.

Qualitative interviews include different types of questions about experience, behaviour, opinions, attitudes and feelings (Kitshoff, 2006: 126). The following guidelines made the interviewing more successful (Gay & Airasian, 2003: 213):

- Listening more, talking less as listening is the most important part of interviewing;
- Following up on what participants said and clarifying questions that were not understood;
- Avoiding leading questions and asking open-ended questions;
- Not interrupting instead waiting for full responses of the participants;
- Keeping participants focused and asking for concrete details;
- Allowing silence as it meant that the participant was thinking;
- Not judging participants' views or beliefs. I was there to learn their perceptions, whether they were acceptable or not;
- Not debating with participants over their responses. I was a recorder, not a debater; and
- Observing the participants' non-verbal communication and checking their own verbal cues.

It has been stated earlier that qualitative semi-structured interviews require probing to gather more in-depth data (see par. 3.7.1). Probing is a strategy I used to obtain the maximum amount of data and to verify that what was said is actually what the participant meant (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 88). The following probing strategies were engaged in this study:

- **Detail-oriented probes:** to ensure the understanding of the “who”, “where” and “what” of the answer given by the participant.
- **Elaboration probes:** to give a full picture about a certain example or answer given.
- **Clarification probes:** to verify the accuracy of my understanding of what had been said by paraphrasing.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis began during the literature review and interviewing processes. Preliminary conclusions were likely to influence the kind of data sought and collected in later parts of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 135).

The data analysis in this study involved the following steps:

- **Organisation of details about the case:** The specific facts about the case were arranged in order of occurrence.
- **Categorization of data:** Categories that could help cluster the data into meaningful groups were identified.
- **Interpretation of single instances:** Specific documents, occurrences, and other bits of data were examined for the specific meanings they had in relation to the case.
- **Identification of patterns:** The data and their interpretations were scrutinized for underlying themes and other patterns that characterize the case more broadly than a single piece of information could reveal.
- **Synthesis and generalisations:** An overall portrait of the case was constructed. Conclusions that had implications beyond the specific case that has been studied were drawn (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 135).

3.9 Trustworthiness

The data analysis, findings and conclusions were tested by assessing trustworthiness (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). Credibility, applicability, dependability and confirmability are said to be the key criteria of trustworthiness. They are constructed to parallel the conventional criteria of inquiry of internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality respectively (Lincoln & Guba, 1994: 991).

The following strategies were applied to promote trustworthiness in this study:

- **3.9.1. Triangulation:** This is a strategy that uses multiple investigators, sources of data, or data collection methods to confirm emerging findings (Merriam & Associates, 2002: 143). In this study, a combination of individual interviews with participants in different levels of education with an analysis of existing literature on the topic was done to enhance the trustworthiness of the data collected.

- **3.9.2. Verifying raw data:** Interview transcripts and field notes were discussed with the participants to correct errors of fact on completion of interviews (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113 and Merriam & Associates, 2002: 143).
- **3.9.3. Keeping notes of research decisions taken:** A journal of decisions during the research process on the data collection and analysis was kept. This helped the participants to follow the reasoning in cases where initial research design changed as the study was conducted and new sources and data collection techniques were incorporated to strengthen the study (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113).
- **3.9.4. Greater trustworthiness in coding data:** The study became more defensible since multiple codes were used and high inter-and intra-coder reliability was obtained (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). An independent coder was asked to code some of the data. In this case, the research objectives and some of the raw data were provided to him. He then coded and developed categories from the text, which were compared to my own codes and categories (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113).
- **3.9.5. Stakeholder check:** The credibility of the study findings was enhanced by allowing research participants, student researchers and some colleagues who showed an interest in the research to connect on or assess the research findings, interpretations and conclusions. The education officer, school principals and teachers were given a chance to comment on whether the interpretations were in line with the personal experiences they tried to express during the interviews (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113 and Merriam & Associates, 2002: 143).
- **3.9.6. Verifying and validating research findings:** Research findings are the essential outcome of any study and data analysis process (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113). Therefore, copies of a draft report were

provided to the participants and I asked for written or oral comments on the report.

- **3.9.7. Researcher's position or reflexivity:** The above strategies helped me to avoid assumptions, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that would affect the investigations (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 113 & Merriam & Associates, 2002: 144).

3.10 Ethical considerations

This study used ethics as a set of rules, which sets expectations for behaviour about the best conduct towards participants, employers, sponsors, other researchers and students (Kitshoff, 2006: 135). Ethical guidelines formed the standards and the basis upon which I evaluated my conduct towards the participants. Ethical principles were internalised to such an extent that all decision-making became ethically guided and part my total lifestyle (Kitshoff, 2006: 135). Ethics are a set of moral principles suggested by either an individual or a group, which are then widely accepted (De Vos, 1998: 240 in Kitshoff, 2006: 135). The following ethical guidelines were used in this study:

3.10.1 Voluntary participation

After obtaining permission from the Ministry of Education, Lesotho, a visit was paid to the participants at their work places. The purpose of the research being conducted was briefly explained and the fact that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw any time they wished was also emphasised (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 298).

3.10.2 Informed consent

After obtaining verbal informed consent, letters of consent in which the research process was described were presented to the participants. They were asked to read the letters, ask questions to gain clarity and sign the consent form to show they were willing to participate in the study (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 298).

3.10.3 Protection from harm

Participants were ensured that they would not be exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm. Honesty, respect and sympathy towards all the participants during the study were also ensured. There was no debriefing required after the interviews (Leedy & Ormrod in Creswell *et al.* 2007: 298).

3.10.4 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

All the participant's information and responses shared during the study were kept private and the results were presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect their identities (Burns, 2000 in Creswell *et al.* 2007: 299). All audiocassettes and interview notes were kept safely.

3.11 Limitations

The fact that the researcher is a teacher in one of the functional schools in the country and highly qualified, could have intimidated the participants. This as a result could have an impact on the study findings. I therefore, tried my best to avoid intimidating them by establishing a rapport with them. I ensured that they were open about what they experience as factors contributing to grade failure/repetition in Lesotho primary schools. I also ensured confidentiality and anonymity by avoiding calling them by names or those of their schools during the interviews. Neither their schools, nor the individuals were identified in the research report.

3.12 Reporting the results

The structure of the report in this study was flexible with considerable space devoted to data collection and findings. The report contains a rich description of the setting and participants, supporting participants' quotes, and the researcher's explanation on prior experiences with the studied phenomenon (Creswell *et al.* 2007: 301).

The results of this study will be presented in the form of a summary of the participants' responses to the interview questions in chapter 8.

3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained the research design and methodology applied in this study. Research instruments, the purpose for which they are created; the participants in the study, the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis techniques, and reporting as well as ethical issues to be considered are discussed.

Chapter 4 deals with the data analysis and interpretation in order to determine how educators perceive the impact of teacher training on learners' performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data analysis and interpretation – teacher training

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three I discussed the research design and methodology. This included research instruments, the purpose for which they were created; the participants in the study, the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis techniques, reporting as well as ethical issues to be considered. In this chapter I will discuss what I found, analyse and interpret it.

The purpose of this study was to explore a selection of possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools. I then asked questions that would elicit responses that would enable me to answer the research question/aims. I asked the following questions:

- (i) What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition?
- (ii) What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition?
- (iii) What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition?
- (iv) What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition?

The questions above led to the following aims:

- (i) To understand the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition;
- (ii) To explore the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition;
- (iii) To determine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition; and
- (iv) To examine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition.

I divided the responses into three sets: perceptions of teachers, principals and the education official. The symbols PR for Principals, T for teachers, and EO for the education official are used to identify their responses. I will also use figures and tables to enhance the data.

I also incorporate in this chapter, my experience first as an unqualified and inexperienced and later as a qualified and experienced primary school teacher. I taught both in the highlands and lowlands of the country and was a parent in a number of Lesotho primary schools. It is important to remember that the results will be based on what the respondents were able to recall, chose to reveal and/or felt was most important at the time of the interview.

I will now discuss the context within which the study was done as I understood it from the respondents' answers to four questions.

4.2 Contextual data – teacher training and class size

These are not views or perceptions regarding the research questions and aims but knowledge that the respondents have about four issues:

- (i) The qualifications teachers in the primary phase should have;
- (ii) The employment of unqualified and/or under qualified teachers;
- (iii) Qualities teachers should have in order to qualify for appointment; and
- (iv) The maximum class size as prescribed by education policy.

The responses are grouped into three sets of respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official. Although I will give a brief conclusion for every set of respondents, I will also give a summary of the responses of the three respondents at the end of each of the four issues.

These facts create the context or the framework within which I asked the questions.

I asked the first question:

4.2.1 What are the requirements for one to be a primary school teacher?

4.2.1.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers indicate that there are teachers with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (C.O.S.C.); some with the Primary Teachers' Certificate (PTC); the Diploma in Primary Education; and the Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate (LPTC).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) LPTC
 - (ii) COSC
 - (iii) PTC
 - (iv) Diplomas
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Diploma after high school and/or PTC – which is a new requirement in Lesotho
 - (ii) Teaching certificate after high school
 - (iii) No teacher training following high school
 - (iv) Old qualification holders
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Not many fully qualified teachers
 - (ii) Unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers are often used
 - (iii) Uncertainty – they report on what they know which may not be in line with the actual requirements
 - (iv) Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education
- (d) Discussion

The Cambridge Overseas School Certificate is mentioned by teachers as one of the qualifications teachers possess. However, they mentioned a diploma to be the highest qualification.

B Principals

Principals indicate that there are teachers with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (C.O.S.C.); some hold a diploma in Primary Education; a Primary Teachers' Certificate (PTC); or the Junior Certificate (JC).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) COSC
 - (ii) JC
 - (iii) PTC
 - (iv) Diplomas
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Diploma after high school and/or PTC – a new requirement in Lesotho
 - (ii) Did not complete high school (JC)
 - (iii) No teacher training following high school
 - (iv) Teacher certificate after high school
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Not many fully qualified teachers
 - (ii) Unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers are often used
 - (iii) Uncertainty – they report on what they know which may not be in line with the actual requirements
 - (iv) Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education
- (d) Discussion

Principals appear to have the same knowledge as teachers. Although there are teachers with Diplomas in Lesotho primary schools, there are also those who teach without teacher training certificates – those are C.O.S.C and JC holders.

C The education official

The education official indicates that there are teachers with C.O.S.C.; PTC; the Diploma in Primary Education; LPTC; the Advanced Primary Teachers'

Certificate (APTC) and the Lesotho In-service Development of Teachers (LIET VI).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) COSC
 - (ii) JC
 - (iii) PTC
 - (iv) Diplomas
 - (v) APTC
 - (vi) LIET IV
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Diploma after high school and/or PTC – a new requirement in Lesotho
 - (ii) Did not complete high school (JC)
 - (iii) No teacher training following high school
 - (iv) Teacher certificate after high school
 - (v) Old qualification holders
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Not many fully qualified teachers
 - (ii) Unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers are often used
 - (iii) Uncertainty – they report on what they know which may not be in line with the actual requirements
 - (iv) Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education
- (d) Discussion

The education official concurs with principals and teachers. C.O.S.C appears to be one of the qualifications Lesotho primary school teachers have. This therefore suggests that, even though there are higher qualifications than C.O.S.C., there are teachers who teach with C.O.S.C. as their highest qualification.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

4.2.1.2 Summary

Above are the teaching qualifications one has to obtain in order to qualify to be a teacher in Lesotho primary schools. Even though there are qualified teachers in Lesotho primary schools, the majority of them are unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers.

However, phrases like “lately the least is the Diploma in Primary Education” keep on coming from respondents. “Lately our college produces Diploma in Education Primary as the least qualification” (EO). PR 5 reports, “Recently we are compelled to employ someone with at least the Diploma certificate and above”. PR 4 confirms, “But of late the least certificate produced by our college is Diploma in Education Primary (DEP) and Diploma in Primary Education (DPE)”. “Lately the least is the Diploma in Primary Education” (T 4). This suggests that even though the respondents are aware that the Department of Education requires teachers with Diplomas, a shortage of teachers forces them to staff schools with unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers. “We still have those teachers with APTC, LIET VI, LPTC, and C.O.S.C and due to their experience, we still retain them” (EO).

Even though the old primary teaching certificate programmes are being faced out both in pre-service and in-service programmes, the introduction of FPE has resulted in a shortage of teachers and the number of untrained (those with secondary education and C.O.S.C) primary school teachers has increased rapidly rising from 1, 809 in 1999 to 3, 035 by 2003 (World Bank, 2005: 116 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2).

It is therefore not unexpected to hear respondents mentioning that schools retain unqualified yet experienced teachers because they are important for the system. This is the practice and to them it is normal. They do not see any harm with that. This aligns well with the theory that teachers admitted with less than full

preparation are found to be “less able to adapt their instruction to promote student learning”. They are also less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming students if their teaching is not effective. They have a higher-than-average leaving rate and their students learn less in important subjects such as math, writing and reading (Darling-Hammond says (2000: 167 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2).

Studies by Stein & Wang (1998; Allinder, 1994 and Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) also revealed that teachers’ qualifications influence the quality of education and that the success of the education system is mainly dependent on the efficacy of the teachers who are delivering it. I was employed as an unqualified teacher in one of the schools in one of the more remote areas of the country. The employer pointed out that it was a long time that they waited for applications from qualified candidates but there seemed to be none. That is how I became a teacher for about five years.

I began to have a passion for the teaching profession though it pays little especially when one is unqualified. I then enrolled with the Lesotho College of Education (LCE) previously called the National Teacher Training College (NTTC) for the PTC programme. It was at this point in time that I incorporated my teaching experience with the theory I obtained from the college. I began to understand what teaching was about. I further developed when I got to the field though it was after some time.

When I look back at the children I taught before, the majority of them are mere housewives and husbands who struggle to put bread on the table. I began to realize that my teaching might have had an impact on the way they perceive life.

It is not unusual to hear most of the principals mentioning qualifications below those that they say are the current requirement. They are the qualifications their teachers possess. “The minimum requirement is four credits and passes from C.O.S.C. level” (PR 1). This could also make it possible that some of the

teachers who participated in this study were not Diploma holders. “Since I am an old teacher, I am not sure of the latest certificates the college offers. What I know is that the latest qualification when I qualified was Lower Primary Teacher Certificate“(T 6).

I then asked the following questions:

4.2.2 Is there a situation where inexperienced and unqualified people are given pupils to teach? If “yes”, under what circumstances?

4.2.2.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Although some teachers disagree that unqualified and inexperienced people are allowed to teach, some agree. When asked what circumstances influence employers’ decisions, teachers explain that economic crises in other parts of the country resulted in a shortage of teachers. As a result anyone is employed. Others say they are appointed when the school is understaffed; when there is no qualified teacher to appoint; and to gain experience.

- (a) Code(s)
(i) Yes
(ii) Never

Circumstances:

- (i) To gain experience
(ii) When the school is understaffed
(iii) When there is no qualified teacher to appoint
(iv) To provide service
(v) Geographical setup
(vi) Economic crises

- (b) Category(s)
(i) It happens in some schools
(ii) It does not happen in others

Circumstances:

- (i) Provision of service
(ii) Response to education needs

- (iii) Teacher crisis
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Shortage of qualified teachers
 - (ii) Unqualified and inexperienced people teach
- (d) Discussion

Teachers agree that children are given to unqualified and/or under-qualified people. T 4 replies, “Yes, it happens when the school is understaffed”. “Yes, there are schools with inexperienced and unqualified teachers” (T 1). Yes, I personally experienced it” (T 5).

They mention that the economic crisis and geographical set up are the influencing factors in this regard. T 1 responds, “They are employed to teach because there are no other people to employ”. “Qualified teachers look for better pastures. No one wants to teach in the rural areas” (T 2). This therefore suggests that unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers are often used in rural Lesotho primary schools.

B Principals

Some principals disagree that they allow unqualified and inexperience people to teach whereas others agree. When asked what circumstances influence their decision, they mention that they employ people straight away from college and/or from other schools as substitutes, to give them experience, and to make use of their teaching experiences.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Never
 - (ii) Not too often
 - (iii) Yes

Circumstances:

- (i) Get them straight from college
- (ii) From other schools
- (iii) To give them experience
- (iv) As substitutes

- (v) To provide service
- (vi) Shortage of teachers
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some schools do
 - (ii) Other schools do not

Circumstances:

- (i) Provision of service
- (ii) Response to education need
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Shortage of qualified teachers
 - (ii) Unqualified and inexperienced people teach
- (d) Discussion

There is a contradiction in principals' responses. They disagree that they give children to unqualified and inexperienced people. "We have never done that" (PR 4). PR 5 replies, "No, we do not give grants to inexperienced and unqualified people". But when asked what circumstances influence their decision, these are their responses: PR 4 responds, "Even the person that we have now who does not have the qualities you mentioned above is not employed. He is just here to gain experience". "They substitute those on maternity leave. And it is only for two to three months" (PR 5). This suggests that due to a shortage of qualified teachers children are given to unqualified and inexperienced people.

C The education official

The education official agrees that children are given to unqualified and inexperienced people. The education official explains that economic crises in other parts of the country, the high teacher/pupils ratio, experience of unqualified teachers and shortage of teachers in the rural parts of the country are the contributing circumstances. As a result they employ unqualified and/or under-qualified people.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Yes, we still have those teachers

Circumstances:

- (i) To utilise their experience
- (ii) High teacher/pupils ratio
- (iii) Geographical setup
- (iv) Economic crises
- (v) Shortage of teachers in the remote areas

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Schools still use such teachers

Circumstances:

- (i) Provision of service
- (ii) Respond to education need

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Unqualified and inexperienced people teach
- (ii) Shortage of qualified teachers

(d) Discussion

The education official also agrees that learners are given to unqualified and inexperienced teachers.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents is given below.

4.2.2.2 Summary

Due to a shortage of qualified teachers, unqualified and inexperienced people are given children to teach. Also see World Bank, 2005: 116 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

T 2 mentions that:

Qualified teachers look for better pastures. No one wants to teach in the rural areas. Therefore there is no option; employers take anyone.

The education official responds that:

Due to a high teacher-pupils ratio, there is a high shortage of teachers. Schools in the remote parts of the country mostly face this crisis. This has then forced the department to recruit unqualified and inexperienced people as well.

T 5 states that:

I started teaching with no training, experience and/or teaching skills. In my first experience as a teacher, 120 class three children faced me. Principals mention that they give children to substitutes only for two to three months. This suggests that they do not see any harm in expecting unqualified and inexperienced people to teach children for three months. They do not to understand the disservice they do to children.

These three months are probably not enough for a teacher to get acquainted with the school in general; learners, colleagues, parents, classroom environment, let alone teaching and learning requirements, after which one leaves the children. See Darling-Hammond (2000: 167, Stein & Wang 1998, Allinder, 1994 and Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

I asked the third question:

4.2.3 Besides the qualifications and experience, what other qualities do employers look for when employing a primary school teacher?

4.2.3.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers mention capabilities, willingness, ability and/or skills in certain areas (*e.g.* computer literacy, extra mural, curricular, and subject area). Others refer to personality, love of children and one's job; behaviour, physical appearance; and background.

- (a) Codes
 - (i) Subject of specialization,
 - (ii) Sporting activities,
 - (iii) Computer literacy
 - (iv) Personality
 - (v) Love of children and one's job
 - (vi) Behaviour
 - (vii) Appearance

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Skills
 - (ii) Values
 - (iii) Attitudes
 - (iv) Experience
 - (v) Knowledge
 - (vi) Interpersonal/relational competences
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that employers look for their capabilities, willingness, ability and/or skills when they appoint them. They may be aware that there should be certain qualities in a teacher, but as to what exactly these qualities are might be a problem since they are not employers. This might be one of the reasons for their uncertainty.

B Principals

Some principals mention background, teaching practice and record of work. Others refer to personality, behaviour and English fluency.

- (a) Codes
 - (i) Background
 - (ii) Teaching practice
 - (iii) Competency in English
 - (iv) Personality
 - (v) Everything that concerns teaching and learning
 - (vi) Behaviour
 - (vii) Record of work
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Experience
 - (ii) Attitudes
 - (iii) Interpersonal/relational competences

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

Ignorance and uncertainty tend to play a crucial role in principals' decisions in this regard. They are not sure of what the qualities of a good teacher are. This suggests that they are likely to overlook the right people for the profession when they appoint teachers.

C The education official

The education official mentions love for children, personality, and areas of specialization to be the qualities employers look for when appointing teachers.

- (a) Codes
 - (i) Personality
 - (ii) Love of children
 - (iii) Areas of specialization
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Values
 - (ii) Experience
 - (iii) Attitudes
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

The education official also appears to be ignorant and uncertain about the qualities they encourage schools to look for when they appoint teachers. This then suggests that anyone is a teacher as long as s/he with children.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents in this regard.

4.2.3.2 *Summary*

There is a great ideal of ignorance and uncertainty with school leadership about what the qualities of a good teacher are. This affects their teacher appointment decision making. As a result almost anyone is given children to teach.

It is noticeable that none of the respondents raise instructional planning, instructional delivery, content and pedagogical competence, communication skills, understanding of human growth and development, a sense of ethics, teaching skills and classroom management as qualities of a good teacher. This suggests that according to them, these are the qualities the teacher will gain throughout the teaching and learning experience and they are not required before entering teaching profession. “We give children to such people probably when they substitute those on maternity leave. And it is only for two to three months“(PR 5). The unqualified person we have now is not employed. He is just here to gain experience after which he plans to enrol with LCE” (PR 4).

A shortage of qualified teachers and insufficient and irrelevant teacher training with those regarded to be qualified, play a crucial role in principals’ decision-making regarding teachers’ appointment.

The reviewed literature states that pedagogical knowledge, strong subject area knowledge, effective communication skills, understanding of human growth and development, effective skills in teaching as well as classroom management, and a sense of ethics are the essential attributes of effective teachers (Williams, Shibanuma, Matsuzaki, Kanayama & Ito (2009: 309 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2). And this seems not to be the case in Lesotho primary schools.

Principals and the education official draw attention to intangible qualities. For instance, qualities such as one’s personality, love of children and one’s job are difficult to identify during the interview. “When employing a teacher, interviews are conducted” (PR 1). “We always encourage School Boards to look for people who love children, have acceptable personalities, and areas of specialization”

(EO). “We consider someone’s personality, the dress code, is s/he presentable? Does s/he look responsible? Is s/he fit to stand in front of children? We are also concerned by the way s/he speaks and the behaviour” (PRs 3 & 5).

I was appointed because there were no qualified applicants. I do not think any of these qualities were identified in me since I did not even go through any screening process.

I then asked the last question in paragraph 4.2.4.

4.2.4 What does education policy prescribe as the maximum class size?

4.2.4.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Even though some teachers give figures between 45 and 65, others mention 45 and 30 to be maximum numbers.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) 30
 - (ii) At least 45
 - (iii) At least 55
 - (iv) 50 upwards
 - (v) 1:60
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Disparities in respondents’ figures
 - (ii) Normally between 50 and 60
 - (iii) Rarely between 30 and 50
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
 - (iii) Large classes
 - (iv) Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education

(d) Discussion

Teachers appear not to be sure of the exact teacher/pupils ratio. They mention widely divergent figures. This suggests little or no knowledge and/or understanding of the Education Act and teaching service regulations. This implies people who are not abreast of what is expected from them

B Principals

Principals mention figures between 45 and 65.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) 53
- (ii) 54
- (iii) 55
- (iv) 1:58
- (v) 1:60

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Disparities in respondents' figures
- (ii) Normally between 50 and 60

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Uncertainty
- (ii) Ignorance
- (iii) Large classes
- (iv) Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education

(d) Discussion

Principals also seem to be uncertain about what the maximum class size is as prescribed by education policy. This again suggests that there is little or no knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations as well as the Act that governs education in the country.

C The education official

Although the education official says 55 is the prescribed maximum class size, he did not seem to be sure. “Er----- (*not sure*) 55” (EO)

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) 55
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Signs of unsure responses were shown
 - (ii) Rarely between 30 and 50
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
 - (iii) Large classes
 - (iv) Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education
- (d) Discussion

The education official also sounds to be unsure of the prescribed maximum class size. : “Er----- (*not sure*) 55” (EO).

I will now summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents in par. 4.2.4.2 below.

4.2.4.2 Summary

There is a great difference in responses which shows uncertainty and ignorance with respondents. One suggestion might be that they might be aware of the prescribed pupils/teacher ratio, but since in practical terms they have not faced the prescribed number; they are always faced with large classes, the figure may not be easily recalled at the time of the interview. Additionally, the point of being unqualified, under-qualified and/or a novice teacher affects the way one assesses things.

Another suggestion besides being unqualified might be that of little or no knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations as well as the

Act that governs education in the country. T 6 responds, “I think it is fifty or fifty something”. PR 1 says, “Maximum? Er--- (unsure), education policy says 53”. If my memory serves me well, since FPE, the policy says 1:60” (PR 5). The EO responds, Er----- (not sure) 55”. Teachers accept any number of learners they are given. They are not aware that there is stipulated number of learners per teacher. T 5 responds, “I had to face 120 class three children in my first year as inexperienced and unqualified teacher.” According to Mateo and Fernandez (1996: 771-778 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) large classes have 60-149 learners. This suggests that teachers are faced with large classes.

In the remote areas of the country where I started teaching, the situation is the other way round. Multi-classes face the teacher. Though learners appear to be few in a class, I had to prepare for three different classes, levels and groups of learners. Similarly, without asking any question I had to accept the offer or else there was no job.

I earlier gave the questions, discussed, interpreted and analyzed the responses. I will conclude this section with a summary in the form of a table of the first question only. The rest of the table will appear as Annexure B later in the study.

Table 4.1 *Sample of data and assigned coding categories*

What are the requirements for one to be a primary school teacher?			
Responses	Codes	Categories	Patterns
<p>Lately, C.O.S.C. with 3 or 4 credits.</p> <p>You should have C.O.S.C plus three year training course to get teachers' certificate.</p> <p>What I know is that the latest qualification when I qualified was Lower Primary Teacher Certificate.</p> <p>Lately the least is a diploma in Primary Education while in the past the requirement was Primary Higher (PH) and PTC.</p> <p>I once taught as a Para-professional teacher in early years of my teaching after I completed my C.O.S.C.</p> <p>Oh right! The requirement is of having four credits and passes from C.O.S.C. level. That is the minimum requirement.</p> <p>The policy says one should have at least PTC III though we still have teachers who still hold Form C and C.O.S.C and they still perform well.</p> <p>In our school we have a teacher who holds them. We have one with Junior Certificate (JC). We also have one holding C.O.S.C. Certificate. The rest are those with Diploma and Degrees in primary education.</p> <p>We have been looking for people with at least Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC). But of late the least certificate produced by our college is Diploma in Education Primary (DEP) and Diploma in Primary Education (DPE).</p> <p>Recently we are compelled to employ someone with at least the Diploma certificate and above.</p> <p>We still have those teachers with APTC, LIET VI, LPTC, and C.O.S.C and due to their experience, we are still retaining also have those with PTC (Primary Teachers' Certificate) who are encouraged to further their studies more. Lately our college produces Diploma in Education Primary as the least qualification.</p>	<p>Lower Primary Teacher Certificate</p> <p>A diploma in Primary Education</p> <p>A Diploma in Education Primary (DEP)</p> <p>C.O.S.C</p> <p>Primary Higher (PH)</p> <p>At least PTC III</p> <p>Junior Certificate (JC)</p> <p>Degrees</p> <p>APTC</p> <p>LIET VI</p>	<p>Diploma after high school and/or PTC – new requirement</p> <p>Did not complete high school (JC)</p> <p>No teacher training following high school</p> <p>Old qualification holders...</p>	<p>Not many fully qualified teachers</p> <p>Unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers are often used</p> <p>Uncertainty – they report on what they know which may not be in line with requirements</p> <p>Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education</p>

In par. 4.3 I will give, interpret and analyse the responses of the respondents to the research questions about the perceptions of educators on factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. I will again divide the responses into three sets: A: teachers, B: principals and C: the education official. I will group each of these under the four main questions: teacher training, class size, planning and parental involvement. In each of these cases I will give the question, discuss, interpret and analyse the responses and conclude with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only and the rest will appear as Annexure B of the study.

4.3 Perceptions of the respondents

Section 4.3.1 will address perceptions of the three sets of respondents: teachers; principals and the education official on teacher training. I will give the main question and sub-questions, discuss, interpret, analyse the responses of the three sets of respondents. I will then summarise the responses of the three respondents at the end of every sub-question. I will conclude the section with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only. I will give the rest of the table as Appendix D in the study.

4.3.1 Perceptions on teacher training

In chapter 2, under the concept teacher training, I mentioned that this study considers the concepts teacher training, professional development, teacher development, and in-service education to mean one and the same thing. They will therefore be used interchangeably in this study.

The main question was:

What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition?

I asked the first sub-question:

4.3.1.1 Sub-question 1:

Is there any cooperation between the teacher training institutions and schools with regard to teachers' performance?

4.3.1.1.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers reply that there is no cooperation between the teacher training college and schools as far as teachers' performance is concerned.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Not at all - once you are out you are on your own
 - (ii) None, as far as I know
 - (iii) I have not seen any of my tutors coming to check on my performance
 - (iv) I have never seen any cooperation since I have been a teacher
 - (v) There is nothing like that
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No cooperation between the college and schools
 - (ii) Lack of quality assurance from the college
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of cooperation between schools and the college
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that there is no cooperation between the college and schools. This therefore suggests that there is a lack of cooperation between schools and the college.

B Principals

Principals also believe that there is no cooperation between the teacher training college and schools as far as teachers' performance is concerned.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) No link between the college and schools
 - (ii) The college does not have follow-up of any kind
 - (iii) They forget all about them once they have graduated
 - (iv) No they do not come unless they are called
 - (v) There is none – once they have completed, the college no longer bothers

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No cooperation between the college and schools
 - (ii) No follow-up on the product
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of cooperation between schools and the college
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that there is lack of cooperation between the college and schools. This suggests a huge gap between schools and the college with regard to teachers' performance.

C The education official

The education official also believes that there is no cooperation between the teacher training college and schools as far as teachers' performance is concerned.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) None, there is none
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No cooperation between the college and schools
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of cooperation between schools and the college
- (d) Discussion

The education official also has the feeling that there is lack of cooperation between schools and the college. "None, there is none" (EO). This strengthens the impression that there is no cooperation between the college and schools.

I will now summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents in par. 4.3.1.1.2.

4.3.1.1.2 Summary

There seems to be no cooperation between the college and Lesotho primary schools. After the completion of the training programme the teacher is on his/her own. It is also incumbent upon teachers to display their potential and capabilities

in their teaching and learning experience. It is also the responsibility of school principals to see to it that teachers teach and teach well. “I have not seen any of my tutors coming to check on my performance” (T 5). T 6 replies, “I have never seen any cooperation since I have been a teacher.” “There is nothing like that” (T 4). T 2 responds, “There is none, as far as I know.” “Not at all, once you are out you are on your own” (T 1). “No, that one has never happened” (PR 5). PR 3 responds, “There is none. Once they have completed, the college does no longer bother.”

The college seems not to have a follow-up system where teachers’ performance is monitored. PR 1 expands, “There is no link between the college and schools. The college does not have the follow-up of any kind.” There could be evaluation sessions where teachers’ experiences are captured and utilised as the mirror for planning new programmes. Paulin (2006 in Malm, 2009: 84 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) confirms the idea when she says that previous experiences, unconscious and latent models that students bring with them when they start their training programmes should be rendered visible, analysed, processed and developed in relation to theory and practice. She further expands that links between on-campus and in-school elements in the training programmes should enhance and cross-fertilise each other more thoroughly.

This denies schools the necessary support they would get from the college. This appears to be in agreement with the McKinsey report where they state that the support given to teachers during both their initial training and their first years of practice is rarely as effective as it should be. See Barber & Mourshed, 2007: 31 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Fully developed school personnel know well where to get help during difficult times. Lack of cooperation between the college and schools suggests a

deficiency in teacher training programmes. This may negatively affect their relationships which may even spill over to their performance.

I asked sub-question 2.

4.3.1.2 Sub-question 2:

If “no”, don’t you think it is necessary?

4.3.1.2.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers agree that it is necessary for the college to cooperate with schools. T 4 replies, “Yes, we really need it.” “It is necessary” (T 3). Nonetheless, others feel that it would be intimidating to be observed by one’s own tutors. Therefore they feel that it is unnecessary. T 5 responds, “I think it is necessary, but on the other side it is not very necessary”.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Yes, we really need it
 - (ii) It is not very necessary
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No cooperation between the college and schools
 - (ii) Feeling of deficiency by teachers
 - (iii) Teachers feel a need for support from the college
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for teacher support from the college
 - (ii) A need for cooperation between the college and schools
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that cooperation between the college and schools is necessary. Their feelings may suggest that through this cooperation they envisage teacher support in the teaching and learning experience. “In fact, we have only one college. There should be proper channels of communication to receive some new ideas coming up. This can make it easier for them to monitor the teaching-learning process in schools. It can also enable them to equip teachers with new

ideas, resources, and everything that can help them lift our education standard” (T 2).

However there are those that do not feel it proper to cooperate with the college. T 5 expands, “I say this because when you are new at work, you are a bit excited and scared, so you try your level best to work hard. But when you get used to the place, you relax and at the same time your work rate declines.” This suggests that teachers do not want to be disturbed, so they do not see a need for schools to have partnership with the college.

B Principals

Principals believe that cooperation between the college and schools is necessary. PR 5 replies, “Yes, I think it is necessary.” “Yes, it is highly needed” (PR 4).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Yes, I think it is necessary
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No cooperation between the college and schools
 - (ii) Feeling of deficiency by principals
 - (iii) Principals feel a need for support from the college
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for support from the college
 - (ii) A need for cooperation between the college and schools
- (d) Discussion

Principals also have a feeling that there is a need for cooperation between the college and schools. Their belief also may indicate that they foresee school support for better learner performance. “It could be very necessary because what one discovers is that the way they place student teachers in schools would really have to be addressed and probably the college would try and have a different approach in terms of training” (PR 1).

C The education officer

The education official also believes that cooperation between the college and schools is a requirement. EO responds, “It is highly needed, it is really necessary to have that cooperation.”

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) It is really necessary to have that cooperation
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No cooperation between the college and schools
 - (ii) Feeling of deficiency by the education official
 - (iii) EO feels a need for school support from the college
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for support from the college
 - (ii) A need for cooperation between the college and schools
- (d) Discussion

The education official feels a need for cooperation between schools and the college. This feeling may suggest that the EO anticipates school support from the college which may result in improvement in learners’ performance.

The responses of the three sets of respondents will be summarised in subsection 4.3.1.2.2 below.

4.3.1.2.2 Summary

Almost all the respondents feel the necessity for cooperation between the college and schools. “It is highly needed, it is really necessary to have that cooperation” (EO). “Yes, we really need it” (T 4). “Yes, it is highly needed” (PR 4). School principals and teachers feel a need to have someone to share their frustrations with, in fact anyone to listen to their difficulties.

The following are some of the responses in this regard:

The college should employ field staff to follow up on the performance of their product (T 1).

Through my observation, the college produces lazy teachers. I think it would be better if there were a follow up on teacher performance. This would help them discover the weak and strong areas teachers have. Then plan their programmes based on what is required at the field (T 6).

There is nothing like that. We have heard that universities have so called alumni where old and new students come together with their lecturers and share their experiences. The college does not have such things. We were supposed to be meeting them once a year to share our teaching and learning experiences. That would help them know where to tighten their programmes (T 4).

It is necessary. We are old teachers and the teaching methods we use are of our times. When this new generation comes with advanced methods, they look down upon us with the thinking that they know better. They then call us “soils” (old, information and knowledge wise) and whatever knowledge we have, they do not consider so much that we end up in conflicts. Our work relations are not good at all (T 3).

I think that will help the college to be aware of issues to be addresses in the training to end up producing quality teachers (PR 5).

The point that the college should learn more from teachers’ experiences keeps on coming up from their responses. This indicates that there is a feeling that the training the college offers is insufficient and irrelevant. They therefore believe that their input in this regard would be important for future training programmes. The idea corresponds with O’Connell Rust’s suggestion that teacher training institutions must find ways of using student teaching and other field experiences to help student teachers develop deeper understandings of themselves as well as the teaching context. See O’Connell Rust, 1994: 216 in Malm, 2009: 77 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2. Also see Paulin, 2006 in Malm, 2009: 84 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

Nonetheless, there are teachers who feel that they would be intimidated to have college personnel monitoring their performance. This suggests that there are teachers who still feel unconfident and incompetent to be monitored. Meaning that they doubt teacher training they received. “I say this because when you are new at work, you are a bit excited and scared, so you try your level best to work hard. But when you get used to the place, you relax and at the same time your work rate declines (T 5).” This is affirmed by Skolverket (2006: 42 in par. 2.2 in

ch. 2) where he says that teachers' own confidence in their methodology and didactic competence and the fact that they enjoy teaching are factors which, irrespective of the student's gender, socio-economic background and level of performance, correlate positively with students' assessment of who is a good teacher and what characterises a good learning environment.

They also believe that this would benefit experienced, qualified teachers with advanced teaching methods. T 3 expands, "We are old teachers and the teaching methods we use are of our times. When this new generation comes with advanced methods, they look down upon us with the thinking that they know better. They then call us "soils" (old, information and knowledge wise) and whatever knowledge we have, they do not consider so much that we end up in conflicts. Our work relations are not good at all."

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I then asked sub-question 3:

4.3.1.3 Sub-question 3

What have you done to initiate such cooperation?

4.3.1.3.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers mention that such need was once raised but nothing has taken place yet. "We raised a point that it would be proper for the college to make a follow up on its product, but no action yet" (T 1). Others indicate that no initiative was ever taken. "No, we have not really thought about it. "We have not taken any initiative" (T 4). " T 4 further explains, "The department threatens teachers. Teachers receive circulars that instruct them to do this and that and tell them that if they do not obey those orders, they are fired."

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) We have not done anything so far
 - (ii) We raised a point that it would be proper that the college should make a follow up on its product
 - (iii) Teachers are threatened
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Action was taken but not at the right time
 - (ii) No follow-up was made
 - (iii) Only the college initiates meetings with schools – on their issues of concern
 - (iv) Schools never initiate meetings with the college
 - (v) Teachers experience threats
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Ignorance
 - (ii) Negligence
 - (iii) Fear
 - (iv) Lack of personal commitment

(d) Discussion

Due to ignorance, negligence, fear of being fired and lack of personal commitment schools never initiate collaboration between the college and schools.

B Principals

Some principals mention that such need was once raised but nothing has taken place yet. “PR 5 remarks, “We once made such suggestion. But we were told that we sound to be rebellious against the current training college, we want to remain with old ideas from the previous teacher training. Hearing such comments, we swallowed the idea.”

Others indicate that no initiative was ever taken. “No, we have not really thought about it. We never consult them” (PR 3). “We have not taken any initiative” (PR 4).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Such issue was raised
 - (ii) Have not taken any initiative
 - (iii) No, we have not really thought about it
 - (iv) We never consult them
 - (v) We swallowed the idea
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Action was taken but not at the right time
 - (ii) No follow-up was made
 - (iii) Only the college initiates meetings with schools – on their issues of concern
 - (iv) Schools never initiate meetings with the college
 - (v) No collaboration between schools
 - (vi) Principals experience threats
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Ignorance
 - (ii) Negligence
 - (iii) Fear
 - (iv) Lack of personal commitment
- (d) Discussion

Ignorance, negligence, fear of being dismissed and lack of commitment in principals appear to discourage principals from initiating cooperation between schools and the college.

C The education official

The education official indicates that no initiative was ever taken. “No, we have not really thought about it. “As far as I know, nothing has been done” (EO).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) As far as I know, nothing has been done
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Schools never initiate meetings with the college
 - (ii) No cooperation between schools and the college
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) No initiative taken
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that schools have not taken any initiative to involve the college in teacher performance. This therefore may suggest that there is no collaboration between schools and the college

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents follows in 4.3.1.3.2.

4.3.1.3.2 Summary

An element of fear manifests itself in this matter. People do not want to inconvenience others in as much as they do not want to be bothered. Persistence in attracting college attention would result in the college monitoring teachers' performance, which would also make them appear incompetent. T 5 says, "On one side it is not very necessary. I feel intimidated to be observed, mainly by someone who has been your teacher before. I do not feel free to open up." PR 5 remarks, "We once made such suggestion. But we were told that we sound rebellious against the current training college, we want to remain with old ideas from the previous teacher training. Hearing such comments, we swallowed the idea." T 4 expands, "The department threatens teachers. Teachers receive circulars that instruct them to do this and that and tell them that if they do not obey those orders, they are fired."

Jersild (1955 in Malm, 2009: 85 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) is of the same mind that emotions such as anxiety, fear, loneliness, helplessness, meaninglessness, and hostility in relation to understanding the self are prevalent in teachers' lives in schools and classrooms. He points out that such emotions need to be addressed

as part of teachers' professional education. Cole (1997: 14 in Malm, 2009: 85 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) concurs that "until these issues are addressed, teachers will not be able to freely and meaningfully engage in the kind of reflective practice and professional development that brings meaning to their own lives and those of their students".

The college normally sends students for teaching practice for a period of 6 months where they are observed only once. After sending student teachers to schools, the college normally calls a meeting with principals and cooperating teachers (mentors). This is the period in which schools have connections with the college.

Students are awarded marks as part of their academic record. I remember very well the day I was to be observed. Very fortunately I had my plan readily prepared for two reasons: (1) keep a good record with the school for appointment in case I come back to seek employment; (2) to keep a good record with the college for completion purposes. I felt relieved after I was observed since I knew that it was over. Therefore, I would feel disturbed if I would be observed time and again.

Additionally, schools appear to be negligent, ignorant and lack personal commitment. They never initiate discussions with the college. They seem to notice that there is a problem with learners' performance but they tend not to bother about the whole issue. "No, we have not really thought about it. We never consult them" (PR 3). "We have not taken any initiative" (TPR 4). According to them, there is someone else from elsewhere who should bother and take action on failure rates in Lesotho primary schools. However, there are those that felt that something has to be done. So, they brought their views up and they report that they received negative response. This could be because such issue was tabled at the wrong time. But since they seem to be negligent, ignorant and lack personal commitment, they never followed the issue up.

The reviewed literature revealed that teacher commitment is one of the most crucial factors for the future success of education and schools. It is considered a key factor as it heavily influences teachers' willingness to engage in cooperative, reflective and critical practice. While teachers do articulate a commitment to external centres such as students, they also make significant links to personal passions which including ideology, beliefs and values (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004: 7 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2).

Both the training and the induction that schools get seem not to regard seriously the significance and understanding of the Education Act and regulations governing the Teaching Service. This therefore may affect their perceptions with regard to the whole profession and as a result their performance is negatively affected. The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 4 followed:

4.3.1.4 Sub-question 4

What would be prominent issues of discussion?

4.3.1.4.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers remark that the college should plan teacher training programmes based on what is required in the teaching field; and equip them with new ideas, resources, and everything that can help them in education (e.g. teaching methods). Others respond that the college should make a follow up on teachers' performance; and that teaching and learning experiences need to be discussed in such cooperation.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Share our teaching and learning experiences
 - (ii) Teaching methods

- (iii) Teacher follow up is needed
 - (iv) Equip teachers with new ideas, new resources, and everything that can help them in education
 - (v) Teach us what would benefit us when we are in the primary school classroom
 - (vi) They should plan their programmes based on what is required at the field
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Teacher preparation
 - (ii) Pedagogical collaboration between teachers and the college is required
 - (iii) Programme planning
 - (iv) Teacher follow-up training
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Insufficient and irrelevant teacher training
 - (ii) Review of content in teacher training programmes is required
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that the teacher training they receive from the college is not enough. They therefore suggest that the college should do follow-up teacher training to equip them with the necessary skills while in the field. T 6 responds, “They should plan their programmes based on what is required in the field.” “Teaching and learning should be monitored to make sure that the teachers are equipped with new ideas, resources, and everything that can help develop their teaching skills” (T 2).

B Principals

Some principals believe that teacher placement in schools as well as the calibre of teachers to appoint; a different approach in terms of training with regard to key elements such as lack of content, lack of confidence, lack of accountability, lack of commitment, and lack of responsibility, discipline, behaviour, work ethics, as well as classroom management would be of great importance. “It would help us

to consult the college when we look for best teachers” (PR 4). “Issues like discipline, classroom management, and teaching-learning methods will be very important to address in such meetings” (PR 5). Others complain about the low quality of teachers the college produces. PR 3 expands, “Their current product is not of the quality expected to face the daily challenges of teaching and learning situation.”

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Consult the college for best teachers
- (ii) Review of teacher training programmes
- (iii) Teacher and learner discipline
- (iv) Classroom management
- (v) Love for children
- (vi) Love for work
- (vii) Methodology
- (viii) The way they place student teachers in schools
- (ix) Lack of content, confidence, accountability, commitment, responsibility in teachers

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Teacher preparation
- (ii) Quality teachers required
- (iii) Classroom leadership qualities
- (iv) Personal competence – self-knowledge and personal characteristics

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Insufficient and irrelevant teacher training
- (ii) Review of content in teacher training programmes

(d) Discussion

Principals believe that the training teachers get is insufficient and irrelevant. It is therefore suggested that the college should review the content in teacher training programmes.

C The education official

The education official mentions discipline and planning – teachers’ activities and teaching methods in particular. “Planning, planning is a serious problem with our teachers. Teacher activities are more than those of learners” (EO).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Planning – teachers’ activities and teaching methods
 - (ii) Discipline
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Teacher preparation
 - (ii) Instructional planning
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Insufficient and irrelevant teacher training
 - (ii) Review of content in teacher training programmes
- (d) Discussion

The education official believes that teachers are not well prepared as far as instructional planning is concerned. They also tend to be not well disciplined.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents follows in par. 4.3.1.4.2 below.

4.3.1.4.2 Summary

It has been found that teacher-training programmes need to be reviewed. They currently seem to be providing insufficient and irrelevant concepts. Respondents are very concerned about teacher training content. There is a feeling that teacher training does not seem to respond to the classroom challenges teachers face in their teaching and learning experiences. “They should teach us what would benefit us when we are in the primary school classroom” (T 1). T 2 replies, “The training teachers get is not sufficient. They lack educational training. It is more of the theory which I do not think it is necessary.” “They do get the training but it is not enough. They still need programmes that keep them in track while in the field. Many of them do not have an idea of the environment or problems encountered in this profession and how to overcome them” (PR 2). “I think the teacher training

offered is away from expectations. You take the new generation and compare it with the older one; they are far different. The current generation comes to schools with really no vision. I mean no drive to perform and perform well. Like I said, if one may compare them, they have many misconnects that one comes across” (PR 1).

In the same vein, the reviewed literature maintains that it is of great importance that the contents of teacher training programmes should be developed so that they correspond more fully with the needs that newly qualified teachers have. This mainly involves skills that form part of social competence but also knowledge of the problems learners have and the ability to deal with them professionally. See Paulin, 2006: 187 in Malm, 2009: 84 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

There is quite a difference between teachers and principals’ views in this regard. Teachers’ teaching and learning needs tend to focus more into cognitive capacities. They tend to pay little or no attention to their personal capacities and qualities as far as teaching and learning is concerned. This suggests that they view the latter only in cognitive perspective not in both cognitive and emotional perspectives. “They should teach us what would benefit us when we are in the primary school classroom” (T 1). T 2 replies, “The training teachers get is not sufficient. They lack educational training. It is more of the theory which I do not think it is necessary.”

Principals’ perceive values, norms, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings to be playing a crucial role for teaching and learning. They also believe that even though teachers are from the same institution, there are those that are the best. So they think that the college is the right consultant for the best teachers. This suggests that principals have come to realise that the calibre of teachers produced, do not meet teaching and learning requirements. Personal capabilities seem to be lacking. “The key elements such as lack of content, confidence, accountability,

commitment, and responsibility in teachers need to be addressed in teacher training programmes” (PR 1).

The above theory corresponds with what Crosswell & Elliot (2004: 7 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) identified to be the six categories representing different ways that teachers perceive understand and conceptualise teacher commitment. These include: “passion” with students; focus on the individual needs of students; responsibility to impart knowledge, attitudes, and values; ‘maintaining professional knowledge’ and engagement with school community.

I also experienced the same deficiency. I could not see it my responsibility to make learners perform well. I could not feel accountable for learners who failed to make it. I was very comfortable with pupils’ textbooks.

It is also not unexpected that instructional delivery, communication skills, understanding of human growth and development, and teaching skills are not seen to be qualities of a good teacher. I could not see a need to bother about instructional delivery. This was the easiest task for me. I would just tell learners what I thought I knew and they did not. I would then ask them to complete exercises regardless of their growth and development. I never knew that communication skills also count in teaching. After all I could only communicate with my colleagues, children and parents whom I regarded as illiterate. I could not relate my personality with the ways in which I acted. I went through career courses that developed my perception as far as teaching and learning is concerned. However, I could still not connect my cognitive capabilities with my personal capabilities in this regard because such importance was never highlighted in my teacher training.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 5:

4.3.1.5 Sub-question 5

Besides the training teachers get from the college, are there any programmes designed to develop teachers professionally either by the department or schools as learning organisations?

4.3.1.5.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers point out that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) organizes workshops for teachers. Others mention that individual schools and teacher associations arrange professional development programmes for them.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) MOET
 - (ii) Teacher associations
 - (iii) Individual schools
 - (iv) Furthering one's studies
 - (v) Curriculum Development Task Teams (CDTT)
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) A sort of professional development programmes are provided
 - (ii) Not all schools and/or teachers are involved in such professional development programmes
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Professional development programmes are lacking
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

According to teachers, professional development programmes are lacking. They are meant for certain teachers and/or certain schools.

B Principals

Some principals mention that individual schools and school proprietors arrange professional development programmes. Others point out that there are no programmes at all.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Individual schools
 - (ii) School proprietors
 - (iii) No programmes at all
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) A sort of professional development programmes are provided
 - (ii) Not all schools and/or teachers are involved in professional development programmes
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Professional development programmes are lacking
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

Principals also are of the same perception that professional development programmes are lacking. It is up to the individual school and proprietor to develop their teachers.

C The education official

The education official points out that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) organizes workshops for teachers.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) MOET
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) A sort of professional development programmes are provided
 - (ii) Not all schools and/or teachers are involved in professional development programmes

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Professional development programmes are lacking
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

The education official believes that as the department they are doing their part by offering schools some professional development programmes.

A brief summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents is given in par. 4.3.1.5.2.

4.3.1.5.2 Summary

Professional development programmes tend not to be seen as a priority. What the Department of Education, individual schools, and proprietor provide appears to be daily and/or weekly workshops which then may have little or no impact on teaching and learning. This suggests that developing teachers professionally is still a lacking concept in Lesotho. The reviewed literature affirms that after the induction period, teachers are expected to continue to meet the core standards and to broaden and deepen their professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills within the context. See Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008: 2 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2).

Lack of professional development programmes is found to be a factor contributing to teachers' performance and learners' as well. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 6 was asked:

4.3.1.6 Sub-question 6

If there are professional development programmes, what are they?

4.3.1.6.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that programmes are meant for teachers to share their experiences, skills, knowledge and develop one's attitudes towards teaching profession. Others point out that mathematics, science and English workshops are organized to equip teachers with skills to teach such subjects.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Equip teachers with different aspects of education
 - (ii) On education - how to improve teachers' skills, attitudes, and values."
 - (iii) Sharing of experiences, knowledge and skills
 - (iv) Mathematics, science and English workshops
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes - daily and/or weekly workshops are offered
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Professional development programmes are lacking
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

Teachers seem not to be clear about what professional development programmes are. They therefore mention the daily and/or weekly workshops they have at their schools and elsewhere.

B Principals

Principals mention that programmes are meant for teachers' development in terms of the attitudes, how to improve their content and so on; to highlight the

department's expectations from teachers; and to train them mostly on methodology.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) For teachers' development in terms of their attitudes
 - (ii) How to improve the content teachers use
 - (iii) To highlight the department's expectations of teachers
 - (iv) To train them mostly on methodology
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes - daily and/or week workshops are offered
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Professional development programmes are lacking
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

There is little understanding of what professional development programmes are. This therefore suggests that professional development programmes are lacking for Lesotho primary school teachers.

C The education official

The education official points out that mathematics, science and English workshops are organized to equip teachers with skills to teach such subjects.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Equip teachers with teaching skills
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes - daily and/or week workshops are offered
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Professional development programmes are lacking
 - (ii) Ignorance

(d) Discussion

The education official also considers the daily and/or weekly workshops they offer teachers as professional development programmes. This then suggests that there is little understanding of what professional development programmes are. This may result from uncertainty about what counts for one to be a quality teacher.

Paragraph 4.3.1.6.2 will summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents.

4.3.1.6.2 Summary

Educators tend to perceive daily and weekly workshops to be professional development programmes. Only workshops are offered and it is possible that very few schools and/or teachers are exposed to them. “They are not there” (PR 4). T 2 replies, “Teachers in government (public) schools are the only ones who get such workshops.” Teacher associations arrange workshops for teachers in areas of specialization. Besides that you may decide to further your studies” (T 5).

Anybody who is not a member of a particular teacher association or a teacher in a private school has no way of furthering his/her studies and/or their school does not see a need to create such opportunities. It means that they are not part of the information shared in those workshops. Also see Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008: 2 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Lack of professional development programmes appears to be playing a crucial role on teachers as well as on learners’ performance.

I asked sub-question 7:

4.3.1.7 Sub-question 7

How effective are they?

4.3.1.7.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers feel that such programmes are not effective. They mention shortcomings like no follow up, a 'hit and run' approach, timing, not funded enough, not enough facilities, very little learning taking place. However, there are those that feel that they are effective.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Unless teachers are followed up - they do not implement what they learn
- (ii) Not as effective as they are expected to be
- (iii) They are really effective
- (iv) They are rushed
- (v) They have no impact on trainees' teaching and learning experiences
- (vi) Their funding remains a problem
- (vii) Insufficient facilities for implementation

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Hit and run approach
- (ii) Little learning takes place
- (iii) Not properly planned for
- (iv) Implementation becomes a problem
- (v) Improper timing

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Ineffective professional development programmes

(d) Discussion

Even though some teachers believe that the workshops they are offered are not properly planned and therefore they tend to be ineffective, some believe that they are still beneficial.

B Principals

Principals feel that they are effective. “They help them maintain their performance standard” (PR 1).

(a) Code(s)

(i) Effective

(b) Category(s)

(i) There is improvement in schools’ performance

(ii) Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes

(c) Pattern(s)

(i) Ignorance

(d) Discussion

Principals believe that professional development programmes offered to teachers are effective.

C The education official

The education official feels that such programmes are not as effective as they are expected to be.

(a) Code(s)

(i) Not as effective as they are expected to be

(ii) They are offered during the holidays

(iii) When the schools open, teachers have forgotten all about what they were trained

(b) Category(s)

(i) Implementation becomes a problem

(ii) Improper timing

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Ineffective professional development programmes
 - (ii) Ignorance
- (d) Discussion

The education officer also feels that professional development programmes are ineffective.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents follows in 4.3.1.7.2.

4.3.1.7.2 Summary

Despite differences of opinion, it seems that the professional development programmes offered to schools appear to be ineffective. It is reported that unless teachers are followed up they do not implement what they learn. The programmes are not as effective as they are expected to be. They seem to be rushed because they are offered during the holidays. So when schools open, teachers have forgotten all about what they were trained. This way, they have no impact on trainees' teaching and learning experiences. Their funding remains a problem and there are insufficient facilities for implementation. T 4 explains, "They are not effective because they are rushed. Funds are insufficient and there are no facilities for teachers to implement acquired skills". Also see Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008: 2 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

Nevertheless, there are respondents who believe that they still benefit much. "They help them maintain their performance standard (PR 1). This may also result from ignorance about the nature of professional development programmes.

Professional development programmes have a role to play on both teachers and learners' performance. The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 8 followed:

4.3.1.8 Sub-question 8

If “no” do you think they are needed?

4.3.1.8.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers feel that such programmes are highly needed. “They are highly needed” (T 1).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Yes, would like other schools to be incorporated
 - (ii) They are highly needed
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Sense of lacking
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for professional development programmes
- (d) Discussion

Although teachers may regard the daily and/or weekly workshops they are offered to be professional development programmes, they feel that they are needed. This suggests that they believe that they would benefit a lot from them if their planning would be done properly.

B Principals

Principals feel that such programmes are highly needed. “I would love all schools to get that” (PR 3).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) They are imperative
 - (ii) They are definitely required
 - (iii) I would love all schools to get that
 - (iv) Yes, I would highly recommend them
 - (v) Yes, they are necessary
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Sense of lacking

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for professional development programmes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that professional development programmes will be of importance for schools' performance.

C The education official

"I would very much love other schools to have such programmes. They are very much helpful" (EO).

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) I would very much love other schools to have such programmes
 - (ii) They are very helpful
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Sense of lacking
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for professional development programmes

- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that professional development programmes are necessary.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents is given in par. 4.3.1.8.2.

4.3.1.8.2 Summary

Professional developmental programmes seem to be lacking for Lesotho primary school teachers. It is revealed that there is a high need for professional development programmes. There is a high sense of deficiency, ineffectiveness and helplessness in schools. PR 1 affirms "They are imperatively needed. They are definitely required." "I would love all schools to get that because all children would benefit from such workshops" (PR 3). "I would very much love other schools to have such workshops. They are very much helpful" (EO). T 1

expands, “They are highly needed”. Also see Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2008: 2 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Without teacher training educators feel that effective, efficient and productive teaching and learning will not take place.

I asked sub-question 9:

4.3.1.9 Sub-question 9

What needs to be addressed in such programmes?

4.3.1.9.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that issues such as teachers being a problem in lacking ways of handling learners and how to make them love learning should be addressed in such programmes.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Ways of handling learners
 - (ii) How to make them love learning
 - (iii) Teachers themselves are the problem
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Learner motivation for learning
 - (ii) Development of self-confidence in learners
 - (iii) Relations and co-operation between learners
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for professional development programmes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that there is a need for professional development programmes. They perceive that such programmes may assist them with those skills and capabilities of learner motivation and development of self-esteem.

B Principals

Principals mention that issues such as sharing of skills and knowledge, teachers getting parents involved, participation of management committees and resources should be of paramount importance in professional development programmes.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Sharing of skills, knowledge and experience
 - (ii) Teachers involving parents
 - (iii) Participation of management committees
 - (iv) Resources
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Parental development both in school management and teaching-learning purposes
 - (ii) Resources in terms of staffing, infrastructure and funding
 - (iii) Relation and co-operation between colleagues, parents and learners
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for professional development programmes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that professional development programmes are necessary. They suggest that they may help schools with ways of handling school resources; involving parents in school management as well as their children's teaching and learning experiences.

C The education official

The education official states that professional development programmes should address issues such as teacher placement in schools and particular classes as well as improvement of teaching skills. Having principals only for school management and leadership taking them out of the classrooms should also be taken into consideration.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Teacher placement in schools and classes
 - (ii) Improvement of teachers' teaching skills
 - (iii) Have principals as managers and leaders of schools not teachers
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) School management and leadership
 - (ii) Teaching skills
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for professional development programmes
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that professional development programmes are of paramount importance for schools. There is a feeling that they may address issues such as teacher placement in schools and in particular classes. They may also assist with improvement of teachers' teaching skills. Taking principals out of classrooms and having them only for school management and leadership should also be taken into consideration.

The responses of the three sets of respondents will be summarised in par. 4.3.1.9.2.

4.3.1.9.2 Summary

Professional development programmes appear to be a need for developing schools. The belief is that they contribute to learners' performance. "Generally, teachers themselves are a problem. They lack ways of handling learners, how to make them love learning. These programmes should address such issues" (T 1). T 2 responds, "I do not think children fail but teachers fail. We are the ones who fail to meet their needs." They feel that they need some development to equip them with skills, knowledge, and values that will help them meet the daily classroom challenges they currently tend to fail to address. See Paulin, 2006: 187 in Malm, 2009: 84 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2.

Teachers believe that it is in such programmes where they get opportunities of improving their capabilities by either setting examination papers or writing literature books for primary education instead of giving such opportunities to external authors, examiners or teachers in above education levels. “You find that PSLE exam papers are set by high school teachers. They use high school standards of setting forgetting that they are setting for a primary school learner. I would also suggest that books prescribed for primary level should be written and published in the country with the vocabulary learners use daily” (T 3).

The other belief is that schools are doing everything right. The problem is with learners. “Free Primary Education (FPE) children do not take anything serious. They do not care. Theirs is to play and to watch TV” (T 6). “I do not think teachers are even aware of that. The problem is that they are unable to identify those differences. It is not like they do it deliberately; it is just that we are not equipped with skills that would enable us to identify different learners’ characteristics” (T 2).

Principals have a feeling that professional development programmes should include issues such as participation in terms of teachers involving parents, participation of management committees as well as resources. PR 1 replies, “Participation in terms of teachers involving parents. They should also bring into account the management committees. Resources would also be issues to be addressed.”

Neither principals nor teachers mentioned issues such as how to handle large classes in terms of planning for diverse classrooms, instruction delivery, providing room for teacher/learner interaction, giving and attending to home work assignments, managing classrooms, acquisition and use of other sources of information, providing for conducive classroom environments as well as incorporating the college in their teaching and learning experience. Educators do

not consider the above mentioned aspects to be the needs to be satisfied in order to motivate learners.

The training offered to teachers appears to be insufficient and as a result does not meet teaching and learning requirements. The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

The main question and sub-questions were given; responses were discussed, interpreted and analyzed at earlier stage. I will now conclude this section with a summary in the form of a table of the first question only. The rest will appear as Annexure C later in the study.

Table 4.2: *Sample of data and assigned coding categories*

<i>Is there any cooperation between the teacher training institutions and schools with regard to teachers' performance?</i>			
Responses	Code(s)	Category(s)	Pattern(s)
<p>Not at all, once you are out you are on your own.</p> <p>None, as far as I know.</p> <p>I have not seen any of my tutors coming to check on my performance.</p> <p>I have never seen any cooperation since I have been a teacher</p> <p>There is nothing like that.</p> <p>There is no link between the college and schools. The college does not have the follow-up of any kind.</p> <p>No, they do not come unless they are called. They forget all about them once they have graduated. It is our responsibility to see that they perform well.</p> <p>There is none, though I am not sure about other schools. Once completed, they no longer bother.</p> <p>There is none</p> <p>No, that has never happened.</p>	<p>Not at all</p> <p>The college does not have a follow-up of any kind</p>	<p>No cooperation between the college and schools</p> <p>Lack of quality assurance from the college</p> <p>No follow-up on the product</p>	<p>Lack of cooperation between schools and the college</p>

Earlier in this chapter I gave the contextual data about knowledge that the respondents have about 4 issues: the qualifications teachers in primary education should have, the employment of unqualified and under-qualified teachers, and what the education policy prescribes to be the maximum class size in primary education.

I grouped the responses into three sets of respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official. I gave a brief conclusion for every set of respondents which I then summarized in a form of a table.

Later on, I addressed perceptions of educators on teacher training. I gave the main question and sub-questions, discussed, interpreted, analysed the responses of the three sets of respondents. I summarised the responses at the end of every sub-question. I also concluded with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only while the rest will appear as Annexure C of the study.

I will now conclude the contextual data based on above mentioned issues. I will conclude what appeared to be the perceptions of teachers, principals and the educational official on teacher training. I will further present findings in a diagram.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 Contextual data

These are not views or perceptions regarding the research questions and aims but knowledge that the respondents have about 4 issues:

- (v) The qualifications teachers in the primary phase should have;
- (vi) The employment of unqualified and/or under qualified teachers;
- (vii) Qualities teachers should have in order to qualify for appointment; and
- (viii) The maximum class size as prescribed by the education policy.

These facts create the context or the framework within which I asked the questions.

It has been found that Lesotho primary schools are staffed with qualified, unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers. Even though there are qualified teachers, not many of them are fully qualified. There are teachers who still hold JC, C.O.S.C and old qualifications such as APTC, LPTC, and PTC as the requirements.

Ignorance and uncertainty were also found to be playing a crucial role. Educators appeared to be uncertain and ignorant about issues such as the requirements for one to become a primary school teacher; qualities teachers should have in order to qualify for appointment; and the prescribed maximum class size per teacher. This suggests that there is little or no knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations as well as the Act that governs education in the country.

I will now give the conclusion on perceptions of educators on factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. I will base findings on teacher training as this study assumed it to be one of the contributing factors.

4.4.2 Perceptions on teacher training

The aim of this main question was to understand the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition. The working assumption was that teacher training is one of the factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. Irrelevance and insufficiency in teacher training programmes appeared to be the contributing factor to teacher and learner performance. The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Besides the above confirmed factor, several factors perceived to be factors contributing to teacher and learner performance emerged. These included lack of cooperation between schools and the college; ignorance; fear; negligence, lack of personal commitment and lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching

service regulations and the Act that governs education. Detailed discussion will be dealt with under empirical findings in chapter 8.

I will now present the knowledge that the respondents have about the 4 issues and findings on perceptions of educators on teacher training on the diagrams below.

Figure 4.1 Presentation of participants' knowledge on teacher training and class size

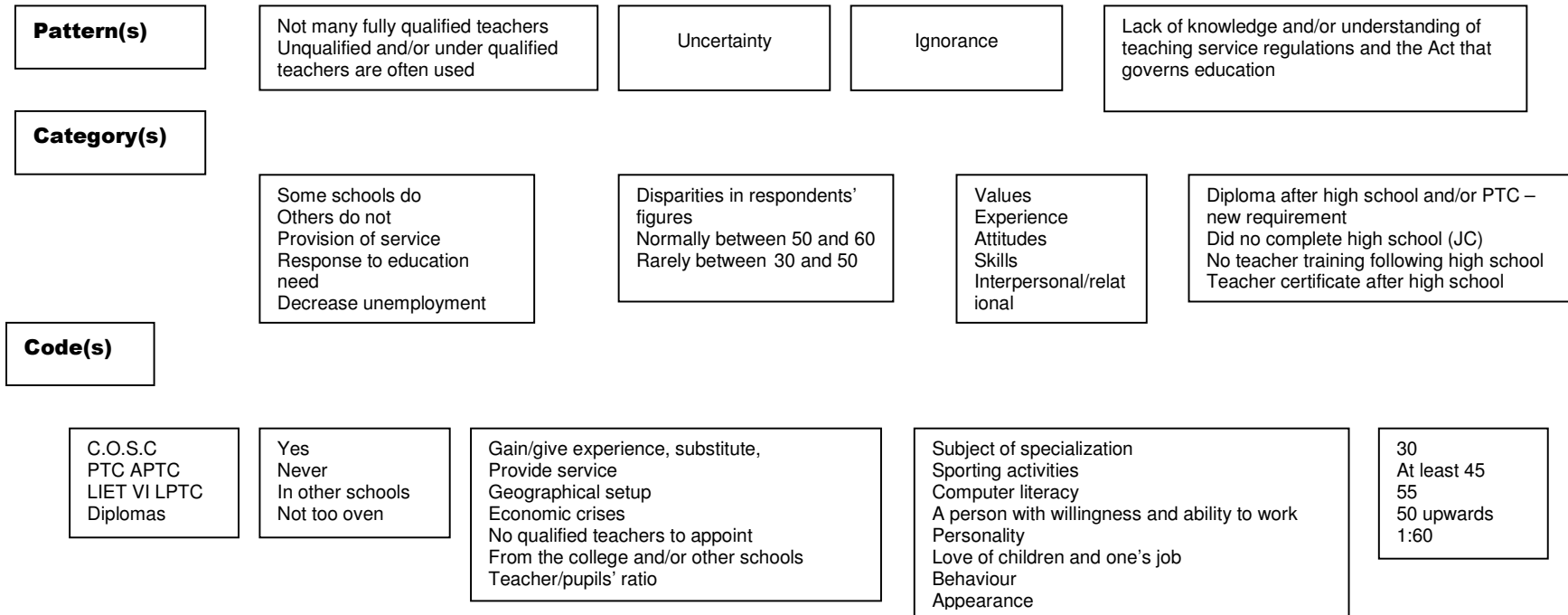


Figure 4.2: *Presentation of participants' perceptions on teacher training*

Pattern(s)	Lack of cooperation between schools and the college Lack of professional development programmes	A need for teacher support from the college A need for cooperation between the college and schools A need for professional development programmes	Ignorance Fear Negligence Lack of personal commitment	Insufficient and irrelevant teacher training A need for review of content in teacher training programmes				
Categ ory(s)	No cooperation between schools and the college Lack of quality assurance from the college No follow-up on the product Feeling of a deficiency by teachers Educators feel a need for support from the college	Action taken but not at the right time No follow-up was made Only the college initiates meetings Schools never initiate meetings with the college Teachers and principals experience threats No collaboration between schools	Teacher preparation, pedagogical collaboration between the college and schools is required, programmes planning, teacher follow-up training, requirement of quality teachers, classroom leadership qualities, personal competence – self-knowledge and personal characteristics, instructional planning	Provision of professional development programmes, not all schools and/or teachers are involved in such programmes	Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes - daily and/or weekly workshops are offered	Hit and run approach, little learning takes place, not properly planned for; implementation becomes a problem, improper timing, and effective	Learner motivation for learning, development of self-confidence in learners, relations and co-operation between learners and teachers	
Code(s)								
Not at all – once you are out you are on your own The college does not have a follow-up of any kind	Yes, we really need it It is not very necessary	We have not done anything so far We raised a point that it would be proper for the college to follow-up on its product Teachers are threatened We swallowed the idea	Share our teaching-learning experiences, teaching methods, the need for teacher follow-up, equip teachers with new ideas, resources and everything that can help them in education, train teachers on primary school classroom requirements, plan programmes based on field requirements, consult them for best teachers, discipline, classroom management, love for learners and one's work, methodology, students teachers' placement in schools, lesson planning	By MOET, associations, schools, proprietors, individual schools, No workshops at all	Share experience, knowledge and skills; equip teachers with different aspects of education, development of teachers' attitudes, improve teacher content knowledge, department's expectations from teachers, methodology	Not as effective as they are expected to be, they are really effective, they are rushed, and they have no impact on trainees, their funding remains a problem, insufficient facilities for implementation, offered at a wrong time	They are imperative, definitely required, they are highly recommended, other schools should have them	Ways of handling learners, how to make learners love learning, teachers being a problem sharing of knowledge, experience & skills, parental involvement, resources, management committees, teacher placement

In chapter five I will deal with the data analysis and interpretation in order to determine how educators perceive the impact of class size on learners' performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

Perceptions of educators on class size

5.1 Introduction

In chapter four I discussed the context within which the study was done as I understood it from the respondents' answers to four questions. These were not views or perceptions regarding the research questions and aims but knowledge that the respondents had about 4 issues: the qualifications teachers in the primary phase should have; the employment of unqualified and/or under qualified teachers; qualities teachers should have in order to qualify for appointment; and the maximum class size as prescribed by the education policy. These facts created the context or the framework within which I asked the questions.

I also addressed the perceptions of the respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official on teacher training. I gave the main questions and sub-questions, discussed, interpreted, and analysed their responses. I then summarised their responses at the end of every sub-question. I further concluded with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only.

In this chapter, I will deal with perceptions of educators on class size. I will give the main question and sub-questions, discuss, interpret, and analyse their responses. I will then summarise their responses at the end of every sub-question. I will conclude with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only.

5.2 Perceptions on class size

The main question was:

What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition?

I asked sub-question 1:

5.2.1 Sub-question 1:

In practice, what is the maximum number of learners per teacher?

5.2.1.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers respond that they face more than 50 learners in practical terms.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) More than 50
 - (ii) As many as 60
 - (iii) 120
 - (iv) 58-60
 - (v) Beyond that
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Indefinite
 - (ii) Some 50-60
 - (iii) Others 60-67
 - (iv) Exceptional cases 67-120
 - (v) Feeling of job overload
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers happen to face more than 50 learners daily. "Speaking from experience, most of the times we are faced with fifty-eight to sixty children" (T 6). This suggests teacher job overload which then affects their performance.

B Principals

Principals respond that teachers face more than 50 learners in practical terms.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Way beyond expectations
 - (ii) 60-64
 - (iii) 50-58
 - (iv) 60-67

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Indefinite
 - (ii) Some 50-60
 - (iii) Others 60-67
 - (iv) Feeling of teacher job overload
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also feel that teachers are faced with large classes. “In my school they are beyond the expectations” (PR 3). This suggests teachers’ job overload.

C The education official

The education official responds that teachers face more than 60 learners in practical terms since the introduction of FPE.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) 60 or more
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Indefinite
 - (ii) Feeling of job overload
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that teachers are faced with large classes.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents follows in par. 5.2.1.2.

5.2.1.2 Summary

According to educators, the numbers of learners teachers face daily are way beyond what they perceive to be the maximum number of learners per teacher. They further state that things have become worse since the introduction of FPE. “They are extremely beyond expectations, 60 to 67 learners” (PR 3). Since the introduction of FPE, it is 60 or more learners per teacher” (EO). This suggests that Lesotho primary school classrooms seem to

be large – beyond teachers' expectations. This then suggests teacher job overload

Large classes appear to have an impact on teachers' performance as well as on learners'. This correlates with what Mateo and Fernandez (1996: 771-778 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) describe as large classes. High teacher/pupils ratios and multi-grade teaching particularly at primary school level have had a negative impact on teachers' performance, resulting in a decline in the quality of teaching-learning activities (World Bank, 2005: 137 and Lerotholi, 2001: 19 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). The World Bank and Lerotholi also state that high drop-out rates, average repetition rates, and low transition/completion rates from primary school to secondary school, are some reflection of the quality of education the system offers. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that large class sizes contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I then asked sub-question 2:

5.2.2 Sub-question 2

What impact does the figure (in 5.2.1) have on: (a) learners?

5.2.2.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers respond that learners are not all reached in this kind of situation; underprivileged learners are at risk; and more time is consumed in terms of marking scripts and giving instructions.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) Unable to reach every child
 - (ii) We compromise time for other subjects
 - (iii) We give children limited activities
 - (iv) Bad impact
 - (v) More time is required in terms of scripts marking and giving out instructions
 - (vi) Compromise fast learners' time trying to accommodate slow learners

- (vii) We do very little
 - (viii) Not so easy to give children what they deserve
 - (ix) Children's learning suffers
 - (x) Very little learning takes place
 - (xi) Unable to meet the needs of the learners
 - (xii) We don't have time for individual learners
 - (xiii) 50 minutes one has to spend with 30 learners is different from when you have 50 of them
 - (xiv) It makes us rush and leave those with problems unattended
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Less teaching and learning takes place
 - (ii) Learners' needs are not met
 - (iii) Learners' performance is affected
 - (iv) Underprivileged learners are at risk
 - (v) Less learner motivation and development of self-confidence
 - (vi) Job overload
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers feel that large classes impede them from meeting learners' needs. This therefore hinders learners and teachers' teaching and learning progress. As a result the performance of both is affected. "The fact is that we do very little. It is not so easy for us to give these children what they deserve. This means that children's learning suffers. Very little learning takes place" (T 5).

B Principals

Principals' reply is that learners are not all reached in this kind of situation; teachers easily become harsh and that scares away shy children. They mention that teachers' concentration begins to digress when the class is large and teaching becomes ineffective as it also demands more time.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) Concentration begins to digress
 - (ii) Not very effective concentration on individual time

- (iii) Teachers manage to assist very few learners and leave slow learners behind
 - (iv) Unable to respond to the needs of all the learners
 - (v) It has a great impact
 - (vi) Teachers tend to be harsh to learners and this makes them and shy to express problems
 - (vii) The situation is bad
 - (viii) It becomes difficult for the teacher to reach each and every child
 - (ix) It impedes teachers from reaching each and every learner
 - (x) Affects learners' performance badly and as a result they decide to drop out
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Less teaching and learning takes place
 - (ii) Learners' performance affected
 - (iii) Learners' needs are not met
 - (iv) Underprivileged learners are at risk
 - (v) Less learner motivation and development of self-confidence
 - (vi) Job overload
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that teachers face large classes daily and this affects their teaching performance and learners' as well. PR 4 explains, "The situation is too bad. We have large numbers of learners and it becomes difficult for the teacher to reach each and every child."

C The education official

The education official mentions that learners are not all reached in this kind of situation; only fast learners can cope; slow learners encounter problems; and performance is affected.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) Unable to reach every child
 - (ii) Only fast learners cope with the situation
 - (iii) Slow learners encounter problems

- (iv) Their performance is affected
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Less teaching and learning takes place
 - (ii) Underprivileged learners are at risk
 - (iii) Fast learners may be privileged
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that teachers are facing large classes. According to the education official the situation may be of a benefit to fast learners and hinder slow learners' performance. EO responds, "Teachers are unable to reach every child. Only fast learners cope with the situation. Slow learners encounter problems and as a result their performance is affected."

Below I will give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

5.2.2.2 Summary

A general concern from respondents is that teachers face large classes and this badly affects learners' performance negatively. The emphasis is that the situation has a negative impact because teachers are unable to reach every child. They give learners limited activities and very little learning takes place. More time is required in terms of scripts marking and giving out instructions and, by so doing; they compromise time for other subjects. Fast learners' time is also compromised trying to accommodate slow learners. They report that they do very little - the 50 minutes one has to spend with 30 learners is different from when s/he teaches 60 of them. The situation forces them to rush and leave those with problems unattended. It is not so easy for them to give children what they deserve because they don't have time for individual learners. They are therefore unable to meet the needs of the learners.

As a result their teaching has a negative influence on learners' motivation, achievement, attitudes towards learning and being in school. PR 5 explains, "The situation impedes teachers from reaching each and every learner. This affects learners' performance badly and as a result they decide to drop out."

“We do not have time for individual learners” (T 1). Also see World Bank, 2005: 137 and Lerotholi, 2001: 19 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Strong, Silver and Robinson (1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) also confirm that learners in smaller groups are motivated and/or energised by four essential goals that must be satisfied: success, curiosity, originality, and relationships. Intrinsic and extrinsic elements can also serve to motivate learners and a combination of both may be seen simultaneously. Learners’ motivation and attitude toward learning tends to be more negatively affected by larger classes. See Spahn, 1999; Feldman, 1984; McConnell & Sosin, 1984 and Bolander, 1973 in Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy, 2008: 221-233 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Large classes have a negative influence on teachers and learners’ performance. They may discourage involvement, providing opportunities for “social loafing” and a less active role in the educational process. It is then possible that the lack of motivation results from the low value learners attach to their individual contributions, a fact that is accentuated in a large class setting. See Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002: 27-52 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Sub-question 3 followed:

5.2.3 Sub-question 3

What impact does the figure (in 5.2.1) have on (b) teachers?

5.2.3.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers respond that the situation affects teachers’ strength, energy and time. They become stressed, come to work already tired, without interest and end up deciding to work only with fast learners. They further explain that their work load makes them ignore some of their roles (e.g. marking learners’ scripts, planning).

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) I don't have time to explore
 - (ii) No time to impart all the information
 - (iii) A time to attend to individual learners
 - (iv) It is a lot of work to do within a short period of time with too many learners
 - (v) The teacher is extremely tired at the end of the day
 - (vi) Planning is affected
 - (vii) Very exhausted
 - (viii) Overloaded
 - (ix) Could not do much
 - (x) Children cannot write in such situations
 - (xi) Hectic situation mainly with marking piles of scripts, compiling marks and preparing progress reports
 - (xii) Very painful
 - (xiii) Unable to achieve our plans
 - (xiv) Not able to mark all the work
 - (xv) We feel overloaded
 - (xvi) Become stressed
 - (xvii) Come to work already tired
 - (xviii) Without interest
 - (xix) Decide to work only with fast learners
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Emotional tension
 - (ii) Job overload
 - (iii) Job stress
 - (iv) Role conflict
 - (v) Instructional planning and delivery are affected
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that they experience emotional tension, job overload, job stress, role conflict and their instructional planning and delivery are affected due to large classes they face daily. This as a result has a negative influence

on both their performance and learners'. T 2 elaborates, "At the end of the day the teacher is extremely tired and that is when the planning is affected. The teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day."

B Principals

Principals respond that the situation impacts negatively on teachers' strength, energy and time. Teachers become stressed, lose temper; interest and patience and as a result become harsh to learners. Principals further explain that the work load that teachers experience makes them ignore some of their roles (i.e. marking learners' scripts).

(a) Code(s)

- (i) It impacts negatively on teachers' strength, energy and time
- (ii) They complain about too much work due to large numbers of learners
- (iii) They are unable to reach all the learners
- (iv) It is quite uncomfortable
- (v) It is difficult for them to cover the planned daily work
- (vi) Large classes kill teachers
- (vii) Even those who seem to be strong are worn out in the middle of the day
- (viii) It is really too difficult for them
- (ix) It is really too much
- (x) Teachers become stressed
- (xi) Teachers lose their temper
- (xii) Teachers lose teaching interest
- (xiii) Teachers become impatient
- (xiv) Teachers become harsh to learners
- (xv) It makes them ignore some of their roles (e.g.. marking learners' scripts)

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Emotional tension
- (ii) Job overload
- (iii) Job stress

- (iv) Role conflict
- (v) Incomplete tasks
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also feel that large classes demand a lot from teachers. They believe that they are the results of teachers' emotional tension, job overload, stress, and conflict. PR 3 responds, "It is very demanding on someone's strength, energy and time. They lose interest and patience. Teachers lose their temper. They are offended by minor things. They tend to be harsh to the kids and this makes them to be uneasy. They sometimes end up not marking their scripts."

C The education official

The education official explains that teachers try to facilitate teaching and learning, but it is difficult and so they get tired.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Poor teachers try their level best
 - (ii) They try but it is difficult.
 - (iii) They get tired on the way due to larger numbers
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Job overload
 - (ii) Job stress
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official also feels that large classes result in teachers job stress and overload. They try their best to meet the requirements of teaching and learning but due to large classes they get tired on the way. "Poor teachers try their level best. They try but it is difficult. They get tired on the way due to larger numbers" (EO).

I will now summarise the responses of the three respondents.

5.2.3.2 *Summary*

This suggests that due to large classes, teachers' workload seems to be too heavy for them. Teachers do not have time to explore, to impart all the information and to attend to individual learners. They feel that it is a lot of work to do within a short period of time with too many learners. They report that they are extremely tired, very exhausted at the end of the day and this affects their planning. They are overloaded mainly with marking piles of scripts, compiling marks and preparing progress reports.

The situation is painful as they cannot do much to assist learners that cannot write in such situations. This prevents them from achieving goals, not even to mark all their scripts. They come to work already tired, stressed up, without interest and this forces them to decide to work only with fast learners. "The situation is very demanding on their strength, energy and time. They lose interest, patience and temper" (PR 3). "It is very much painful. We are unable to achieve our plans. We cannot even mark all their scripts" (T 6). Also see World Bank, 2005: 137 and Lerotholi, 2001: 19 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Hargreaves (1998: 835 in Malm, 2009: 85 par. 2.3 in ch. 2) also says that emotions comprise the most dynamic qualities of teaching, literally, for they are fundamentally about movement. They are essential to sustaining teachers' sense of self (their sense of value and worth in their work). For that reason, they are the psychic rewards of teaching. They act as the power to make independent judgements as well as exercise personal discretion, initiative and creativity through teachers' work. The latter found that the emotional bond teachers have with their students is the central influence with regard to their choice of method, teaching context and practice.

It was unexpected that none of the principals mention teacher absenteeism in this regard. Only learners' absenteeism rate is reported to be high. Just because respondents did not mention teachers' absenteeism, does not mean they always report for duty. They might have chosen not to reveal it and/or they felt the issue not to be most important at the time of the interviews.

Otherwise, research reveals that overcrowding of classrooms; job stress and burnout appear to be amongst many reasons teachers give for dissatisfaction, which can contribute to teacher absenteeism. See Whitehead, 2009: 242; Day, 2002: 677-679 in par. 2.3 in ch 2. Furthermore, Forness & Kavale (2001: 5-81 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) note that smaller teacher/pupils ratios in primary grades result in a less hectic atmosphere, better teacher morale, more individualised instruction, and improved learner achievement, particularly by at-risk learners and learners with learning problems.

Research also found that factors found to inhibit learner participation in large class settings include low levels of learner-teacher interaction, teachers that are not motivated, and difficulty in paying attention. See Strong *et al.*, 1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2).

Large classes therefore seem to have a negative impact on teachers and learners' performance. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 4:

5.2.4 Sub-question 4

What impact does the figure (in 5.2.1) have on (c) the classroom environment?

5.2.4.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers point out that teaching-learning materials as well as facilities (e.g. textbooks, desks) are insufficient. As a result it is difficult to incorporate various teaching practice alternatives. They explain that classrooms are very crowded and this makes movement difficult.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Learners are unable to sit properly
 - (ii) Teaching materials are not enough
 - (iii) Classrooms are congested

- (iv) Learners copy from one another
 - (v) It is too bad because they are noisy
 - (vi) This kind of environment encourages learners' disengagement
 - (vii) Others are loitering in the classroom not writing - disturbing others
 - (viii) Learners are unable to move
 - (ix) It is difficult for one to cope in such environment
 - (x) Classes are so packed
 - (xi) Learners do not sit comfortably
 - (xii) It is a difficult situation
 - (xiii) Teacher's movement is difficult
 - (xiv) It's chaotic
 - (xv) Not conducive to teaching and learning
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Negative classroom environment
 - (ii) Not conducive to teaching and learning
 - (iii) Teaching and leadership skills are affected
 - (iv) Job stress
 - (v) Learners' performance affected
 - (vi) Learners are uncomfortable
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that due to large classes, classrooms are congested. This therefore results in classrooms that are not conducive to teaching and learning. Teachers experience job stress so much that their teaching and leadership skills are affected. As a result learners' performance is affected. T 2 explains, "Classrooms are so packed. Kids do not sit comfortably. This makes the situation difficult. The classroom is so congested, so much crowded. The movement of the teacher to make sure that he helps the individual child is difficult."

B Principals

Principals point out that teaching-learning materials as well as facilities (e.g. textbooks, desks) are insufficient. As a result it is difficult to incorporate various teaching practice alternatives. Principals also mention that classrooms are very crowded and this makes movement difficult. They maintain that classroom management becomes so much of a problem that most of the learners are disengaged and make much noise.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Uncomfortable situation
- (ii) Grouping is not possible
- (iii) No space to stand for your observations
- (iv) Movement is impossible
- (v) Conflicts arise as learners push one another
- (vi) Very crowded
- (vii) Teaching and learning materials are not well displayed
- (viii) Children are also noisy
- (ix) Teachers never stop disciplining
- (x) Teachers sometimes get out of track (they punish them)
- (xi) Classrooms are congested
- (xii) No freedom at all
- (xiii) Learners are far too noisy
- (xiv) Resources become very or extremely scarce
- (xv) Management of the classroom also is not very easy

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Negative classroom environment
- (ii) Not conducive to teaching and learning
- (iii) Emotional tension
- (iv) Teaching and leadership skills are affected
- (v) Job stress
- (vi) Learners' performance affected

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Large classes

(d) Discussion

Principals believe that large classes prevent teachers from utilizing their leadership and teaching skills effectively, efficiently and productively. Teachers therefore experience job stress and emotional tension and as a result they become harsh to learners. This as a result makes the classroom environment tense and not conducive for learning and this affects learners' performance. PR 4 responds, "They are very much crowded. Teaching and learning materials are not well displayed. These children are also noisy. Teachers never stop disciplining so much that they sometimes get out of track."

C The education official

The education official explains that classrooms are very crowded. Learners are so noisy that the teacher has to shout in order to be properly heard and this makes teaching and learning difficult.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) It is worse than in small classes
- (ii) Classrooms are congested
- (iii) Difficult for children to hear the teacher
- (iv) The teacher has to shout
- (v) Chaotic situation

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Not conducive to teaching and learning
- (ii) Teaching and leadership skills are negatively affected
- (iii) Job stress

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Large classes

(d) Discussion

The education official also believes that large classes result in situations not conducive to learning. Teachers have to shout at the top of their voices when teaching and this causes them stress. Their teaching and leadership skills are negatively affected and this has an impact on learners' performance. "It is worse. Classrooms are congested. It is difficult for children to hear the teacher as a result the teacher has to shout. The situation is chaotic" (EO).

Paragraph 5.2.4.2 below summarises the respondents of the three respondents.

5.2.4.2 *Summary*

Large classes have resulted in difficult management of classroom environments. As a result elements such as time, space, resources, learner groupings, instructional or learning strategies, partnerships, and presentations or teaching strategies that the teacher can employ daily to help achieve desired learning outcomes are negatively affected. Classrooms are reported to be congested. Learners are unable to sit properly. This contributes to learners copying from one another. Teaching materials are not enough. This encourages learners' disengagement and as a result they keep loitering in the classroom and disturbing others. The situation is reported to be chaotic. Movement is not easy in this situation. It is difficult for one to cope in such environment.

"They are very crowded. Teaching and learning materials are scarce and not well displayed. Children are also noisy. Teachers never stop disciplining. They sometimes get out of track and punish them" (PR 4). "Classrooms are so packed, congested and much crowded. Learners do not sit comfortably. Teacher's movement is difficult. It is really a difficult situation to be in"(T 2). "It is worse. Classrooms are congested. It is difficult for learners to hear the teacher. It is really chaotic" (EO).

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Also see World Bank, 2005: 137 and Lerotholi, 2001: 19 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2. Large classes have a negative impact on teachers' performance as well. Strong *et al.* (1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) mention that factors that affect motivation include the physical layout of the classroom as it affects participation in class discussion. Teacher behaviours, including speaking voice and movement, also contribute to levels of learner participation in large class settings and have a major influence on the learning process. They further point out that the opportunity to interact with peers and class is

perceived as not readily available in large class formats, and noise and certain seating arrangements were considered inhibitory to the learning experience. Also see Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Sub-question 5 followed:

5.2.5 Sub-question 5

What teaching practice techniques have you adopted to suit your classes?

5.2.5.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention whole-group instruction, field trips, peer teaching and ability grouping as the teaching methods they employ to suit their classes.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Whole-group instruction
 - (ii) Field trips
 - (iii) Peer teaching
 - (iv) Ability grouping
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Choice of teaching practice techniques is affected
 - (ii) Very limited variety of teaching practice techniques
 - (iii) One-size-fits-all approach often used
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers use a very limited variety of teaching practice techniques due to large classes. As a result a one-size-fits-all approach is often used. T 1 explains, “I normally divide the kids into two groups; fast learners and slow learners (ability grouping). I sometimes give fast learners tasks to do. When they are done, I pair them with slow learners (peer grouping) to assist them. In the mean time I attend to slow learners’ problems.”

B Principals

Principals mention that teachers often use whole-group instruction and smaller groups to accommodate all learners in the teaching and learning situation.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Smaller groups
 - (ii) Look and say, and demonstration
 - (iii) The chalkboard
 - (iv) Whole-group instruction
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Choice of teaching practice techniques is affected
 - (ii) Less variety of teaching practice techniques
 - (iii) Whole-group method often used
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that large classes prevent teachers from using a variety of teaching practice techniques. As a result the whole-group method is often used. This has a negative influence on learners' performance as they are approached similarly yet they have different characteristics. PR 4 replies, "They normally use the chalkboard to explain to all of them."

C The education official

The education official mentions that teachers often use the grouping method as the teaching practice technique to suit their classes.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Grouping method is often used
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Choice of teaching practice techniques is affected
 - (ii) No variety of teaching practice techniques
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes

(d) Discussion

The education official's belief is that large classes prevent teachers from adopting various teaching practice techniques. As a result they often rely on the grouping method. EO responds, "They use grouping more often."

I will now summarise the responses of the respondents in par. 5.2.5.2 below.

5.2.5.2 Summary

Teachers in large classes prefer the grouping method. The situation of large classes has affected teachers' decision-making and problem-solving skills so much that they are unable to try other teaching practice techniques. As a result they opt for a one-size-fits-all approach which then affects most of the learners' performance. "I usually engage them in large group presentation; peer education and ability grouping" (T 4). "I use mixed ability grouping" (T 2).

Rice (1999: 215-229) and Shapson, Wright, Eason & Fitzgerald (1980: 141-152 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) explain that class size significantly affect three key instructional strategy alternatives in mathematics classes: The amount of time spent; innovative instructional practices; and whole-group discussions. In all three cases, the effect of class size is negative particularly in larger classes (Bonesronning, 2003: 952-965 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2).

Schumm, Moody, & Vaughn (2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159 in par. 2.3 in ch.2) affirm that instruction in general elementary and special education resource rooms tends to be a 'one size fits all' approach. There is little or no differentiation of lesson planning or individualization of materials in response to student instructional levels or needs. Baker & Zigmond (1990, Schumm *et al.* 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) also confirm that whole-group instruction is the primary mode of instructional delivery, with few instances of ability grouping of students.

Moreover, teachers have not received any training in psycho-social care and support techniques such as play therapy (Ministry of Education and Training,

Lesotho, 2004: 11 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). They are not exposed or trained regarding learning styles, their learning styles cannot influence their teaching learners with different learning styles, and they cannot identify learning styles in students (Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 518 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2).

Spahn (1999; Feldman, 1984, McConnell & Sosin, 1984 and Bolander, 1973 in Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy, 2008: 221-233 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) also indicate that although class size may not be significant in courses best suited for the lecture learning style, courses geared toward promoting critical thinking and advanced problem solving are best taught in a smaller classroom environment. Learners' motivation and attitude toward learning tends to be more negatively affected by larger classes. They further emphasise that, though learners may have learned the material, they do not feel as satisfied with the classroom experience as they would have in smaller classes, suggesting that some learning opportunities may have been lost.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I then asked sub-question 6:

5.2.6 Sub-section 6

How effective are they?

5.2.6.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers find the group method to be ineffective stating that some learners become disengaged whereas others find it effective. Some mention that it promotes participation, encourages cooperation and competition amongst learners.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) There is improvement
 - (ii) It becomes competitive
 - (iii) It is very effective
 - (iv) Some groups may be independent

- (v) Learners are sometimes not engaged in group work; they are busy with irrelevant stuff
 - (vi) They work cooperatively
 - (vii) The teacher moves from one group to another assisting
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Seen to be effective
 - (ii) Promotion of cooperative learning
 - (iii) Encouragement of competitive learning
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Effectiveness of grouping method in large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that grouping method sounds to be the solution to teaching and learning problems brought about by large classes. They mention that the grouping method encourages competition amongst learners and promotes cooperative learning. T 6 responds, “This has been effective since it encourages competition between the leaders.”

B Principals

Some principals find the group method to be ineffective. They explain that teachers fail to give feedback (e.g. they do not mark scripts). Others say it is effective but only to some extent whereas another group replies that it is effective.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) To a certain extent
 - (ii) They are effective
 - (iii) Not effective
 - (iv) Teachers fail to give feedback
 - (v) It takes teachers time to mark learners’ scripts
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Not properly managed
 - (ii) Not properly planned
 - (iii) Not purposefully used
 - (iv) Promotes laziness amongst teachers

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Ineffectiveness of the grouping method
 - (ii) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals do not see the effectiveness of the grouping method due to large classes; instead they see the method promoting teacher laziness. They complain that it takes time for teachers to mark and give learners feedback. PR 2 explains, “Teachers fail to give feedback. It takes them time to mark children’s scripts.”

C The education official

The education official mentions that the grouping method is not effective.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Not effective
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Not properly managed
 - (ii) Not properly planned
 - (iii) Not purposefully used
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
 - (ii) Ineffectiveness of the grouping method
- (d) Discussion

The education official also does not see the effectiveness of the grouping method in large classes. The EO explains, “The method is not effective.”

The responses of the three respondents will be summarised in par. 5.2.6.2 below.

5.2.6.2 Summary

Even though teachers support the group method, principals and the education official do not seem to approve it. The group method has its advantages when it is well managed. It can also disadvantage both learners and the teacher when it is not well managed. “In most cases learners are disengaged. They

are busy with irrelevant stuff” (T 2). “Teachers fail to give feedback. It takes them time to mark children’s scripts” (PR 2).

Additionally, teachers seem to lack skills that would assist them to manage grouping more effectively. From their responses, it is concluded that they apply a one-size-fits-all approach using grouping as a technique to reduce the number of scripts to mark. This way, it is only teachers that benefit since their workload is somewhat reduced. Disadvantaged learners’ needs are left unattended. As a result they misbehave. “This gives me a chance to attend to those that I did not attend to during large group presentation” (T 4). “I give learners a task to perform. When fast learners are done, I pair them with slow learners to assist. I sometimes give them work to do. In the mean time I’m not paying much attention to fast learners, instead I give myself time to attend to slow learners’ problems” (T 1).

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Due to large classes, teaching practice techniques teachers’ employ do not seem to be effective. As a result learners’ performance is affected negatively. Also see Spahn, 1999; Feldman, 1984; McConnell & Sosin, 1984 and Bolander, 1973 in Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy, 2008: 221-233 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Sub-question 7 was as follows:

5.2.7 Sub-question 7

How is the teacher/learner interaction in your classes?

5.2.7.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers believe that teachers’ interaction with learners is smooth. Others do not believe that there is smooth teacher/learner interaction in the classrooms.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) I don't want to do things by myself
 - (ii) I want learners to participate fully
 - (iii) The interaction is so smooth
 - (iv) I allow my learners to interact with me freely
 - (v) I come down to their level
 - (vi) I assist them with guidance
 - (vii) The interaction is very limited
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Teachers encourage freedom to approach them in their classes
 - (ii) Learners are open to their teachers
 - (iii) Teachers encourage learner participation
 - (iv) Learner motivation and development of self-esteem
 - (v) Limited interaction is also felt
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Presence of teacher/learner interaction in classrooms
 - (ii) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers are of the opinion that though their classes are large, they think teacher/learner interaction is present in their classrooms. T 1 explains, "Like I said, I don't want to do things by myself. I want them to participate fully." However, there are those who doubt the presence of teacher/learner interaction due to large classes they face daily. T 4 doubts the situation, "Such chance is very limited".

B Principals

Some principals believe that there is interaction between teachers and learners. Others do not believe that teacher/learner interaction is as it is expected to be.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Not as it should be
 - (ii) In our case it is more of a drive - the interaction is really fair
 - (iii) There is interaction between teachers and learners
 - (iv) Teachers move around

- (v) Teachers listen to learners' different problems
 - (vi) Teachers assist where they discover a need
 - (vii) Some teachers are harsh, they scare children, and relationships are not appealing at all
 - (viii) Unable to reach each and every child
 - (ix) The child whose needs are not met does not have good relationships with the teacher
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Teachers address learners' learning problems
 - (ii) Teachers encourage learner participation
 - (iii) Learner motivation and development of self-esteem
 - (iv) Limited interaction is also felt
 - (v) Not good relationships between teachers and learners
 - (vi) Little learning takes place
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Presence of teacher/learner interaction in classrooms
 - (ii) Less teacher/learner interaction in classrooms
 - (iii) Large classes

(d) Discussion

Principals sense some presence of teacher/learner interaction in large classrooms. PR 2 responds, "There is interaction between teachers and learners." Nevertheless, there are those that suspect less teacher/learner interaction in such large classes. PR 5 elaborates, "It is not as it is expected to be. It is not good because the teacher is unable to reach each and every child. And as a result, the child whose needs are not met does not have good relationships with the teacher".

C The education official

The education official does not believe that there is teacher/learner interaction in the classrooms.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) The situation is so tense
 - (ii) Teachers don't have time for their learners
 - (iii) They do not manage to mark all their written work

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Less learner motivation and development of self-esteem
 - (ii) Limited interaction is also felt
 - (iii) Not good relationships between teachers and learners
 - (iv) Little learning takes place
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Less teacher/learner interaction in classrooms
 - (ii) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official suspects that large classes teachers face daily may impact on their interaction with learners. The EO expands, “The situation is so tense that teachers are unable or don’t have time for their learners. They do not manage to attempt to all their written work”.

Paragraph 5.2.7.2 below summarises the responses of the three sets of respondents.

5.2.7.2 Summary

The majority of teachers seem to be of the view that there is teacher/learner interaction in their classrooms. This contradicts what they said earlier. “The situation impedes teachers from reaching each and every learner” (PR 5). “We do not have time for an individual learner” (Ts 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6). This suggests limited chances of teacher/learner interaction in this situation. “Teachers are harsh, not all learners’ needs are met, not enough time is given to learners, and no feedback is provided (PR 2). “The situation is so tense teachers are unable to devote time to or don’t have time for their learners. They do not manage to mark all their written work” (EO). “The situation is much appealing to their strength, energy and time. They lose interest, patience and temper” (PR 3).

This does not deny the fact that there are teachers who are skilful enough to maintain their interaction with learners. There are also those who are longing for such interaction as well. “I allow my kids to interact with me freely, to be free in class. I do not want intimidated kids. I allow them to correct me where they think I am wrong” (T 2). However, the classroom environment does not

seem to permit them due to large classes. “Classrooms are so packed, congested and much crowded. Kids do not sit comfortably. Teacher’s movement is difficult. It is really a difficult situation to be in “(T 2). It is therefore possible that the day ends without the teacher having said and/or heard “a word” from one or more learners.

Large classes have created cold relationships between teachers and learners. T 4 explains, “As teachers we feel overloaded. When one is overloaded, s/he becomes stressed. S/he comes to work already tired, without interest. We end up deciding to work only with fast learners.” This also has a negative influence on learners’ motivation, achievement, attitudes towards learning and being at school. “Others are harsh so they scare learners”. Also see Hargreaves, 1998: 835 in Malm, 2009: 85 par. 2.3 in ch. 2. The relationships in this environment are not appealing at all” (PR 4). “It impedes teachers from reaching each and every learner. This affects learners’ performance badly and as a result they decide to drop out” (PR 5). This therefore suggests that there is less teacher/learner interaction in such classroom environment.

Maasoumi *et al.* (2005: 333-368 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) say that smaller classes give the teacher an opportunity to interact with individual learner. This opportunity enables him/her to identify those learners with learning problems whereas it is difficult in larger classes. Also see Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Teachers tend to hide the fact that there is lack of teacher/learner interaction in their classrooms. Principals and the education official seem to be conveying what they observe daily. Large classes result in less teacher/learner interaction and this has impact on learners’ performance. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 8 followed:

5.2.8 Sub-question 8

How is your questioning style?

5.2.8.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers believe that their questioning styles are acceptable. They accommodate all learners.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) Allow children time to think
 - (ii) Help them to get to the answer
 - (iii) Accommodate all of them
 - (iv) Give myself time to move step-by-step with slow learners
 - (v) Give them freedom to express their weaknesses without fear
 - (vi) Ask every child including slow learners
 - (vii) Point even to those that do not have their hands up
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Teachers guide learners' thinking
 - (ii) Almost all learners are included in teachers' questioning styles
 - (iii) Learner motivation
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Teacher questioning behaviour is acceptable
 - (ii) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers think that even though they are faced with large classes, their questioning behaviour accommodates all learners. T 6 responds, "I try by all means to ask every child including slow learners".

B Principals

Some principals believe that teachers' questioning styles are acceptable. It accommodates all learners. Nonetheless, others do not believe that teachers' questioning styles are acceptable. They mention that it discriminates against learners with learning problems.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) No questions that would challenge the thinking skills of a child
 - (ii) Teachers guide learners
 - (iii) More chances are given to slow learner
 - (iv) Some teachers really do not care
 - (v) They pay attention only to fast responses
 - (vi) Some teachers have patience, they wait until the learner gets the direction
 - (vii) Teachers with larger classes do not have time for unsure children
 - (viii) Teachers are in a hurry, their eyes are on kids that can give correct answers
 - (ix) Teachers lose patience
 - (x) Teachers with a reasonable numbers of learners have time for them
 - (xi) Some go step-by-step with the child
 - (xii) Some move forward with children ready to move
- (b) Category(s)
- (i) Less guidance is given to learners with learning problems
 - (ii) No variety of questions for different learners
 - (iii) Same questions are put to all learners
 - (iv) Very few teachers guide learners' responses to questions
 - (v) Advantaged learners are catered for
 - (vi) Disadvantaged learners are at risk
- (c) Pattern(s)
- (i) Large classes
 - (ii) Not all learners are accommodated in teachers' questioning styles

(d) Discussion

Even though some principals consider teachers' questioning styles to be accommodative, some are of the opinion that, due to large classes, not all learners are accommodated in teachers' questioning styles. PR 4 replies, "Teachers with larger classes do not have time for unsure children. They are

in a hurry; therefore their eyes are on kids that can give immediate and correct answers. They lose patience as they want to cover the syllabus”.

C The education official

The education official does not believe that teachers’ questioning styles are acceptable. They encourage memorisation. So, learners who are not good at that, meet with problems.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) It is not good at all
 - (ii) It encourages too much memorization
 - (iii) Children who are not good at memorization meet with problems
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Advantaged learners are catered for
 - (ii) Disadvantaged learners are at risk
 - (iii) No variety of questions for different learners
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
 - (ii) Not all learners are accommodated in teachers’ questioning styles
- (d) Discussion

The education official also suspects that large classes impede teachers from accommodating all learners in their questioning styles. EO: “It is not good at all. It encourages too much memorization and children who are not good at that, encounter problems”.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three respondents in par. 5.2.8.2 below.

5.2.8.2 Summary

Although teachers believe that their questioning styles are acceptable, they tend to be at odds with what they said earlier. “We do not have time for an individual kid” (Ts 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6). This suggests that, since they are unable to reach each and every learner, they have no time for individual learners. They cannot become considerate when it comes to questioning styles. It is easier said than done. “I try by all means to ask every child including slow learners”

(T 6). “I give them a chance to think. I also point even to those that do not have their hands up” (T 3).

Principals and the education official therefore challenge their perception. They argue that teachers are harsh, they do not give enough time to learners, no feedback is provided. Therefore, it is impossible for them to meet all learners’ needs” (PR 2). “The situation is so tense teachers are unable to ... or don’t have time for their learners. They do not manage to mark all their written work” (EO). “The situation impacts negatively on teachers’ strength, energy and time. They lose interest, patience and temper” (PR 3). “Teachers do not have time for struggling children. They are in a hurry, as they want to cover the syllabus. They lose patience. Their eyes are therefore on kids that have fast answers” (PRs 3 and 4). “The situation impedes teachers from reaching each and every learner” (PR 5). Also see Hargreaves 1998: 835 in Malm, 2009: 85 par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

From what T 1 described to be the teaching style mostly employed in this situation, “I give learners a task to perform. When fast learners are done, I pair them with slow learners to assist. I sometimes give them work to do. In the mean time I am not paying much attention to fast learners, instead give myself time to attend to slow learners’ problems” (T 1), I draw the conclusion that teachers often use whole-group instructional plans. It is therefore unlikely that questions of different levels can come out of that technique.

The large classes teachers face daily and lack of skills enabling them to identify learners’ different learning styles make it difficult to adapt their questioning styles to suit each and every learner in the classroom. They therefore often opt for a one-size-fits-all approach. As a result most of the learners’ performance is affected. Also see Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2004: 11 and Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 518 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 9 was asked:

5.2.9 Sub-question 9

How often do you give and attend to homework assignments given to learners?

5.2.9.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers believe that it is not easy to give learners home work as well as to attend to those given due to their large numbers. Some mention that home work assignments are given and attended to.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) On daily basis
- (ii) It is not easy
- (iii) At least three times a week
- (iv) I give and take my time to mark them
- (v) Not always – but marked when given
- (vi) Sometimes forget – rush for class work
- (vii) Time consuming to mark – day's lessons suffer

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Job overload
- (ii) Less priority is given to home work assignments
- (iii) Teacher-parent and parent-learner communication affected

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Home work assignments not always given and attended to
- (ii) Large classes

(d) Discussion

There are teachers who believe that, in spite of the situation of large classes, they always give out home work assignments and attend to them. T 1 replies, "On daily basis and on different subjects". On the contrary, other teachers are of the opinion that, due to large classes, they are unable to always give home work assignments to learners and attend to them the following day. T 2 responds, "As I said, it is not easy. I do give them at least three times a week so that I am able to attend to them the following day".

B. Principals

Principals believe that some teachers give learners home work assignments and at the same time attend to their marking. They also mention that there are teachers who do not give out home work assignments and those that give but do not attend to their marking.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) To quite an extent
 - (ii) Only in upper classes (where there are fewer learners) – rarely in lower classes (where there are more learners)
 - (iii) Some give and mark – others do not
 - (iv) Marking is done by learners on the chalkboard
 - (v) Teachers do not give out home work assignments
 - (vi) Those who give do not attend to them
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Home work assignments not seen as a priority
 - (ii) Less attention is given to home work assignments
 - (iii) Teacher-parent and parent-learner communication affected
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Home work assignments not always given and attended to
 - (ii) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals feel that teachers do not always give and attend to home work assignments due to large classes. PR 2 replies, “Home work assignments are given in upper classes (classes 6 and 7) where there are fewer learners. They are rarely given in lower classes where there are more learners”.

C The education official

The education official believes that it is not easy to give learners home work as well as to attend to those given due to their large numbers.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Teachers do not give out homework
 - (ii) Those who give do not attend to them

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Job overload
 - (ii) Home work assignments not seen as a priority
 - (iii) Less attention is given to home work assignments
 - (iv) Teacher-parent and parent-learner communication affected
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Home work assignments not always given and attended to
 - (ii) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that, due to large classes, teachers are unable to always give home work assignments and those who manage to give, are unable to attend to their marking. “Due to high teacher-pupil ratio, teachers do not give out home works. Those who give them do not attend to them” (EO).

The responses of the three sets of respondents are summarised below.

5.2.9.2 Summary

The implication is that home work assignments are not always given. Those that give them once in a “blue moon” do not attend to them. “Due to high teacher-pupil ratio, teachers do not give out home work assignments. Those who give them do not attend to them” (EO). I sometimes even forget to give them homework because I am in a hurry for the day’s lessons. Marking takes the whole morning due to large classes and the day’s lessons suffer” (T 3).

Large classes appear to have negative effects on home work assignments. Teachers complain about marking of scripts which is time consuming in large classes. In Bonesronning, Hoxby and Rice (2003: 952; 2000: 1240; 1999: 215 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) it is noted that teachers tend to prefer smaller classes for workload reasons. They perceive smaller classes as easier to manage. They believe that smaller classes involve fewer disruptions and behaviour problems as well as, less paperwork and grading responsibilities.

In the reviewed literature teachers report that developing effective home-based activities require time and effort (Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). For the at-home parental efforts to be successful, teachers need to provide parents with instruction, develop meaningful and interesting home activities that children and parents can do together, coordinate schedules with parents, and maintain regular communication with them (Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). Lack of instructional resources is reported to constrain teachers' time and energy to communicate with parents. This leads to a weaker sense of responsibility among teachers for the school mission of developing positive relationships with parents and the community (Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak, 2005: 61 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2).

Epstein, Salinas & Jackson (1992, 1995 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 326 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) also endorse home work as one of the strategies to promote student learning, parent-child interactions, and parent-teacher communication. Epstein (1988) and Leone & Richards (1989 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 325 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) also suggest that learners who enjoy talking with their parents about their homework and school tend to perform well at school. Also see Hargreaves, 1998: 835 in Malm, 2009: 85 par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 10:

5.2.10 Sub-question 10

How is the noise level in your classroom?

5.2.10.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers agree that there is too much noise in their classrooms.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) It is a problem at the beginning of the year
 - (ii) Not so noisy really, unless I am out
 - (iii) Unrealistic not to expect noise in such situations
 - (iv) Children are noisy
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) The noise level is unacceptable
 - (ii) Not conducive to teaching and learning
 - (iii) Classroom management seems to be a problem
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers are of the opinion that learners in large classes are noisy. T 6 responds, "It is too bad. They are far too noisy."

B Principals

Some principals agree that there is too much noise in classrooms. However, there are those who feel that teachers' management level is good.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Management level is really good
 - (ii) Too much noise regardless of the presence of the teacher
 - (iii) Far too noisy whether working or not
 - (iv) The situation is really uncomfortable
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) The noise level is unacceptable
 - (ii) Not conducive to teaching and learning
 - (iii) Classroom management seems to be good with some teachers
 - (iv) Less leadership skills with other teachers
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Although there is a feeling that there are teachers who manage their classrooms effectively in this situation of large classes, the belief is that the

noise level is unacceptable. This therefore makes the environment uncondusive to teaching and learning. PR 3 replies, “They are far too noisy whether working or not.”

C The education official

The education official responds that the noise level is too bad and it prevents the teacher and learners from hearing one another.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Their noise makes it difficult to for them to hear one another
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) The noise level is unacceptable
 - (ii) Not conducive to teaching and learning
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official believes that the noise level in large classes is unacceptable. It prevents clear communication between the teacher and learners. “It is difficult for children to hear the teacher” (EO).

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of the respondents.

5.2.10.2 Summary

There are several classroom incidents that can result in a high noise level. When learners are left unattended, they are likely to find something to keep themselves busy with and that may cause disruption to others including the teacher. We then refer to that noise to be without a specific focus and it is difficult to control. There is the noise that results from learners’ debate to reach a certain consensus on a specific concept. That is said to be purposive and it is controllable. PR 5 responds, “They control it by grouping the learners. You will find that in a group it is more manageable as it is caused by the discussions rather than when it comes from everywhere about anything”.

Educators consider the noise level in classrooms to be too high. The noise seems to be without a specific focus as it requires the teacher to shout at the top of his/her voice in order to be heard. “It is difficult for children to hear the teacher” (EO). PR 3 explains, “They are far too noisy whether working or not”. T 4 expands, “When one gets into classroom and finds these many and noisy children, s/he becomes annoyed”. This as a result makes the environment not conducive to teaching and learning.

It is surprising to hear principals responding that teachers’ classroom management sounds good. This contradicts their earlier responses where they mentioned that classroom management is amongst the prominent issues they would like the college to address. This suggests that even though there are teachers that can manage their classrooms effectively, there are those that cannot due to lack of leadership skills. It is therefore in such classrooms where the noise level is unacceptable.

Research has found that teachers who perceive themselves as competent use more positive approaches in classroom management (Emmer & Hickman, 1991 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). Woolfolk & Hoy (1990 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) expand that there is a relationship between teacher efficacy and a healthier school atmosphere and a healthy school environment contributes to the teachers’ beliefs influential in students’ learning.

This suggests that large classes result in ineffective instructional delivery. Ineffective instructional delivery encourages learner disengagement, which in return promotes unexpected behaviours as a form of communication. Also see Strong *et al.* 1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2 who address the point that noise and certain seating arrangements are considered inhibitory to the learning experience. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

The last sub-question followed:

5.2.11 Sub-question 11

How do teachers manage the noise level referred to in the above sub-section?

5.2.11.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that they give learners books, newspapers and magazines to read between lessons. They explain that they have sessions with their learners where teacher's expectations of learners as well as learners' expectations of the teacher are discussed in the beginning of the year. They also point out that they discipline learners by always silencing them, ignoring and/or spanking them.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Let them know your expectations while in class
 - (ii) Learners raise their hands when they have questions
 - (iii) They read books and magazines
 - (iv) Exercise your authority, but not in a way that oppresses children
 - (v) Talk to them from time to time
 - (vi) Discipline them - spank them
 - (vii) Decide to work only with fast learners
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Well thought out classroom management strategies
 - (ii) Classroom management is a problem
 - (iii) Negative disciplinary climate
 - (iv) Weak teacher/learner relations
 - (v) Emotional tension
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Teachers tend to have well thought classroom management strategies, but due to the large classes they are facing, classroom management tends to be a problem. The noise level seems not to cease. T 6 replies, "You keep on

disciplining them. Sometimes one goes to an extent of spanking them which is also illegal”.

B Principals

Principals mention that teachers group children and discipline learners by always silencing them. They further explain that teachers ignore learners or punish them when they make noise.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Teachers give up
 - (ii) Discipline learners
 - (iii) They sometimes get out of track and punish them
 - (iv) Teachers group learners
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Improper classroom management strategies
 - (ii) Negative disciplinary climate
 - (iii) Weak teacher/learner relations
 - (iv) Emotional tension
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

Principals also suspect that large classes prevent teachers from managing the noise level in their classrooms. Their classroom management strategies sound not to be proper for this type of environment. As a result they experience weak teacher/learner relations as they even go to extend of punishing them. PR 4 expands, “Teachers never stop disciplining so much that they sometimes get out of track and punish them”.

C The education official

The education official mentions that teachers shout at the top of their voices for them to be heard.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) The teacher shouts at the top of her/his voice in order to be heard
 - (ii) Shouting also makes things worse.
 - (iii) The situation is really chaotic

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Improper classroom management strategies
 - (ii) Negative disciplinary climate
 - (iii) Emotional tension
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Large classes
- (d) Discussion

The education official too believes that large classes impede teachers from employing proper classroom management strategies. As a result they experience emotional tension and the disciplinary climate becomes negative. EO responds, “Trying to be heard, the teacher shouts at the top of her/his voice which also makes things worse. The situation is really chaotic.”

The responses of the three respondents will be summarized below.

5.2.11.2 Summary

Teachers implement several classroom management strategies to control the noise level in their classrooms. “Sit with them and discuss your and their expectations in the classroom” (Ts 1, 2 and 5). “I keep on silencing them” (T 1). “I discipline them by spanking them which is also illegal” (T 6). “Teachers never stop disciplining so much that they sometimes get out of track and punish them” (PR 4). I sometimes decide to work only with fast learners” (T 4).

It is therefore partly due to large classes that teachers are unable to identify and implement proper classroom management strategies to maintain order. The other reason may be that of receiving irrelevant and insufficient teacher training. The responses are confirmed by Paulin (2006 in Malm, 2009: 85 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2) in a Swedish study that, due to both the content of their training programmes and their induction as beginners into school domains where they are left alone without the support they need, teachers have difficulties understanding and handling problematic pupils, with discipline, with relations and co-operation with colleagues and parents. Also see Emmer & Hickman, 1991 and Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I earlier gave the main question then sub-questions, discussed, interpreted and analysed the responses of the three sets of responses. I will now conclude with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only. The rest of the table will appear as Annexure D later in the study

Table 5.1: *Sample of data and assigned coding categories*

<i>In practice, what is the maximum number of learners per teacher?</i>			
Responses	Code(s)	Category(s)	Pattern(s)
But practically they are more than 50 kids.	More than 50	Indefinite	Large classes
We go as far as 60 pupils, per teacher 45.	As many as 60 pupils	Some 50-60	
I had to face 120 class three children in my first year as inexperience and unqualified teacher.	120	Others 60-67	
From my experience, most of the times we are faced with fifty-eight to sixty children.	Fifty-eight to sixty children	Exceptional cases 67-120	
It is beyond that.	1: more	Feeling of job overload	
It is 1: more	up to 40		
The demand has forced it up to 40	Way beyond expectations		
It goes a way beyond that. Teacher finds him/herself faced by 60 to 64 pupils	50 up to 58		
In my school, they are beyond the expectations. Some teachers have 50 up to 58 while others have 60 up to 67. They are extremely beyond what was expected.	60 or more		
They are far more beyond it.			
In big schools the number exceeds the prescribed ratio. But in some schools like mine, it is the exact number in other classes and a bit below in others.			
Because of the introduction of FPE it is 60 or more.			

Earlier in this chapter, I addressed perceptions of educators on class size. I gave the main question and sub-questions, discussed, interpreted, analysed the responses of the three sets of respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official. I then summarised the responses at the end of every sub-question. I also concluded with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only while the rest will appear as Annexure D of the study.

I will now conclude what appeared to be the perceptions of educators on class size. I will further present findings in a diagram.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 Perceptions on class size

The aim of this main question was to explore the influence of class size on learners' performance in Lesotho primary schools. It was also assumed that class size contributes to high repetition rate in Lesotho primary schools. Educators perceived large classes to be negatively affecting teachers and learners' performance'.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. I will now present findings on perceptions of educators on class size on a diagram below.

Figure 5.1: *Presentation of respondents' perceptions on class size*

Pattern(s)		Large classes									
Category(s)		Indefinite, some 50-60, others 60-67, 67-120 in exceptional cases	Less teaching and learning, learners' needs are not met; underprivileged learners are at risk, learners' performance is negatively affected, less learner motivation and development of self-confidence	Emotional tension, job overload, job stress, role conflict, instructional planning and delivery are negatively affected, incomplete tasks	Negative classroom environment, not conducive to teaching and learning, teaching and leadership skills are negatively affected	Choice of teaching practice techniques is negatively affected; a one-size-fits-all approach is often used	Teachers encourage learner participation and freedom of approach; learners are open to their teachers, very limited, not properly managed, little learning takes place	Home work assignments not always given and attended to, the noise level is unacceptable, improper classroom management strategies			
C o d e s	More than 50, as many as 60, 120, 58-60, 1: more, way beyond expectations, 60-64, 50-58, and 60-67	Unable to reach every learner, we compromise other subjects' time, we give learners limited work, require more time in terms of marking and giving out instructions, compromise fast learners' time trying to accommodate slow learners, we do very little, it is not easy to give learners what they deserve, learners' learning suffers, very little learning takes place, unable to meet learners' needs, we do not have time for individual learners, we leave those with learning problems unattended, learners become uneasy and decide to drop out, they are unable to write	We do not have time to explore and impart all the information, no time to attend to individual learners, a lot of work to do within a short period of time with many learners, we are extremely tired at the end of the day, planning is affected, we feel exhausted, we feel overloaded, we cannot do much, marking, compiling marks and preparing reports become a hassle, it is very painful, unable to reach our targets, unable to mark them all, they become stressed, they come to work already tired, they lose interest, they decide to work with fast learners only	Learners are unable to sit properly, teaching materials are not enough, classrooms are congested, learners copy from one another, and they are noisy, learners are disengaged, a lot of disturbance, difficult movement, difficult for one to cope in such situation, learners are not comfortably seated, it is chaotic, it is not conducive to teaching and learning, the teacher shouts	Whole-group instruction, field trips, peer teaching, ability grouping, look and say, demonstration, chalkboard use	Improvement in learners' performance, effective, learners become competitive, it promotes independence, some learners are busy with irrelevant stuff, it encourages cooperative learning, it gives the teacher time to assist	It is smooth, I do not do things alone, I involve them fully, I come down to their level, I assist them with guidance, it is very limited, some teachers are harsh – others are patient, the situation is tense, teachers do not have time for learners, they fail to attend to their work	We allow learners time to think, we help them get to the right answer, we accommodate them, we move step-by-step with learners, we give them freedom to express their weaknesses without fear, point even those that do not have their hands up, some teachers do not care, they pay attention only to fast responses, teachers are in a hurry	On daily basis, it is not easy, to quite an extent, at least three times a week, not always, I sometimes forget, it is time consuming to mark, only in upper classes, marking is not genuinely done, those who gibe do not attend to them	Learners are too noisy, only at the beginning of the year, not so noisy unless I am out, too noisy whether working or not, too noisy regardless of the presence of the teacher	Let know your expectations, learners have books and magazines to read; teachers should exercise their authority but no in a way that oppresses learners, we talk to them from time to time, we discipline them – spank them decide to work with fast learners only, teachers group learners, teachers shout in order to be heard

In chapter six I will deal with the data analysis and interpretation in order to determine how educators perceive the impact of teacher planning on learners' performance.

CHAPTER SIX

Perceptions of educators on teacher planning

6.1 Introduction

I dealt with perceptions of educators on class size in chapter 5. In this chapter I will focus on perceptions of educators on teacher planning. I will give the main question and the sub-questions. I will discuss, interpret, analyse and summarise the responses of the three sets of responses in each sub-question. I will then conclude the section with a summary in the form of a table of the first question only.

6.2 Perceptions on teacher planning

This study regards the terms teacher planning, instructional planning, and lesson planning to mean one and the same thing. I will therefore use them interchangeably in this chapter.

The main question was:

What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of teacher planning on grade repetition?

I asked sub-question 1:

6.2.1 Sub-question 1

Do teachers plan their lessons before teaching?

6.2.1.1 Responses:

A Teachers

While some teachers agree that they plan their lessons regularly and properly, others disagree.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) It does not happen regularly
 - (ii) Do not actually plan the “how” part of it
 - (iii) Yes, we do – we do plan every lesson
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some teachers plan but not regularly

- (ii) Some plan but not properly
- (iii) Planning of methodology remains a problem
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Irregular and inadequate planning
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that they do their planning even though it is not done regularly and/or properly.

B Principals

Principals agree that teachers plan their lessons regularly and properly. However, there are those who disagree that teachers plan their lessons. There are also those who are uncertain about teachers' regular and/or proper planning.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Not done in a reliable way
 - (ii) Yes, they do plan before teaching
 - (iii) Cannot guarantee that they all do their planning every time
 - (iv) Do not always check their lesson plan books
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some teachers plan but not regularly
 - (ii) Some plan but not properly
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Irregular and inadequate planning
- (d) Discussion

Principals believe that instructional planning is done but not regularly and properly. Some principals are not sure as they do not always check on teachers' planning.

C The education official

The education official disagrees that teachers plan their lessons regularly and properly.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Not satisfactorily

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Not genuinely done
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Irregular and inadequate planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official too believes that instructional planning is not regularly and properly done.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents in par. 6.2.1.2.

6.2.1.2 Summary

Even though some teachers state that they plan their lessons before they teach, not all of them do. Some plan but not regularly, some plan but not satisfactorily. “Yes they do, but not satisfactorily. They plan to impress officials” (EO). “We plan to some extent. It does not happen regularly. We don’t actually plan the ‘how’ part of it” (T 1).

It is important to reiterate that the results of this study are based on what respondents were able to recall, chose to reveal and felt was most important at the time of the interview. It is therefore not surprising to hear teachers reporting that they daily plan their lessons. “Yes, I prepare before I teach” (Ts 2, 3, 5 & 6).

Teachers point out that, due to job overload and lack of time management, they are unable to regularly and satisfactorily plan their lessons. “At the end, the teacher is extremely tired and that is when planning is affected. It is compromising because at the end of the day the teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day” (T 2). T 4 expands, “Sometimes we do not plan because we seem to lack time management. We are unable to divide our labour properly and that affects our planning”.

There is an element of dissatisfaction in principals’ responses about teachers’ lesson planning. “Planning is done to a certain extent. I do not think it is done in a reliable way whereby one would say it is satisfactory” (PR 1). Principals

also seem not to have enough evidence of lesson planning. “Yes they do plan before teaching. But I cannot warrant that they plan every time because I do not always check their lesson plan books” (PR 3). “Here I should be very honest. I rely more on the drive than looking into a manual work. Drive to see that at the end of the day, targets are met. This is in the assessment of the end product. A plan of strategies is just indicative of what one has been doing or intends to do” (PR 1).

From these responses, one concludes that there is little effort from principals to emphasize the importance of lesson planning. Therefore there is no way that teachers can value it. This suggests that lessons are not regularly and properly planned. This may lead to inappropriate instructional delivery. As a result learners’ performance could be negatively affected. Jacobson *et al.* (1981: 59 par. 2.4 in ch. 2) emphasise the importance of planning when they say that in order for the teacher to teach effectively and productively, s/he must know where s/he intends to go, when and how s/he intends to get there.

According to the SFED (in Karaca, 2008: 1111 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) and Dickson (1981 in Karaca, 2008: 1111 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) planning the instruction material and choosing and implementing the teaching strategy are some of the areas of teacher efficacy. Allinder (1994 and Stein & Wang, 1998 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) point out that teachers who perceive themselves as competent are better organised, spend more time in planning, try to provide a high quality of teaching and are more eager to search for new approaches and methods to use in fulfilling the needs of their learners. Teacher efficacy therefore seems to be missing with Lesotho primary school teachers.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that inadequate teacher planning in Lesotho primary schools contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 2 follows:

6.2.2 Sub-question 2

If “yes”, how do they do their planning?

6.2.2.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that they plan together as stream teachers. They use the national syllabus to decide upon concepts, objectives, strategies and materials.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) We note down
 - (ii) We plan together
 - (iii) We follow the national syllabus
 - (iv) Study, understand and note the work you intend learners to learn
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) The syllabus is often used to guide the planning
 - (ii) There is collaboration during planning
 - (iii) Planning is noted down
- (c) Category(s)
 - (i) Inadequate and irregular instruction planning
- (d) Discussion

There is collaborative planning where teachers plan together as stream teachers. They are guided by the syllabus when planning and they note down their planning.

B Principals

Principals mention that teachers plan together as stream teachers. They use the national syllabus to decide upon concepts, objectives, strategies and materials.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Prepare their daily plans
 - (ii) Come together as stream teachers
 - (iii) Start with schemes

- (iv) Decide upon objectives, strategies and the materials
- (v) They write
- (vi) Use concepts from the syllabus
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) The syllabus is often used to guide the planning
 - (ii) There is collaboration during planning
 - (iii) Planning is noted down
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate and irregular instruction planning
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that teachers use the syllabus as their guide when planning. They have the same understanding as teachers that there is collaboration amongst teachers during planning sessions where they note down their planning.

C The education official

The education official replies that teachers do not regularly plan their lessons.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Not regularly done
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) No regular planning
- (c) Category(s)
 - (i) Inadequate and irregular instruction planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official believes that teachers do not regularly plan their lessons.

Paragraph 6.2.2.2 summarises the responses of the three sets of respondents.

6.2.2.2 Summary

Joint planning where teachers share experiences, knowledge and skills seems to be applied in most cases. Teachers' decision-making with regard to lesson planning also tends to rely more on the syllabus. "Teachers sit together as stream teachers. They decide upon the concepts to teach,

objectives, strategies and the materials basing themselves on the syllabus” (PR 2). T 5 replies, “As I said earlier, we agree that as teachers we follow the national syllabus. The syllabus is divided into sections. It is very important for one to study, understand and note the work you intend children to learn.” Their planning is noted.

Kruger & Adams (1995: 17 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) state that one of the important aims of planning is to serve as a reminder of the successes and failures of previous lessons and to form the basis for modifying and shaping future lessons. “At the end, the teacher is extremely tired and that is when planning is affected. It is compromising because at the end of the day the teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day” (T 2). T 4 expands, “Sometimes we do not plan because we seem to lack time management. We are unable to divide our labour properly and that affects our planning”. Kruger & Adams’s findings may not apply to Lesotho primary school teachers. Their planning does not seem to take into consideration the successes and failures in previous lessons. Instead, they just consider what the syllabus says. As a result learners’ performance is also negatively affected.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 3:

6.2.3 Sub-question 3

If “no”, why don’t they do it?

6.2.3.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers state that they do not have time to plan. They are always extremely tired due to job overload caused by large classes.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) We do not find time to plan

- (ii) Teachers are extremely tired at the end of the day – planning is negatively affected
- (iii) We seem to lack time management
- (iv) We are unable to divide our labour properly
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Job overload
 - (ii) Insufficient planning time
 - (iii) Lack of time and work management skills
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Teachers consider job overload, insufficient planning time, lack of time and work management to be factors that lead to their inadequate lesson planning.

B Principals

Some principals mention that teachers' attitudes, aptitude, irresponsibility, and lack of skills influence them not to plan their lessons. Some mention that they are not sure whether teachers plan or not because they never monitor teachers' planning. This suggests that they are also unable to know reasons for those who do not plan.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Cannot warrant that they all do it and do it every time
 - (ii) Do not always check their lesson plan books
 - (iii) One's attitudes
 - (iv) One's aptitude
 - (v) Irresponsibility
 - (vi) Lack of actual skills
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Planning not a priority
 - (ii) Lack of commitment to one's work
 - (iii) Insufficient planning skills
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning

(d) Discussion

Principals also do not see planning as a priority. This, together with lack of commitment to their work, and insufficient planning skills with teachers may result in inadequate planning of lessons.

C The education official

The education official mentions that large classes impede teachers in planning their lessons.

(a) Code(s)

(i) Large classes

(b) Category(s)

(i) Job overload

(c) Pattern(s)

(i) Inadequate instructional planning

(d) Discussion

The education official thinks that teachers experience job overload and that it affects their planning negatively.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

6.2.3.2 Summary

It seems that due to job overload, inadequate time and work management, lack of commitment to one's job and insufficient planning skills, teachers' planning is irregular and inadequate. This has a negative impact on their instructional delivery. As a result learners' performance is negatively affected. "We seem to lack time management. We are unable to divide our labour properly so it affects our planning" (T 4). "At the end, the teacher is extremely tired and that is when planning is negatively affected. It is compromising because at the end of the day the teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day" (T 2). "One's attitudes, aptitude, irresponsibility, attitudes and lack of skills of doing things right are the contributing factors to teachers' planning" (PR 1). EO responds, "Have not got actual reasons for that besides large numbers of children they have. That might be one of their reasons though I have not heard from them". See SFED

and Dickson, 1981 in Karaca, 2008: 1111 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2. Also see Allinder, 1994 and Stein & Wang, 1998 in Karaca, 2008: 1113 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2.

Lack of teacher efficacy has resulted in inadequate planning and this has a negative influence on learners' performance. Inadequate planning prevents the teacher from varying his/her teaching methods to suit the type of learners s/he has. This as a result creates room for learner disengagement which in turn negatively affects their performance.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 4 follows:

6.2.4 Sub-question 4

What factors do teachers consider when planning their lessons?

6.2.4.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers mention the syllabus, content, time, learners' background knowledge as well as their level of understanding. Others point out teaching-learning materials, methods and strategies, activities, and objectives.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) The syllabus
 - (ii) Time
 - (iii) The content
 - (iv) The objective
 - (v) The methods, strategies and materials
 - (vi) The type of learners I have
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Several factors considered
 - (ii) "Teachers' knowledge" not of paramount importance
 - (iii) Learners' characteristics not of paramount importance

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Teachers are uncertain about what factors to consider when planning their lessons. They mention several factors and almost all of them relate to learners, which is good. None of the factors relate to them as teachers. For instance, their knowledge about learners and the content they are planning to deliver. This suggests inadequate instructional planning.

B Principals

Principals mention the syllabus, the content, learners' background knowledge as well as their level of understanding, activities, and enough knowledge of the content.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) The correct material
 - (ii) Enough content knowledge
 - (iii) The type of learners
 - (iv) The syllabus
 - (v) The scheme and record book
 - (vi) Teachers' and learners' activities
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Several learners-related factors are considered
 - (ii) "Teachers' knowledge" not of paramount importance
 - (iii) Learners' characteristics not of paramount importance
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Principals also tend to be uncertain about what factors teachers consider in their planning. This suggests inadequate planning of instruction.

C The education official

The education official states the content, learners' background knowledge as well as their level of understanding, teaching-learning materials, methods and strategies, and objectives.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Content
 - (ii) Objectives
 - (iii) Sometimes students' backgrounds
 - (iv) Materials to use
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Several learner-related factors are considered
 - (ii) "Teachers' knowledge" not of paramount importance
 - (iii) Learners' characteristics not of paramount importance
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official is also uncertain about factors teachers consider when planning their lessons. This uncertainty may result in inadequate instructional planning.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents is given below.

6.2.4.2 Summary

It has been found that teachers are uncertain about factors to consider when planning lessons. This then leads to the conclusion that their instructional planning is inadequate which in return affects their instructional delivery negatively. As a result there is a negative impact on learners' teaching and learning experience.

Teaching-learning materials, methods and strategies appear to be of paramount importance in teaching and learning. "The teaching and learning materials, activities and the techniques are very important in planning" (T 3). However, it is surprising to note that very few principals (but not teachers)

notice the importance of enough content knowledge. “Carrying the correct material and enough knowledge to support what one puts across” (PR 1).

None of the respondents mentioned knowledge of learners’ different characteristics. The implication is that teachers seem not to be keen about what to teach and who the intended recipient is. This indicates that the organized teaching-learning materials, methods and strategies apply to all learners regardless of their individual characteristics.

Peterson, Marx & Clark (1978: 417-432 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) describe teacher planning as a process of selecting educational objectives, diagnosing learner characteristics, and choosing from alternative instructional strategies in order to achieve certain learner outcomes. Borich (1996: 184 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) emphasises that it will be improper for the teacher to decide upon the content to teach before s/he is familiar with his/her learners’ characteristics. These characteristics include level of achievement, motivation, cultural diversity, family and community backgrounds.

Teacher planning requires thorough knowledge of the expected outcomes, content to be taught, learners’ characteristics as well as teaching-learning strategies (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 315; Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999: 12; Borich, 1996: 105, 2000: 211 and Cruickshank, Bainer & Metcalf, 1999: 46 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2). Questions on who, what, when, why, and how to teach are answered in the lesson plan (Jacobs *et al.* 2004: 315; Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999: 12; Borich, 1996: 49; Avenant, 1990: 79; Anderson, 1989: 45 and Jacobson *et al.* 1981: 59 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2).

The fact that none of the teachers came up with the above factors may imply that they consider them less important in their planning. “The teaching and learning materials, activities and the techniques are very important in planning” (T 3).

Zahorik (1975: 215 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) indicates that (a) content to be taught seems to be one of the most important planning decisions teachers make; (b)

selection of learner learning activities is mentioned frequently by teachers as an important planning decision, but rarely the first decision made; (c) planning decisions involving choice of materials is also mentioned by about half of the teachers; (d) specification of learning objectives is mentioned only infrequently by teachers as an important part of planning; and (e) planning decisions about evaluation, diagnosis, organization of the learning environment, and instructional strategies are made by one-third or fewer of the teachers.

Goodlad, Klein, and Associates (1974: 78 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) add that most teachers neither plan nor teach with specific learning objectives in mind. Rather, teachers' concerns are with "coverage of certain material" (Goodlad, *et al.* 1974: 78 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) and this has a great impact on learners' performance.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I then asked sub-question 5:

6.2.5 Sub-question 5

Besides text books, what are other sources of information do teachers use for their lesson preparations?

6.2.5.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers mention that they improvise whereas others refer to the use of old collections of books.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Be resourceful - improvise
 - (ii) Not easy to get other sources
 - (iii) Schools do not have libraries
 - (iv) Costly to get to libraries in town
 - (v) No relevant information in libraries
 - (vi) Computer illiterate
 - (vii) Not easy to access internet
 - (viii) Old collections of books

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Not easy to obtain other sources besides text books
 - (ii) Teaching and learning resources are a problem
 - (iii) Learners' text books are the major sources of information
 - (iv) Very limited content knowledge
 - (v) Complaints but no initiative
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning because their content knowledge is very limited
- (d) Discussion

Teachers feel that it is not easy to obtain other sources of information. They therefore rely on pupils' text books. This suggests limited content knowledge with teachers. As a result planning is inadequate.

B Principals

Some principals state that teachers use the library, readily available material beside textbooks, and text books. Others mention that teachers improvise.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Material is really not available
 - (ii) Share and/or wait for one another
 - (iii) Teachers hunt for teaching aids
 - (iv) Multiplication, division and science charts
 - (v) They use text books
 - (vi) The library
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Library use is rare
 - (ii) The department provides schools with some sources of information
 - (iii) Insufficient teaching and learning resources
 - (iv) Learners' text books are the major sources of information
 - (v) Very limited content knowledge
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning because content knowledge is very limited

(d) Discussion

Principals believe that there are not enough sources of information to assist teachers with their planning. This also suggests limited content knowledge with teachers; as a result instructional planning is poor.

C The education official

The education official mentions that teachers use readily available material provided by the department including those textbooks.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Charts for different subjects
- (ii) Science and mathematics kits

(b) Category(s)

- (i) The department provide schools with some sources of information
- (ii) Very limited content knowledge

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Inadequate instructional planning because content knowledge is very limited

(d) Discussion

The education official believes that as the department they provide teachers with sources of information to assist in their planning.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents follows in par. 6.2.5.2.

6.2.5.2 Summary

There is contradiction in respondents' views. They mention that they improvise yet they earlier mentioned that they do not have time to plan. "At the end, the teacher is extremely tired and that is when planning is negatively affected. It is compromising because at the end of the day the teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day" (T 2). "We seem to lack time management. We are unable to divide our labour properly so it negatively affects our planning" (T 4).

According to them, the situation does not allow them time to think about improvising. Even the library use that principals mentioned does not seem to be productive. “It is not easy to get other sources. Schools do not have libraries. It requires money for one to get to the library in town where we happen not to get relevant information. Internet is also not so easy for to use we are not even familiar with. We actually rely on text books” (T 2).

Even though the department supplies schools with some teaching and learning materials as indicated by the education official, “Schools are supplied with science and mathematics kits. Charts on different subjects are also given to schools”, such material does not seem to be effective. “You can imagine when a big school like ours is given one science kit and expected to do efficient work with that. Who will have access to it and who will not? We have three streams in class 7. Classes 5 and 6 also have concepts that demand the kid. We then have to fight over it” (T 4). This suggests that pupils’ text books are often used when planning lessons. This could also suggest that teachers’ content knowledge is very limited. I teach what I know, not what learners should learn.

See Allinder, 1994, Stein & Wang, 1998 SFED, Dickson, 1981 in Karaca, 2008: 1111 in par. 2.4 ch. 2. Also see Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 315; Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999: 12; Borich, 1996: 105, 2000: 211 and Cruickshank, Bainer & Metcalf, 1999: 46 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2.

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 6:

6.2.6 Sub-question 6

Do teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics?

6.2.6.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Although some teachers reply that very few of them acknowledge that learners have different characteristics, others state that they do not.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Some do – others do not
 - (ii) Sometimes I remember
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Learners' differences not always acknowledged
 - (ii) Not all teachers acknowledge them
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Not all teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics. This as a result makes teachers' planning inadequate.

B Principals

Some principals agree that teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics. Others disagree that teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Some do and others do not
 - (ii) The majority of teachers do not recognise that learners have different characteristics
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Learners' differences not always acknowledged
 - (ii) Not all teachers acknowledge them
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning

(d) Discussion

Principals also have a feeling that not all teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics. This therefore suggests a negative impact on their instructional planning.

C The education official

The education official replies that some of the teachers do while the majority of them do not.

(a) Code(s)

(i) The majority of teachers do not recognise differences

(b) Category(s)

(i) Learners' differences not always acknowledged

(ii) Not all teachers acknowledge them

(c) Pattern(s)

(i) Inadequate instructional planning

(d) Discussion

The education official also believes that not all teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents in par. 6.2.6.2 below.

6.2.6.2 Summary

It is surprising that respondents this time say they acknowledge that learners have different characteristics yet none of them mentioned this as a factor to consider during lesson planning. This brings me to the conclusion that teachers seem not to recognise sufficiently that learners have different characteristics. The EO explains, "Very few of them do. Because of high teacher-pupils ratio, the majority of teachers are unable to diagnose such differences." I sometimes remember" (T 3). PRs 2 and 3 respond, "Some do and others do not".

Borich (1996: 184 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) highlights that it will be improper for the teacher to decide upon the content to teach before s/he is familiar with his/her learners' characteristics. These characteristics include level of achievement,

motivation, cultural diversity, family and community backgrounds. See Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 315; Bickart, Jablon & Dodge, 1999: 12; Borich, 1996: 105, 2000: 211 and Cruickshank, Bainer & Metcalf, 1999: 46 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2.

However, teachers in Lesotho primary schools have not received any training in psycho-social care and support techniques such as play therapy (Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2004: 11 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2). Also see Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 518 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2.

I could not acknowledge learners' different characteristics because I did not even know what they are. I was a grade 4 teacher and I operated with the syllabus addressing the national goals as far as the grade 4 child is concerned. The issue of learners with different characteristics was beyond my capacity. This applied both before and after my teacher training. I taught grade 4 learners, not individual learners. This means that both my planning and delivery were improper and inadequate.

It is therefore suggested that teachers' instructional planning does not acknowledge learners' differences. They employ a one-size-fits-all approach in their planning. As a result struggling learners are negatively affected.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 7 follows:

6.2.7 Sub-question 7

If "yes", what do they do to accommodate such differences in their daily planning?

6.2.7.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers mention that they adapt their lessons to suit each learner. Others reply that it is difficult to plan according to each child's needs because they have to teach many children.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Adapt lessons to suit each and every learner
 - (ii) Diagnose learners' problems and deal with them
 - (iii) Not easy because we have so many learners
 - (iv) Have different plans
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some teachers appear to be considerate
 - (ii) Others encounter problems due to large classes
 - (iii) Little accommodation of learners' differences in planning
 - (iv) Difficulty in deciding on teaching practice alternatives
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (ii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Some teachers try to accommodate different learners' characteristics in their planning but they encounter problems due to large classes. With others it is a difficult approach to try.

B Principals

Principals mention that teachers diagnose learners' weak areas and incorporate them in their planning.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Teachers look at areas that are weak in the learner
 - (ii) Teachers incorporate learners' weak areas in their daily planning
 - (iii) Teachers divide learners into groups
 - (iv) Teachers bring learners together at the end of the day
 - (v) Discuss what an individual learner has come up with
 - (vi) Teachers assist those who encounter problems
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some teachers appear to be considerate in their delivery
 - (ii) Diverse responses in this regard
 - (iii) Instructional planning not monitored by principals
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Negligence

- (iii) Ignorance
 - (iv) Inadequate and irregular instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Uncertainty, ignorance and negligence of duty seem to be the influencing factors in principals' responses. Their point of view differs from that of teachers in this regard. They tend not to have an idea on how different learners' characteristics are accommodated in teachers' planning. Their responses are based on instructional delivery not instructional planning. This suggests that they do not sufficiently monitor teachers' instructional planning. This may result in inadequate and irregular instructional planning.

C The education official

The education official mentions that teachers are unable to acknowledge learners' different characteristics. This therefore makes it difficult for teachers to accommodate such different characteristics in their planning.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Teachers are unable to acknowledge learners' different characteristics
 - (ii) Accommodating them cannot be easy
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Little accommodation of learners' differences in planning
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official believes that if teachers are unable to acknowledge that learners have different characteristics, it will not be easy for them to accommodate such differences in planning.

Paragraph 6.2.7.2 summarises the responses of the three sets of respondents.

6.2.7.2 Summary

Some teachers find it impossible to accommodate learners' differences in their planning due to large numbers they face daily. "We have to adapt the lesson to suit each learner. We have to use different approaches to reach them all.

However, it is not easy because we have many children” (T 2). “But due to large classes, it is difficult to plan according to each child’s needs” (T 6). This suggests that teachers apply a “blanket” approach, rather than specifically focusing on struggling learners, which then leaves struggling learners not catered for. The EO replies, “Teachers are unable to acknowledge learners’ different characteristics, accommodating them cannot not be easy”.

This correlates with the experience Reilly (2007: 770 in Mokhtari, Rosemary & Edwards, 2007: 354 in par. 2.4 in ch 2) had. She says that one of her weaknesses has always been documenting a student’s progress, because she always found it such an overwhelming task. She would assess students, hand in the scores to an administrator, and file them away. She literally would assess here and there, never use the results, and concentrate on whole-group instruction. Individual needs based on assessment were never taken into consideration (Calderon (a kindergarten teacher)).

Uncertainty, ignorance and negligence are sensed in principals’ responses. They tend not to have a clear picture of how teachers accommodate learners’ different characteristics in their planning. Their responses refer to teaching practice alternatives teachers use in classes. PR 3 responds, “They rely more into peer educating. When the fast learners have completed their given tasks, they are assigned slow learners to assist. In some cases the teacher goes around to assist”. “They do. Even if children can be divided into groups, at the end of the day they come together and discuss what individuals have come up with. Those who encountered problems are assisted” (PR 4). The conclusion may be that they do not bother about whether and how teachers plan. PR 3 explains, “It is true that as the principal I cannot warrant that they all do their planning every time because I do not always check their lesson plan books”.

Teachers’ instructional planning tends not to accommodate different learners’ characteristics. This has a negative impact on instructional delivery, which then spills onto learners’ teaching and learning experience. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 8:

6.2.8 Sub-question 8

If “no”, what do they present as reasons why they needn’t do it?

6.2.8.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention a lack of skills, teacher ignorance, and large classes to be the factors influencing their planning.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) We are not aware that learners have different characteristics
 - (ii) We are unable to identify those differences
 - (iii) We are not equipped with skills that would enable us to identify different learners’ characteristics
 - (iv) Large classes impede us
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Lack of skills
 - (ii) Ignorance
 - (iii) Large classes
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that large classes, ignorance and lack of skills are the factors contributing to their inadequate instructional planning.

B Principals

Principals mention that teachers’ lack of skills and ignorance are the reasons why they do not acknowledge that learners have different characteristics.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) How to accommodate different learners’ characteristics in teaching and learning still remains a problem
 - (ii) Honestly not aware
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Lack of skills
 - (ii) Ignorance

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that, due to lack of skills and ignorance, teachers are unable to acknowledge learners' different characteristics. This as a result affects their instructional planning negatively.

C The education official

The education official mentions that lack of skills, large classes and workload are the reasons why teachers are unable to acknowledge learners' different characteristics.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Lack of skills
 - (ii) Large numbers of learners per class
 - (iii) Workload
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Workload due to large classes
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that teachers' workload due to large classes and lack of skills contributes to their planning problems. As a result their instructional planning becomes inappropriate.

I will now summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents.

6.2.8.2 Summary

Lack of skills, large classes and teacher ignorance are seen to negatively affect teacher planning. Teachers are therefore unable to incorporate different learners' characteristics in their planning. This deficiency forces them to apply a one-size-fits-all approach in their teaching and learning. As a result learners with learning problems suffer. T 2 and PR 3 reply, "Teachers lack skills that enable them to identify different learners' characteristics". How to accommodate that in the teaching-learning still remains a problem" (PR 2).

The EO responds, “Apart from lack of skills, teachers are loaded with large numbers of learners. It becomes difficult with some of them to realise the importance of some of these issues due to workload”.

This suggests that teachers went through insufficient and irregular teacher training. For this reason, they are unable to accommodate learners’ differences in their planning. As a result their planning becomes inadequate and irregular. Also see Paulin, 2006: 187 in Malm 2009: 85 in par. 2.4 in ch.2.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 9 followed:

6.2.9 Sub-question 9

How do teachers find out about their learners’ differences?

6.2.9.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention lesson evaluation, quizzes, the March test and exams.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) When the child does not perform according to expectations
 - (ii) I evaluate them
 - (iii) Quizzes
 - (iv) Home work assignments and tests
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Only classroom performance is evaluated
 - (ii) External influences are not taken care of
 - (iii) Insufficient learner assessment strategies
 - (iv) Lack of assessment skills
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
 - (iii) Inadequate instructional planning

(d) Discussion

Teachers seem to be more concerned about classroom influences on learners' performance. Less attention is given to external influences. This suggests uncertainty and ignorance about factors that may negatively influence learners' performance. As a result instructional planning is hindered.

B Principals

Principals respond that teachers use quizzes and feedback from previous teachers, the March tests and exams to assess learners' performance.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Interest of the teacher
- (ii) Tests and exams
- (iii) Teachers are informed of learners' learning problems
- (iv) Learners' reports
- (v) Records from previous class teachers

(b) Category(s)

- (i) Only classroom performance is evaluated
- (ii) External influences are not taken care of
- (iii) Insufficient learner assessment strategies

(c) Pattern(s)

- (i) Uncertainty
- (ii) Ignorance
- (iii) Inadequate instructional planning

(d) Discussion

Principals also appear to be uncertain and ignorant about what criteria teachers should use to assess learners' performance. They also rely more on internal influences though not most of them. Teachers' competences are not included in their assessment. Less attention is given to external influences.

C The education official

The education official cites tests and exams.

(a) Code(s)

- (i) Tests and exams

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Only classroom performance is evaluated
 - (ii) External influences are not taken care of
 - (iii) Insufficient learner assessment strategies
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official too tends to be uncertain about strategies teachers use to assess learner performance. This suggests inadequate instructional planning.

I will now summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents.

6.2.9 Summary

Class evaluation, quizzes, tests and exams seem to be playing an important role in teachers' decision-making. T 1, 2 and 3 respond, "Evaluations that we give after every lesson". TPR 5 answers, "Their reports and records from previous class teacher as well as quizzes." PR 2 and the EO reply, "The tests and exams that learners write". Much attention is partly given to internal (classroom) influences. I say partly because more work is given to learners who tend to experience teaching and learning problems. Everything seems to be right with teachers which may not be the case. This suggests uncertainty and ignorance in educators about the appropriate criteria for assessing learners' different characteristics. See Reilly 2007: 770 in Mokhtari, Rosemary & Edwards, 2007: 354 in par. 2.4 in ch 2.

It is mentioned that due to lack of diagnostic skills, large classes, and ignorance, teachers are unable to identify learners' differences. It is therefore impossible for them to assess such differences in learners. This implies that they have never tried to identify such differences or else inadequate assessment strategies are applied in this regard.

It is therefore of great importance that the contents of teacher training programmes should be developed so that they correspond more fully with the needs that newly qualified teachers have. This mainly involves skills that form part of social competence but also knowledge of the problems learners have and the ability to deal with them professionally (Paulin, 2006: 187 in Malm, 2009: 85 in par. 2.4 in ch.2).

Teachers seem to be uncertain about which learner assessment strategies to use. This then makes it difficult to employ the right assessment strategies in order to identify different learners' characteristics. As a result their planning is negatively affected, so does instructional delivery as well as learners' performance. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I then asked the last sub-question:

6.2.10 Sub-question 10

When do teachers find out about their learners' differences?

6.2.10.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers respond that they find out about their learners' differences at the beginning of the year, and in the middle of the year. Others mention the March test and during the lesson presentation are the right times for them to diagnose such differences.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) During the time I teach
 - (ii) At the evaluation session
 - (iii) During March tests
 - (iv) At the beginning of every year, when we meet
 - (v) In the middle of the year
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Only content based assessment
 - (ii) Less attention on out of classroom influences

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Teachers seem to be uncertain about what the appropriate is time for them to find out about learners' problems. They tend to put more focus on content-based assessment. Outside classroom influences tend not to be taken care of. This suggests inadequate instructional planning since they may also negatively affect learners' performance.

B Principals

Some principals mention that such differences can be diagnosed at the beginning of the year, early enough, in the middle of the year, and during March tests. Others state that it is impossible to diagnose such differences at the beginning of the year.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) After March tests
 - (ii) Not easy to identify such differences at the beginning of the year
 - (iii) In the middle of the year
 - (iv) Before the actual teaching and learning takes place
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Only content-based assessment
 - (ii) Less attention on out of classroom influences
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
 - (iii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

Principals also tend to be uncertain about what the appropriate time is for teachers to diagnose learners' problems. This suggests the ineffectiveness of their lesson plan monitoring. As a result teachers' instructional planning is inadequate.

C The education official

The education official mentions that it takes time for teachers to diagnose learners' problems. With some it is towards March whereas with others it is after the June exams.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) It takes time
 - (ii) For some it is towards March
 - (iii) For others it is after the June exams
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) A longer time is required
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Uncertainty
 - (ii) Ignorance
 - (iii) Inadequate instructional planning
- (d) Discussion

The education official too seems to be uncertain about what the proper time for teachers to diagnose learners' problems is.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three respondents.

6.2.10.2 Summary

Teachers are uncertain and ignorant about the appropriate time for identifying learners' different characteristics. T 1 responds, "During the time I teach, at the evaluation session." T 6 replies, "It is in March when the teacher notices those children who are fast, average and slow." T 4 explains, "We become aware of such problems when you are already working with them. That is, it is in the middle of the year, not towards the end."

The same uncertainty and ignorance are seen with principals. "It is not easy to identify such differences at the beginning of the year. Mid year, towards March is the appropriate time" (PR 4). PR 5 expands, "Actually they diagnose such differences at the beginning of the year, after the allocation of classes. They must know their learners first before the actual teaching and learning takes

place.” PR 2 responds, “They are able to diagnose such differences after March tests.”

The education official also appears to be uncertain about what the appropriate time is. The EO responds, “It takes time for an individual teacher to diagnose such differences.” For some it is towards March. For others it is after June exams.” This suggests that teachers lack planning skills. They plan but for whom, to them it is not an issue. This negatively affects their instructional delivery as well as learners’ performance. Also see Ministry of Education and Training, Lesotho, 2004: 11 and Young, Wright & Laster, 2009: 518 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I earlier gave the main question and the sub-questions. I discussed, interpreted, analysed and summarised the responses of the three sets of respondents. I will now conclude with a summary in the form of a table of the first question only. The rest of the table will appear as Annexure E later in the study.

Table 6.1: *Sample of data and assigned coding categories*

<i>Do teachers plan their lessons before teaching?</i>			
Response	Code(s)	Category(s)	Pattern(s)
<p>To some extent. It does not happen regularly. We do not actually plan the 'how part of it'</p> <p>Yes we plan every lesson.</p> <p>This is what I always do as a teacher.</p> <p>Yes, we prepare.</p> <p>Yes, as a teacher I prepare before I teach.</p> <p>To a certain extent. It is not done in a reliable way. It is not satisfactory.</p> <p>Yes, they do plan their lessons before they teach.</p> <p>Yes they do plan before teaching. But I cannot warranty that they all do their planning every time because I do not always check their lesson plans.</p> <p>Yes, they do.</p> <p>Yes, they do plan them.</p> <p>Yes they do, but not satisfactorily. Teachers do not plan their daily work. They plan to impress officials.</p>	<p>To some extent Not regularly.</p> <p>Not actually the 'how part of it'</p> <p>Yes we plan every lesson.</p> <p>To a certain extent.</p> <p>Cannot warranty that they all do their planning every time</p> <p>Not satisfactorily.</p> <p>Teachers do not plan their daily work.</p> <p>They plan to impress officials.</p>	<p>Not genuinely done</p> <p>Ineffective instructional delivery</p>	<p>Irregular and inadequate instructional planning</p>

Earlier in this chapter, I addressed perceptions of educators on teacher planning. I gave the main question and sub-questions, discussed, interpreted, analysed the responses of the three sets of respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official. I summarised the responses at the end of every sub-question. I concluded with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only as the rest will appear as Annexure E.

I will now conclude the section on the perceptions of educators on teacher planning. I will further conclude this chapter by presenting findings in a diagram.

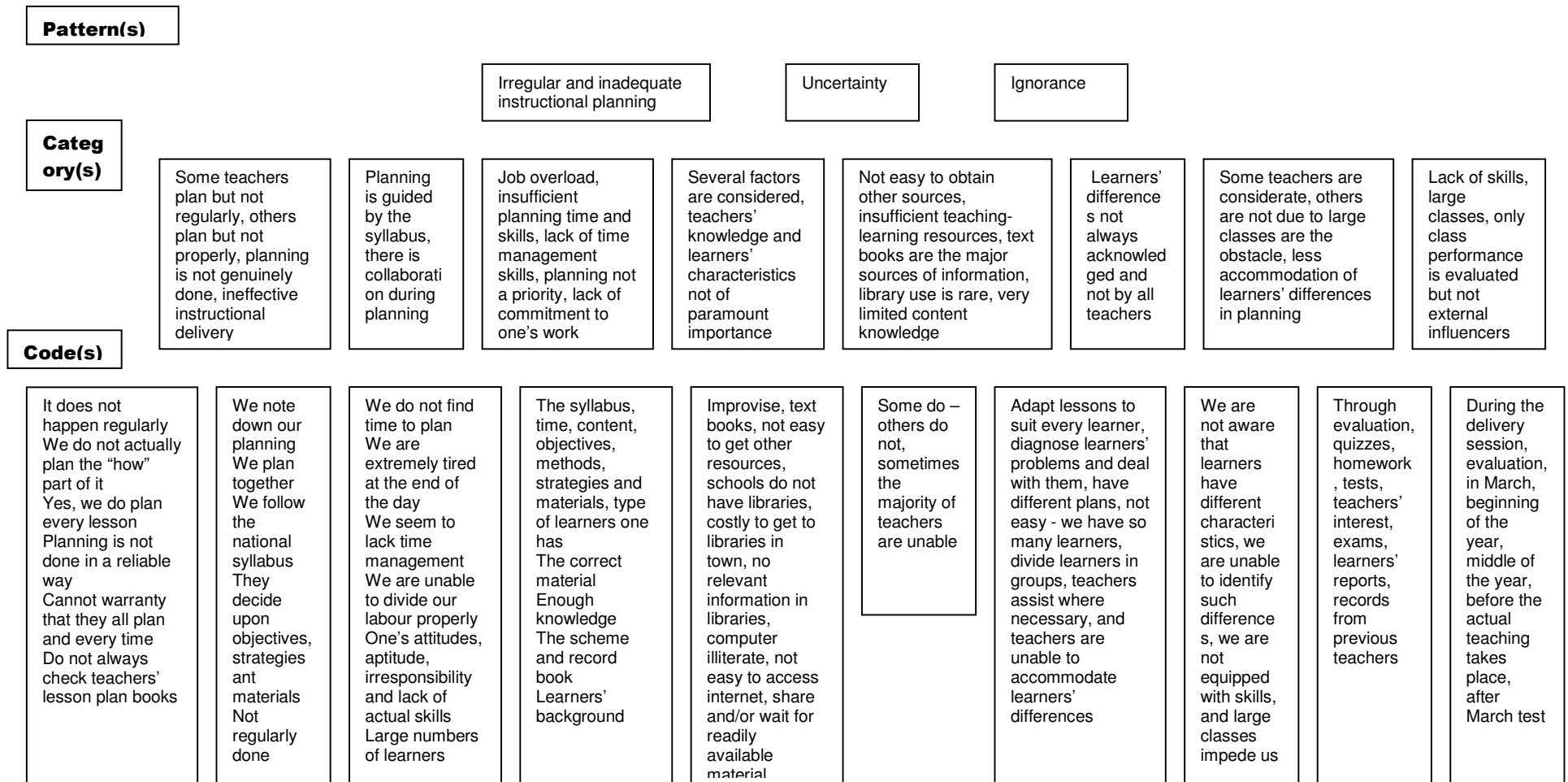
6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 Perceptions on teacher planning

The aim of having this main question was to determine the relationship between teacher planning and learners' performance in Lesotho primary schools. The working assumption was that teacher planning contributes to high repetition rate in Lesotho primary schools. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Irregular and inadequate instructional planning, uncertainty and ignorance are perceived to be the contributing factors in this regard. I will discuss full details under empirical findings in chapter 8.

I will now present my findings on perceptions of educators on teacher planning in a diagram below.

Figure 6.1: *Presentation of respondents' perceptions on teacher planning*



In chapter seven I will deal with data analysis and interpretation in order to determine how educators perceive the impact of parental involvement on learners' performance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Perceptions of educators on parental involvement

7.1 Introduction

Chapter six was about perceptions of educators on teacher planning. In chapter seven I will concentrate on perceptions of educators on parental involvement. I will give the main question and sub-questions, discuss, interpret, and analyse their responses. I will summarise their responses at the end of every sub-question. I conclude each sub-question with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only. I will then round off the chapter by a brief conclusion which will be followed by a diagram representing findings.

7.2 Perceptions on parental involvement

The main question was:

What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition?

I asked the first sub-question:

7.2.1 Sub-question 1

Do parents understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education?

7.2.1.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers agree that parents understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education whereas others disagree.

- (a) Code(s)
- (i) Some do not – others do
 - (ii) The majority do not
 - (iii) They leave all the responsibility with teachers
 - (iv) They are so ignorant

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some parents do not understand their responsibility
 - (ii) Others are less involved in education matters
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that, although there are parents that understand their role as parents in their children's education, there are those that do not understand.

B Principals

Principals agree that parents understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education. However, some principals disagree.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) To quite an extent really
 - (ii) Some of them do - others do not
 - (iii) The majority of parents have ignored their responsibility
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some parents do not understand their responsibility
 - (ii) Others are less involved in education matters
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that parents do not understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education. Nonetheless, there are those who believe that parents understand their responsibility.

C The education official

The education official disagrees that parents understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) No
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Parents do not understand their responsibility

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

The education official also feels that parents do not understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education.

A summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents follows in par. 7.2.1.2.

7.2.1.2 Summary

The impression is that there are those parents that do understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education whereas others do not. This makes those who do not irresponsible. As a result there is lack of parental involvement in schools. "They do not. Some do not but others do. The majority does not" (T 1). Ts 2, 6 and the EO respond, "They are very ignorant". This suggests that parents are not involved, aware, knowledgeable and encouraging their children to do better academically.

The findings correspond with the reviewed literature that many parental involvement policies fail to recognise the ethnic diversity among parents. Such parents tend to know little about the education system. This contributes to widening the gap between the involved and the uninvolved parents, and the achievers and the underachievers among their children. As a result these are the parents that are often seen as indifferent or difficult and considered by schools to be 'hard to reach' (Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 and Crozier & Davies, 2007: 297 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

Past experience was also found to affect parental involvement in one way or the other. Some parents have had difficulties at school as children and have negative memories that make a visit to school an uncomfortable experience (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 279 and Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). Other parents, who themselves were not successful in school, feel intimidated and anxious about interacting with teachers (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 279 and Karther & Lowden, 1997 in Perla & O'Donnell,

2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). Also, if in the past schools have only contacted parents to discuss problems, parents feel justifiably defensive and unwilling to become actively involved (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 279 and Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

Parents are involved if they see that supporting and enhancing their children's school achievement is part of their 'job' as parents and if they feel they have the capacity to contribute (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong & Jones, 2001 and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997 Van Voorhis, 2003: 324-325 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). Parents see their roles as encourager/supporter, disciplinarian, provider and cultural historian. It is in these roles that they convey their expectation for the education of their children (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). They therefore feel hesitant to communicate with teachers due to the cultural and/or language barriers or the fear of being labelled as problem parents by reporting children's problems at home (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

I mentioned earlier that I was a parent in a few of the primary schools in Lesotho, both in the highlands and lowlands of the country. I knew my responsibility to pay school fees and to see to it that my child goes to school.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 2:

7.2.2 Sub-question 2

If 'yes', how have you come to realise that?

7.2.2.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers state that parents who understand their role as parents for their children's education sign their children's homework assignments and visit their

children's schools. Those who do not understand do not care; they have many excuses to give for everything they are asked to do.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Very few parents sign children's homework and come to school to find out how their children are doing
 - (ii) Parents give many excuses
 - (iii) Parents do not respond to calls
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Few parents understand their responsibility
 - (ii) Parents are uninvolved in education matters
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that, while some parents show their responsibility by signing their children's homework assignments and visiting schools, there are those who do not regard that as their responsibility.

B Principals

Principals mention that parents of average learners sign their children's homework assignments and visit their children's schools whereas those of learners with learning problems shy away.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Parents do not bother signing their children's home work assignments
 - (ii) They do not collect their children's report cards
 - (iii) Only those that care visit their schools
 - (iv) Parents of children with problems shy away
 - (v) Parents of learners with average performance always respond and at a high rate
 - (vi) Parents refuse to buy exercise books - they claim that stationery is free
 - (vii) They do not attend teacher-to-parent meetings
 - (viii) They do not care whether children have passed or not

- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Few parents understand their responsibility
 - (ii) Parents are uninvolved in education matters
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that parents are irresponsible because they do not comply with some school requirements such as signing of children's homework assignments; attending meetings; and collecting report cards.

C The education official

The education official replies that parents are not cooperative at all. They always have excuses to give.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Parents are not cooperative at all
 - (ii) They always have excuses to give
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Parents are less involved in education matters
 - (ii) Parents have ignored their responsibility
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

The education official too believes that parents always give excuses when it is their turn to play their part.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

7.2.2.2 Summary

The majority of parents in Lesotho primary schools do not understand their responsibilities as parents for their children's education. Signing homework assignments, buying lost stationery, collecting children's report cards from schools, responding to teachers' calls for discussion still remain a problem. "They do not bother signing their children's homework assignments. They do not collect their children's report cards from schools. They do not care

whether their children come to school clean or not” (PR 5). “Parents are not cooperative at all. They always have excuses to give” (EO). Parents refuse to buy the exercise books saying that stationery is free” (PRs 3 and 4). This suggests that parents do not understand their responsibility as parents in their children’s education. This can be due to some of the reasons found from the reviewed literature. See Harris & Goodall, 2008, Karther & Lowden, 1997 and Brown, 1989 in Perla & O’Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2. Also see Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong & Jones, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997: in Van Voorhis, 2003: 324-325 and Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2.

Several studies highlight parental frustration and embarrassment when they help children with skills that they (parents) do not remember, never learnt, and/or explain differently from the teacher (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 313; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler & Burow, 1995 and National Commission of children, 1991 in Perla & O’Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). As a result, parents provide a form of help that is negative or inappropriate such as helping in order to finish more quickly; helping despite knowing that the work has to be completed independently; or helping with the knowledge that the help makes the work harder for the learner (Cooper, Lindsay & Nye, 2000 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 325 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). Teachers provide little or no explanation about helping children with home work, or helping them with reading or mathematics (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 313 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

The lacking parental involvement in Lesotho primary schools creates a gap between parents and schools as well as parents and their child as far as education is concerned. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

Sub-question 3 follows:

7.2.3 Sub-question 3

If “no”, what have you as the teacher, principal, and the department done to make them aware of their responsibilities?

7.2.3.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that they call parents to teacher/parent meetings.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Invite parents to meetings
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Teachers invite parents to discussions
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers recognise the importance of parents in children’s education. So they normally call them to meetings.

B Principals

Principals point out that schools invite parents to parents’ meetings.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) We normally call parents to meetings
 - (ii) Hold children’s reports
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Schools take the initiative to involve parents
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also think that there is a need for parents to be involved in their children’s education. They therefore initiate meetings with them.

C The education official

The education official points out that as the department they encourage school/parents’ meetings.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) We encourage principals to have parents meetings
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Schools call parents to meetings
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

The education official too considers parental involvement to be important. The department therefore encourages schools to have parents' meetings.

Paragraph 7.2.3.2 gives a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

7.2.3.2 Summary

Inviting parents to meetings is considered to be a communication strategy used by Lesotho primary schools. "We invite them for discussions" (Ts 1, 2, 4 and 6). "We normally call parents' meetings" PRs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

This implies that schools understand that their effort alone cannot achieve the nation's goal for the child's education. They therefore require parents to play their role too. They therefore take the initiative of calling parents for meetings to discuss issues of concern. With some schools the effort tends to be structured and persistent. I say this because they even go to the extent of holding the child's report for the parents to come to fetch it. "I sometimes hold children's reports with a hope that they will be eager to know their children's performance then come for them" (PR 2). But still there is no positive response from parents.

This also may result from the method or approach applied. See Paulin, 2006 in Malm, 2009: 85 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2 who substantiated the argument. The reviewed literature confirms that teachers report that they want more communication with parents but they need more instruction and encouragement to develop high-quality home work assignments (Epstein & Becker, 1982 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 324-325 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). This indicates that many teachers are not well prepared for, or being trained to

communicate effectively with parents/caretakers from different backgrounds and culture with whom they will interact (Epstein, 2001 in Dotger, 2008: 93 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

The department also seems to see the importance of parents in their children's education. They therefore encourage schools to have meetings with parents. EO responds, "We always encourage principals to have parents meetings where issues pertaining schools are discussed as well as children's performance."

With others the initiative may be just to ease their consciences. "We call parents once every year" (PR 4). We normally call parents meetings at the end of every year" (PR2). It is unrealistic to expect that involving parents once in a year can have any positive impact in the running of the school.

This suggests a need for parental involvement in Lesotho primary schools. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 4:

7.2.4 Sub-question 4

How have they responded to such information?

7.2.4.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Some teachers mention that parents' response towards their invitation is positive. Others reply that parents do not respond to their initiative.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Very well really
 - (ii) Some of them respond to calls, others do not
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some parents respond positively
 - (ii) Others respond negatively

- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Less parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that parents respond positively to their invitation. Nevertheless, others believe that parents' response to their invitation is negative.

B Principals

Even though some principals mention that parents attend meetings satisfactorily, others reply that parents do not attend meetings satisfactorily.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Very bad - it becomes difficult
 - (ii) Reports remain at school until the child completes school
 - (iii) Very exciting
 - (iv) Some understand - others are still lagging behind
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Negative response with some
 - (ii) Positive response with others
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (ii) Less parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals believe that although some parents refuse to attend meetings, others understand the importance of meetings and respond positively to them.

C The education official

The education official replies that parents are not cooperative at all. They complain that meetings waste their time.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) They complain about their wasted time with meetings
 - (ii) Parents are not cooperative at all
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Negative response
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement

(d) Discussion

The education official considers parents' response to be negative.

I will now summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents.

7.2.4.2 Summary

The responses show that even though some parents' response to meetings is not good, there are those that respond positively to schools' invitations. "Positively really, they take it positively" (Ts 1, 2 and 4). PRs 1, 2, 4, 5 and the EO respond, "Their response becomes relatively very bad. It becomes difficult". This then disables effective communication between schools and parents as well as parents and their children with regard to school matters. There are several reasons that may influence parents' responses. See Harris & Goodall, 2008: 279, Karther & Lowden, 1997 and Brown, 1989 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 and Paulin, 2006 in Malm, 2009: 85 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2.

Also see Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331; Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeJong & Jones, 2001 and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 324-325 and Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2.

As a result their engagement in school matters is limited and this affects their children academically. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked the fifth sub-question:

7.2.5 Sub-question 5

How often do parents, teachers and/or principal meet in an academic year?

7.2.5.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers say that they invite parents to meetings when the need arises. It can be once, twice, thrice and/or four times a year.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Twice
 - (ii) When there is a need
 - (iii) At least three times a year
 - (iv) Once a year
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) At least once a year with some schools
 - (ii) More than once with others
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers see a need for parental involvement in children's education. They therefore call parents to meetings at least once every year.

B Principals

Principals mention that they call parents meetings once, twice and/or four times a year.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Once a year
 - (ii) At least two or four times a year
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) At least once a year with some schools
 - (ii) More than once with others
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also feel a need for parental involvement in children's education. They therefore invite them to meetings at least once a year.

C The education official

The education official responds that some schools invite parents to meetings once a year while with others it is twice a year.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Some once a year
 - (ii) Others twice
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) At least once a year with some schools
 - (ii) More than once with others
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

The education official agrees that schools see the need for parental involvement. They therefore invite parents to meetings at least once a year.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

7.2.5.2 Summary

The notion is that schools see a need for parental involvement in children's education. They call parents to meetings at least once a year. "When there is a need" (Ts 1 and 4). "We meet once a year" (EO; PRs1, 2 & 4).

The time limit for parental involvement does not seem to fully accommodate parents in their children's education. This suggests that parental involvement is not a priority in Lesotho primary schools.

The reviewed literature confirms that low teacher expectations of parents also increase the communication gap between teachers and families (Dodd & Konzal, 2000 and Karther & Lowden, 1997 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). Studies in the United States have shown that parental involvement is high when teachers have positive attitudes toward parents and work collaboratively with them (Bauch & Goldring, 2000 and Griffith, 1998 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). Schools' attitudes to parental involvement and an inviting climate influence parents' decisions of becoming involved in their children's schools (Eccles & Harold, 1993 and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 412 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

Zhao and Akiba (2009: 412 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2) found that schools expect parents to provide home-based support such as preparing students' lunchboxes, making sure home work is completed and communicating with schools about students' problems at home. They are not expecting parents to assist teachers and to participate in school governance. Research also showed that schools rather than parents are often 'hard to reach'. It is also found that while parents, teachers and learners tend to agree that parental engagement is a 'good thing', they also hold very different views about the purpose of engaging parents (Harris & Goodall, 2008: 277 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

Parental involvement is lacking in Lesotho primary schools. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I asked sub-question 6:

7.2.6 Sub-question 6

What do they/you discuss?

7.2.6.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that they invite parents to schools to fetch learners' reports, discuss their performance and the overall administration of the school.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Collect the reports
 - (ii) Overall administration of the school
 - (iii) Learners' performance
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Schools meet parents in an academic year
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that there is a need for parental involvement in their children's education. They therefore initiate discussions with parents where

issues such as learners' performance and school administration in general can be discussed.

B Principals

Principals reply that they invite parents to meetings for purposes such as getting to know one another, discussing the school's administration, children's performance and hygiene, and collection of children's reports.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) What goes on at school
 - (ii) Getting to know one another
 - (iii) Their children's performance
 - (iv) Collection of report cards
 - (v) Hygiene
 - (vi) Give them an induction
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Schools meet parents in an academic year
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also see a need for parental involvement in their children's education. They therefore initiate meetings with parents where issues such as administration, learners' performance, and induction giving can be tackled.

C The education official

The education official responds that schools invite parents to meetings to discuss problems children encounter in their teaching and learning experiences.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Learners' academic problems
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Schools meet parents in an academic year
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement

(d) Discussion

The education official perceives parental involvement to be important in their children education. They therefore encourage schools to have parents' meetings where learners' performance and other education issues can be discussed.

A brief summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents is given below.

7.2.6.2 Summary

Educators perceive parental involvement to be a requirement in schools. They believe that it creates the opportunity for parents and schools to discuss issues such as learners' performance, school administration as well as to induct parents. PR 4 responds, "We discuss learners' performance". T 2 expands, "We discuss the overall administration of the school. Twice a year we discuss the learner's performance, how the progress is, what problems the learner encounters in his/her learning and how s/he should be assisted". The EO replies, "Teachers call parents when they discover learners' academic problems".

Zhao & Akiba (2009: 412 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2) found that schools expect parents to provide home-based support such as preparing students' lunchboxes, making sure home work is completed and communicating with schools about students' problems at home. They are not expecting parents to assist teachers and to participate in school governance. See Harris & Goodall, 2008: 277 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2.

This contradicts what Epstein (1995: 112; Petit 1998 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 104 and Figure 2.4 by Berger, 2000: 152, par. 2.5 in ch. 2) describe as the activities, dimensions and possible roles for parents in schools.

Parental involvement in children's education creates an opportunity for both the teacher and parents to identify and attend to learners' problems as early as possible. It also brings understanding of one's responsibility. The findings

appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

The next sub-question followed:

7.2.7 Sub-question 7

How do parents react when they discover that their children have failed and have to repeat grades?

7.2.7.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that some parents become hurt to the extent that they shed tears when they hear that their children have failed and have to repeat grades. They also respond that some parents accept whatever results they come across.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) It is painful - they shed tears
 - (ii) Some accept anything taking place
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some parents become emotionally hurt
 - (ii) Others just accept whatever results
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers perceive that parents become emotionally hurt when they hear that their children have failed and should repeat grades. They therefore feel that there is a need for parental involvement in schools so that they can be abreast of the progress of their children and assist.

B Principals

Principals mention that some parents become hurt when they hear that their children failed and have to repeat grades. They also explain that there are those parents who never complain about their children's performance, they accept whatever results.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) They put all the blame on teachers
 - (ii) Have not seen or heard a parent commenting
 - (iii) They become hurt and it is very painful
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Some parents become emotionally hurt
 - (ii) Others never comment – accept whatever results
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also observe hurting emotional feelings with parents when they heard negative results about their children's performance. However, they mention that there are those that accept whatever results.

C The education official

The education official mentions that parents feel hurt when they hear that their children failed and have to repeat grades.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) They really feel hurt
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Parents become emotionally hurt
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) A need for parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

The education official too believes that parents feel hurt when they hear that their children failed and have to repeat grades.

I will now summarise the responses of the three sets of respondents.

7.2.7.2 Summary

The perception is that parents experience emotional tension when they realize that their children do not perform well at school. "They become hurt and the situation is very painful" (Ts 1, 2, 4 & 6; PRs 2, 3 & 5; EO).

The implication is that lack of parental involvement in children's education does not only affect children's performance at school. Parents also are negatively affected either emotionally, morally, financially, or socially. The relationships between parents and their children, parents and teachers as well as teachers and children are also negatively affected. This therefore suggests a need for parental involvement in schools in order to rectify factors that might emotionally hurt others.

The reviewed literature agrees that when parents and teachers have open discussions on children's special needs, health problems, and any home circumstances, it helps the teacher to develop approachable attitudes towards the learner. The same openness gives the teacher the opportunity to contact them if s/he suspects that the child has a problem of any kind. Such discussions also guide the teacher as to make allowance for individual differences between learners as well as, to identify and attempt to remedial learning difficulties. Parental involvement opens doors for teachers and parents to discuss their children's progress at effective parent-teacher conferences (Hornby, 2000: 16-17; Rudney, 2005: 37 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

Machen *et al.* (2005: 13-16 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2) also adduce that, although the relation between family factors and children's success is complex, the positive influence of parent involvement promotes a family-school partnership that increases constructive child outcomes. Learners whose parents are involved are more likely to take personal responsibility for their learning. When parents show an interest in their child's education by getting involved, learners adopt a mastery goal orientation to learning where they are more likely to seek challenging tasks, persist through academic challenges, and experience satisfaction in their schoolwork. Finally, when parents become involved with learners' reading activities, learners demonstrate greater self-efficacy as readers, are more motivated to read, and voluntarily participate in literacy activities.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I then asked the last sub-question.

7.2.8 Sub-question 8

What reasons do you usually give to convince a parent that his/her child has failed and has to repeat a grade?

7.2.8.1 Responses:

A Teachers

Teachers mention that problems in reading and writing, ignorance in everything concerning education and absenteeism are factors contributing to learners' failure and grade repetition.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) The learner does not do homework assignments
 - (ii) The learner cannot meet the standard
 - (iii) They cannot read and write
 - (iv) Ignorance in learners
 - (v) Absenteeism
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Ignorance
 - (ii) Absenteeism
 - (iii) Reading and writing problems
 - (iv) Learners are below standard
 - (v) Lack of self-confidence and motivation
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Teachers believe that lack of parental involvement in children's education may result in learners' problems in reading and writing, ignorance, below standard, a high absenteeism rate, lack of self-confidence and motivation.

B Principals

Principals mention that children fail and repeat grades because of a high absenteeism rate, learners' lack of motivation, and different capabilities.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Children's attendance is very poor
 - (ii) Children do not have the passion and interest to learn
 - (iii) Different capabilities
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Absenteeism
 - (ii) Learners' lack of motivation
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

Principals also believe that lack of parental involvement may result in learners' lack of motivation, and a high absenteeism rate.

C The education official

The education official mentions that children's reading and writing problems and a high absenteeism rate contribute to their failure and grade repetition.

- (a) Code(s)
 - (i) Children do not know how to read and write
 - (ii) Children's attendance is poor
- (b) Category(s)
 - (i) Reading and writing problems
 - (ii) Absenteeism
- (c) Pattern(s)
 - (i) Lack of parental involvement
- (d) Discussion

The education official also believes that lack of parental involvement contributes to learners' reading and writing problems and absenteeism.

I will now give a summary of the responses of the three sets of respondents.

7.2.8.2 *Summary*

Educators believe that lack of parental involvement contributes to learners' absenteeism, reading and writing problems as well as ignorance. These factors also appear to be contributing negatively to learners' performance. Children cannot read and write; they are not independent; they do not do home work assignments; and/or they cannot meet the standard" (Ts 1 & 5; EO). Children's school attendance is poor and they lack passion and interest to learn" (Ts 3 & 6; PRs 3 & 5; EO). This suggests that parental involvement negatively influences learners' performance.

These findings resonate well with the reviewed literature by Ballantine (1999: 170); Karther & Lowden (1997: 43 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 104); Sussell, Carr & Hartman (1996: 55) and Rockwell, Andre & Hawley (1996: 13 par. 2.5 in ch. 2) who have summarized the benefits of parental involvement in the education system as follows:

- Improved communication between parents and children and teachers as well;
- Higher academic performance of children whose parents are involved;
- High school attendance and less disruptive behaviour;
- Increased likelihood of completing high school and attending college;
- A sense of accomplishment for parents;
- Higher parental expectations of children;
- Improved study habits among children;
- Improved teacher morale;
- Improved school climate; and
- Increased likelihood of parents deciding to continue their own education.

The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition.

I earlier gave the main question and the sub-questions. I discussed, interpreted, analysed and summarised the responses of the three sets of respondents. I will now conclude with a summary in the form of a table of the first question only. The rest will appear as Annexure F later in the study.

Table 7.1: *Sample of data and assigned coding categories*

<i>Do parents understand their responsibility as parents for their children's education?</i>			
<i>Response</i>	<i>Code(s)</i>	<i>Category(s)</i>	<i>Pattern(s)</i>
<p>They do not. Some do not others do. But the majority does not.</p> <p>No, they see their responsibility in a different way.</p> <p>Some of them do, others do not. parents throw the whole Responsibility unto teachers.</p> <p>They are so ignorant</p> <p>It is not all who do.</p> <p>Very few do. The whole responsibility is left with the teacher.</p> <p>To quite an extent really. Their participation is really very bad."</p> <p>No, not at all. Very few do.</p> <p>Not all, some of them do but others do not. Some yes, others no.</p> <p>The majority of the parents have ignored their responsibility.</p> <p>No---, no. our parents do not seem to be clear about what is expected from them.</p>	<p>The majority does not.</p> <p>They are so ignorant</p> <p>To quite an extent really.</p> <p>Very bad.</p> <p>The majority of the parents have ignored their responsibility.</p>	<p>Some parents do not understand their responsibility</p> <p>Others are less involved in education matters</p> <p>Parents have ignored their responsibility</p> <p>Parents do not understand their responsibility</p>	<p>Lack of parental involvement</p>

Earlier in this chapter, I addressed perceptions of educators on parental involvement. I gave the main question and sub-questions, discussed, interpreted and analysed the responses of the three sets of respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official. I summarised the responses at the end of every sub-question. I concluded with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only while the rest will appear as Annexure F.

I will now conclude what appeared to be the perceptions of educators on parental involvement. I will further present findings in a diagram.

7.3 Conclusion

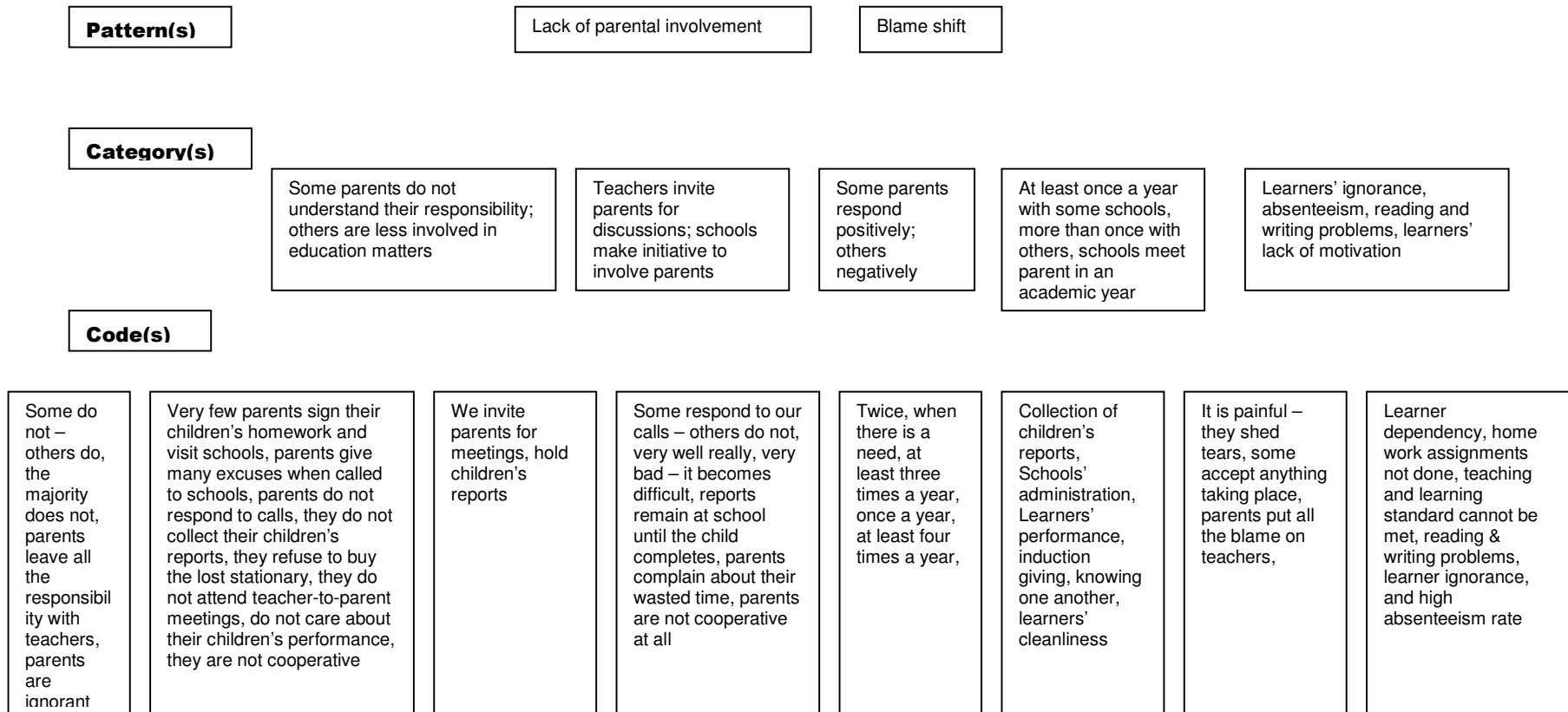
7.3.1 Perceptions on parental involvement

The aim of this main question was to examine the relationship between parental involvement and learners' performance in Lesotho primary schools. It was assumed that parental involvement contributes to high repetition rate in Lesotho primary schools. Lack of parental involvement is perceived to be playing the crucial role in learners' performance. The findings appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increases grade repetition. Further details will be discussed under empirical findings in chapter 8.

Apart from lack of parental involvement featuring as the contributing factor in this regard, blame shift appeared to be playing a critical role in teachers' performance.

I will now present my findings on the perceptions of educators on parental involvement in a diagram.

Figure 7.1 *Presentation of respondents' perceptions on parental involvement*



The findings of the study will be discussed in the next chapter (chapter 8).
An overview of the research, findings, conclusions, recommendations, suggestions for future research and concluding remarks will round off the chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Overview, findings, conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

The title of this study is “the perceptions of educators on certain factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.”

I addressed perceptions of respondents (teachers, principals and an education official) on teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. I gave the main question and sub-questions in each case and discussed, interpreted, and analysed their responses. I then summarised their responses of at the end of every sub-question. I further concluded each section with a summary in the form of a table for the first question only.

This chapter concludes the study on the perceptions of educators on certain factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. The chapter includes: the aim and objectives of the study; an overview of chapters within the study; research findings both from the literature and empirical study; and conclusions. Recommendations, suggestions for future research and concluding remarks will round off the study.

I will therefore now outline the aim and objectives of the study.

8.2 The aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators’ perspectives on possible but as yet unexplored or under explored causes of repetition.

The objectives of this study were:

- To understand the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition.
- To explore the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition.

- To determine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition.
- To examine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition.

A literature review and empirical study as well as an analysis of the results were undertaken to achieve the aim and objectives above.

Below I will give an overview of chapters that constitute the study and what each chapter entails.

The dissertation is composed of eight chapters. These are as follows:

- **Chapter one:** It contained the introduction, statement of purpose, research aim and objectives, the working assumption, literature review and the rationale. The conceptual and theoretical framework, methodology, and trustworthiness were discussed. It also dealt with how data would be analysed, ethical considerations, the limitations of the research as well as its significance.
- **Chapter two:** The chapter contained the literature review. It gave an overview of the relationships between teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement and learners' performance.
- **Chapter three:** Chapter three dealt with the research design and methodology. This included research instruments, the purpose for which they were created; the participants in the study, the sampling procedure, data collection and analysis techniques, reporting as well as ethical issues to be considered.
- **Chapter four:** This chapter gave the contextual data about knowledge that the respondents have about 4 issues: the qualifications teachers in primary education should have, the employment of unqualified and under-qualified teachers, and what the education policy prescribes to be the maximum class size in primary education. The responses were grouped into three sets of respondents namely teachers, principals and the education official. A brief conclusion for every set of respondents which was then summarised in the form of a table was given. Later on,

the chapter addressed perceptions of educators on teacher training. The main question and sub-questions were given. The responses were discussed, interpreted, analysed and summarised at the end of every sub-question. The conclusion was given in the form of a table for the first question and the rest will appear as Annexure C of the study.

- **Chapter five:** Perceptions of educators on class size were addressed in this chapter. The main question and sub-questions were given. The responses were discussed, interpreted, analysed and summarised at the end of every sub-question. The conclusion was given in the form of a table for the first question and the rest will appear as Annexure D of the study.
- **Chapter six:** This chapter dealt with perceptions of educators on teacher planning. The main question and sub-questions were given. The responses were discussed, interpreted, analysed and summarised at the end of every sub-question. The conclusion was given in a form of the table for the first question and the rest will appear as Annexure E of the study.
- **Chapter seven:** The chapter consisted of perceptions of educators on parental involvement. The main question and sub-questions were given. The responses were discussed, interpreted, analysed and summarised at the end of every sub-question. The conclusion was given in a form of a table for the first question and the rest will appear as Annexure F of the study.
- **Chapter eight:** This final chapter concluded the study by the perceptions of educators on certain factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. The chapter includes: the aim and objectives of the study; an overview of chapters within the study; research findings both from the literature and empirical study; and conclusions. Recommendations, suggestions for future research and concluding remarks will round of the study.

In paragraph 8.3 I will refer to research findings from the literature review and the empirical study.

8.3 Research findings

The review of the literature and the empirical research are discussed in this paragraph.

8.3.1 Findings from literature

The review of literature focused on the relationships between teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement and learners' performance was made and below are the findings.

8.3.1.1 *Teacher training*

The literature confirms that there is a significant relationship between teacher training and learner performance.

It has been found that teachers' emotions play a crucial role in both the content and the form of teaching and such emotions need to be addressed as part of teachers' professional education. See Hargreaves 1998: 835 and Cole, 1997: 14 in Malm, 2009:85 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2. The reviewed literature also found that teacher training develops personal subject knowledge and has an impact on the pedagogic knowledge to underpin effective classroom practice. See Edwards & Mutton, 2007: 503-519 and Parker, 2004: 819-831 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2. A relationship was found between teacher training, teacher lesson planning and overall improvement in learning (Browder, Trela & Jirnenez, 2008: 206-219 in 2.2 in ch. 2).

However, there is evidence that teacher training has no influence on learners' academic understanding and as a result, teacher training does not affect learners' performance (Hardman, Abd-Kadir & Smith (2008: 55-69) and Wiley & Yoon (1995 in Jacob & Lefgren (2004: 60-61).

Despite the fact that some studies do not see any influence of teacher training on learners' performance, I maintain my assumption that there is the relationship between teacher training and learners' performance particularly in the era of FPE where classes are large as this is also confirmed by some of the reviewed literature and by my empirical study. See the World Bank report (2005: 116 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) where it states that even though the old

primary teaching certificate programmes are being phased out both in pre-service and in-service programmes, the introduction of FPE has resulted in a shortage of teachers and the number untrained primary school teachers has increased rapidly. The National Report on the Development of Lesotho Education (2004: 11 in par. 2.2 in ch. 2) also notes that the introduction of FPE necessitated a review of teaching and learning strategies that seem to be teacher-centred and emphasize knowledge over skills.

I will now give literature findings on class size.

8.3.1.2 Class size

The literature confirms that class size has an impact on learner performance. High teacher/pupils ratios and multi-grade teaching were found to have negative impact on teachers' performance resulting in a decline in the quality of teaching and learning activities (World Bank, 2005: 137 and Lerotholi, 2001: 19 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). It has also been found that more learning takes place in smaller classes than in larger ones. Also see Maasoumi *et al.*, (2005: 333-368 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2 that there is more teacher/learner interaction in smaller classes than in larger ones (Haenn, 2002: 1-5; Bourke, 1986: 558-571 and Blatchfort, Goldstein, Martin & Browne, 2002: 169-185 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). Such interaction enables the teacher to identify those learners with learning problems whereas it is difficult to do so in larger classes (Lizzio, Wilson, & Simons, 2002: 27-52 and Blatchford, Bassett, Brown, Martin, & Russel, 2004: 709-730 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2).

It has also been found that the physical layout of the classroom, teacher behaviours including speaking voice and movement, levels of teacher/learner and learner/learner interaction, demoralised teachers and difficulty in paying attention also contribute to levels of learner participation in large class settings. Also see Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995: 8-14 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2.

Contrary to the above findings, large differences among teachers rather than class size seem to negatively affect learner performance (Jirjahn, Pfeifer & Tsertsvadze, 2008: 1-4 and Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain, 2005: 417-458 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). In the same vein, the reviewed literature states that learner's

outcomes are not affected by class size but instead by diseconomies of scale. Also see Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy (2008: 221-233 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2). Increases in teacher salary, learner innate ability, teacher rank, teacher experience, attendance rate, and college variables rather than large or small class size, were also found to lead to higher learner achievement (Borland, Howsen & Trawick, 2005: 73-83 in par. 2.3 in ch. 2).

Even though some literature questions a link between class size and learner performance, I believe that there is a link as some of the literature and the findings of my empirical study found it.

Literature findings on teacher planning will follow.

8.3.1.3 Teacher planning

The literature indicates that instructional planning is one of the most important professional activities in which teachers engage. See Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998: 65 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2 and that much of what takes place in classrooms is based on the planning activities of teachers. See Clark & Dunn, 1991 and Clark & Peterson, 1986 in Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998: 65 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2. It has also been found that lesson planning maintains learners' attention and participation. See Mercer & Mercer, 1993: 100 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2 as they begin to identify knowledge gaps on their own, their motivation and interest increase and their overall performance improves (Jones & Moreland, 2005: 193-206 and Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159-174 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2).

Despite the positive impact planning is confirmed to have in learner performance, it is also found to have negative effects if not well attended to. The literature states that most teachers neither plan nor teach with specific learning objectives in mind. They are concerned with "coverage of certain material and this has a great impact on learners' performance (Goodlad, Klein & Associates, 1974: 78 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2). Whole-group instruction was also found to be the primary mode of instructional delivery, with few instances of ability grouping of students (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Schumm, Moody & Vaughn, 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2) and little or no differentiation of lesson planning or individualization of

materials in response to student instructional levels or needs (Schumm, Moody, & Vaughn, 2000 and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2). When such adaptation occurs, it is generally geared as a 'blanket' modification, rather than specifically focused on struggling students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Fuchs, Fuchs & Bishop, 1992a and Zigmond, 1996 in Capizzi & Fuchs, 2005: 159 in par. 2.4 in ch. 2).

This suggests a link between teacher planning and learners' performance.

I will now present literature findings on parental involvement.

8.3.1.4 Parental involvement

The literature demonstrates that parental involvement is significantly associated with student achievement. It has also been found that parenting, communicating, supporting, volunteering, at-home learning, leading, and collaborating are the core influences on learners' performance. See Epstein, 1995: 112 in 2.5 in ch. 2. Parental involvement has been found to increase learner achievement, parent empowerment, improved attendance, and lower dropout rates. See Epstein, 1995: 112 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2.

Home work processes were found to be one of the strategies to promote student learning, parent-child interactions, and parent-teacher communication. See Epstein, Salinas & Jackson, 1992, 1995 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 326 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2. The literature also states that parental involvement opens doors for teachers and parents to discuss learners' progress. See Hornby, 2000: 16-17 and Rudney, 2005: 37 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2. Such discussion helps the teacher to develop approachable attitudes towards the learner, gives the teacher the opportunity to contact parents if s/he suspects that the child has a problem of any kind, guides him/her as to make allowance for individual differences between learners as well as to identify and attempt to remedial learning difficulties. See Hornby, 2000: 16-17 and Rudney, 2005: 37 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2.

However, the literature also confirms that lack of parental involvement may result in a negative impact on learner performance. It has been found that low

teacher expectations of parents also increase the communication gap between teachers and families. See Dodd & Konzal, 2000 and Karther & Lowden, 1997 in Perla & O'Donnell, 2002: 105 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2. Schools' attitudes to parental involvement and an inviting climate influence parents' decisions of becoming involved in their children's schools (Eccles & Harold, 1993, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, Griffith, 1998 and Bauch & Goldring, 2000 in Zhao & Akiba, 2009: 414 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). The literature shows that schools expect parents to provide home-based support such as preparing students' lunchboxes, making sure home work is completed and communicating with schools about students' problems at home. They are not expecting parents to assist teachers and to participate in school governance.

Lack of instructional resources was found to constrain teachers' time and energy to communicate with parents. As a result they provide little or no explanation about helping children (Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak, 2005: 61 and Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009: 331 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). The literature also suggests that teachers want more communication with parents as well as more instruction and encouragement to develop high-quality home work assignments (Epstein & Becker, 1982 in Van Voorhis, 2003: 323 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). However, they are not well prepared for, nor are they being trained to communicate effectively with, parents/caretakers from different backgrounds and culture with whom they will interact (Epstein, 2001 in Dotger, 2008: 93 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2). This leads to a weaker sense of responsibility among teachers for the school mission of developing positive relationships with parents and the community (Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak, 2005: 61 in par. 2.5 in ch. 2).

These findings suggest a connection between parental involvement and learners' performance.

In par. 8.3.2 I will present the empirical findings on perceptions of educators on factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.

8.3.2 Empirical findings

I addressed perceptions of educators on factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools in chapters four, five, six and seven. I will now discuss perceptions of educators.

8.3.3 Contextual data – teacher training and class size

I asked the following questions in order to gain knowledge that the respondents have about four issues:

8.3.2.1 What are the requirements for one to be a primary school teacher?

I found that even though there are qualified teachers in Lesotho primary schools, not many of them are fully qualified. There are teachers who still hold JC, C.O.S.C and old qualifications such as APTC, LPTC, and PTC as the requirements (see par. 4.2.1 in ch. 4).

I also found lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education to be playing a crucial role in principals' responses. They could not tell exactly what the requirements for one to qualify for primary teaching position are. Instead, they kept on referring to the practical situation where they still have unqualified and under-qualified people to teach (see par. 4.2.1 in ch. 4).

8.3.2.2 Is there a situation where inexperienced and unqualified people are given pupils to teach? If “yes”, under what circumstances?

I found that inexperienced, unqualified and under-qualified people are given pupils to teach in Lesotho primary schools (see par. 4.2.2 in ch. 4).

8.3.2.3 Besides the qualifications and experience, what other qualities do employers look for when employing a primary school teacher?

I found that there is a great deal of ignorance and uncertainty with school principals about what qualities of a good teacher are. This implies that almost anyone is given pupils to teach (see par. 4.2.3 in ch. 4).

8.3.2.4 What does education policy prescribe as the maximum class size?

A lot of ignorance and uncertainty about what education policy prescribes as the maximum class size was found in respondents. The implication is that

educators have little or no knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations as well as the Act that governs education in the country (see par. 4.2.4 in ch. 4).

8.3.3 Addressing the aim of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools. The following objectives were therefore addressed:

- 8.3.3.1 To understand the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition;
- 8.3.3.2 To explore the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition;
- 8.3.3.3 To determine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition; and
- 8.3.3.4 To examine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition.

I will now give the findings on perceptions of the respondents in order to address each of the objectives.

8.3.3.1 To understand the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition.

Insufficient and irrelevant teacher training programmes were found to be one of the factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools. Teacher training programmes offered by the college seem to fail to respond to the current daily classroom challenges (see par. 4.3.1.4 in ch. 4). Teachers' experiences are never investigated and incorporated in the planning of teacher training programmes (see par. 4.3.1.2 in ch 4). Ignorance, negligence, fear and lack of personal commitment are also found to be the great influences of the way teachers and principals act. They could notice a need for schools and the college to cooperate but they could not initiate such cooperation (see par. 4.3.1.3 in ch. 4). They regard the daily and/or weekly workshops they are offered to be professional development programmes (see par. 4.3.6 in ch. 4).

I found that there is lack of cooperation between schools and the college. There seems to be a gap between schools and the teacher training institution. Thus, schools do not seek and/or get any support from the college with regard to teaching and learning experiences (see par. 4.3.1.1 in ch. 4). The college as well does not seem to seek and/or get feedback of any kind from schools. I also found that such cooperation is needed to provide a continuous teaching and learning experience (see par. 4.3.1.2 in ch. 4). It is through this cooperation that the college can discover prominent areas to be addressed in their teacher training programmes (see par. 4.3.1.4 in ch 4).

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training contributes negatively to learner performance and increase grade repetition.

8.3.3.2 To explore the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition

I found that Lesotho primary school teachers are faced with large classes (see par. 5.2.1 in ch 5). Due to large classes, teachers are unable to reach each and every learner (see par. 5.2.2 in ch. 5), they experience job stress (see par. 5.2.3 in ch. 5) and have congested classrooms (see par. 5.2.4 in ch. 5).

Large classes affect teachers' questioning style and teaching practice alternatives negatively. As a result they opt for a "one-size-fits-all" approach which also appears to be ineffective (see par. 5.2.8, 5.2.5 and 5.2.6 in ch. 5). Teachers seem to fail to interact well with learners (see par. 5.2.7 in ch. 5) and to give and attend to home work assignments given (see par. 5.2.9 in ch. 5) due to large classes. Large classes result in a high noise level (see par. 5.2.10 in ch. 5) which is difficult for teachers to control (see par. 5.2.11 in ch.5).

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that class size contributes negatively to learner performance and increase grade repetition.

8.3.3.3 To determine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher planning and grade repetition

I found that even though teachers plan collaboratively and note down their planning (see par. 6.2.2 in ch. 6), they do not plan their lessons regularly and adequately (see par. 6.2.1 in ch. 6). Principals also seem not to care whether teachers plan their instruction or not (see par. 6.2.1 in ch. 6). Due to job overload, inadequate time and work management, lack of commitment to one's job and insufficient planning skills, teachers' planning is irregular and inadequate (see par. 6.2.3 in ch. 6). Educators were found to be uncertain about factors to be considered when planning lessons (see par. 6.2.4 in ch. 6).

Pupils' text books are often used when planning lessons and this suggests teachers' limited content knowledge (see par. 6.2.5 in ch. 6). Teachers cannot acknowledge and identify learners' different characteristics (see par. 6.2.6 in ch. 6). Their limited skills, large classes and ignorance (see par. 6.2.8 in ch. 6) impede them from incorporating learners' differences in their teaching and learning experiences (see par. 6.2.7 in ch. 6). I found teachers to be uncertain and ignorant about how (see 6.2.9 in ch. 6) and when (see 6.2.10 in ch. 6) to diagnose different learners' characteristics.

The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher planning contributes negatively to learner performance and increase grade repetition.

8.3.3.4 To examine the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition

I found that the majority of parents in Lesotho primary schools do not sign their children's home work assignments, collect report cards, have excuses when called for meetings and do not buy stationery for their children (see par. 7.2.2 in ch. 7). This implies that they do not understand their responsibility as parents in their children's education (see par. 7.2.1 in ch. 7). Schools invite parents to meetings (see par. 7.2.3 in ch. 7) at least once a year (see par. 7.2.5 in ch. 7) where learners' performance, school administration and

parents' induction are issues of discussion (see par. 7.2.6 in ch. 7) and parents' response is reported to be negative (see par. 7.2.4 in ch. 7).

Parents experience emotional tension when they hear that their children failed and have to repeat grades (see par. 7.2.7 in ch. 7). Learners' absenteeism, reading and writing problems and ignorance are perceived to contribute negatively to learners' performance (see par. 7.2.8 in ch. 7). The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that parental involvement contributes negatively to learner performance and increase grade repetition.

8.4 Conclusion

My working assumption was that educators' perceptions will be that teacher training; class size, teacher planning, and inadequate parental involvement are all factors that may contribute to the high repetition rate in Lesotho primary schools. The findings therefore appear to confirm the working assumption that teacher training, class size, teacher planning and parental involvement contribute negatively to learner performance and increase grade repetition.

However, unqualified and/or under-qualified teachers in schools, lack of cooperation between schools and the college, ignorance, uncertainty, fear, negligence, lack of personal commitment and lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education were also diagnosed to be factors contributing to both teachers and learners' performance in Lesotho primary schools.

8.5 Recommendations regarding improvement of practice

I recommend that:

- There should be financial resources to meet the growing demand for well-educated local teachers and principals, the need for literacy, and for vocational and technical training outside the formal academic setting.
- Education leadership programmes should be established and/or managerial positions should be filled by qualified people.

- Principals' responsibility should clearly be defined in the teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education.
- More and only qualified teachers should be employed with hardship allowances for those in remote areas of the country.
- Strong collaboration between schools and the college with regard to teaching and learning is needed.
- Teacher training programmes should respond to the current situation of large classes in terms of instructional planning and delivery, classroom management, classroom environment, research and community engagement.
- Teaching and school management and leadership positions should be on a contract basis with renewal of the contract based on performance.
- More purposive and directive parent and professional development programmes with enough funding, time and resources are required.

Below are suggestions for future research.

8.6 Suggestions for future research

Various issues which need further investigations came out in this study. Amongst them are:

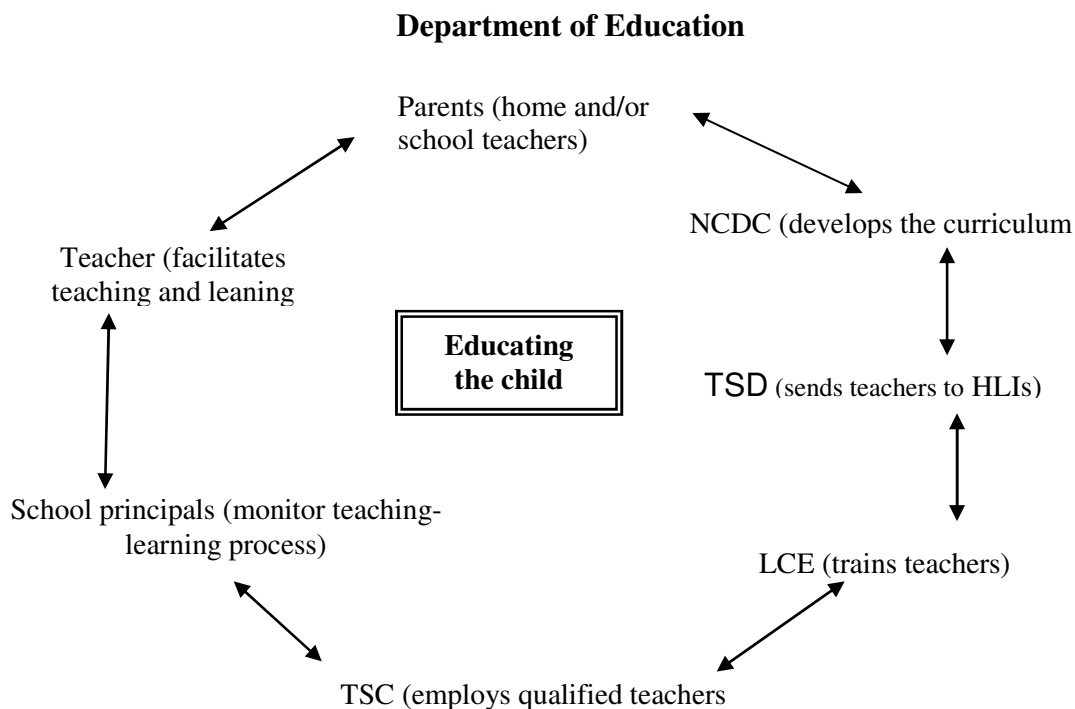
- College based research to explore their areas of interest when they design teacher training programmes and the quality measures they employ in ensuring quality product.
- Balancing the nation's expectations of teachers with the content offered by teacher training programmes.
- The perceptions of parents on factors contributing to their children's performance.
- Learners' perceptions on factors contributing to their performance.
- How the department of education supports schools with regard to large classes teachers face since the introduction of FPE. How effective their support is and how they measure its quality.
- The role of school principals in ensuring quality teaching and learning in schools.

8.7 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, one could say that schools are there to facilitate teaching and learning while children are at school to learn. It is therefore through the partnership and collaboration of several parties that this purpose can be fulfilled.

The Department of Education through the National Curriculum Development Council (NCDC) draws up a plan of action (curriculum). These are the expectations of the department for every learner. It is also the department's responsibility through the Teaching Service Department (TSD) that teachers are qualified. Teacher training institutions are there to mould teachers to successfully put the prescribed plans into practice. The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and School Management Boards (SMBs) are there to see to employment of qualified teachers. School principals are there to monitor the whole process of teaching and learning. Parents are also there as teachers at home and/or at schools if educated on how to go about it. This collaboration can be presented as an unbreakable chain below.

Figure 8.1: *Presentation of the expected collaboration between education divisions*



It is impossible for one single party to fulfil the purpose alone. This study revealed that learner performance is impacted negatively by lack of cooperation between schools and the college, teacher training, class size, teacher planning and inadequate parental involvement which increase grade repetition.

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Annexure A

Semi-structured interview schedule for educators

A General

1. What are the requirements for one to be a primary school teacher?
2. Is there a situation where inexperienced and unqualified people are given pupils to teach? If “yes”, under what circumstances?
3. Besides the qualifications and experience, what other qualities do employers look for when employing a primary school teacher?
4. What does education policy prescribe as the maximum class size?

B Teacher training

What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition?

1. Is there any cooperation between the teacher training institutions and schools with regard to teachers’ performance?
2. If “no”, don’t you think it is necessary?
3. What have you done to initiate such cooperation?
4. What would be prominent issues of discussion?
5. Besides the training teachers get from the college, are there any programmes designed to develop teachers professionally either by the department or schools as learning organisations?
6. If there are professional development programmes, what are they?
7. How effective are they?
8. If “no” do you think they are needed?
9. What needs to be addressed in such programmes?

C Class size

What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition?

1. In practice, what is the maximum number of learners per teacher?
2. What impact does the above figure have on: (a) learners?
3. What impact does the above figure have on (b) teachers?
4. What impact does the above figure have on (c) the classroom environment?
5. What teaching practice techniques have you adopted to suit your classes?
6. How effective are they?
7. How is the teacher/learner interaction in your classes?
8. How is your questioning style?
9. How often do you give and attend to homework assignments given to learners?
10. How is the noise level in your classroom?
11. How do teachers manage the noise level referred to in the above sub-section?

D Teacher planning

What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of teacher planning on grade repetition?

1. Do teachers plan their lessons before teaching?
2. If “yes”, how do they do their planning?
3. If “no”, why don’t they do it?
4. What factors do teachers consider when planning their lessons?
5. Besides text books, what are other sources of information teachers use for their lesson preparations?
6. Do teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics?
7. If “yes”, what do they do to accommodate such differences in their daily planning?
8. If “no”, what do they present as reasons why they needn’t do it?
9. How do teachers find out about their learners’ differences?
10. When do teachers find out about their learners’ differences?

E Parental involvement

What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between parental involvement and grade repetition?

1. Do parents understand their responsibility as parents in their children’s education?
2. If ‘yes”, how have you come to realise that?
3. If “no”, what have you as the teacher, principal, and the department done to make them aware of their responsibilities?
4. How have they responded to such information?
5. How often do parents, teachers and/or principal meet in an academic year?
6. What do they/you discuss?
7. How do parents react when they discover that their children have failed and have to repeat grades?
8. What reasons do you usually give to convince a parent that his/her child has failed and has to repeat a grade?

Annexure B – F

Theme analysis of transcribed interviews during data analysis

Annexure B

Contextual data – teacher training and class size

T = teacher, PR = principal, EO = education officer

Teacher training: What are the perceptions of educators on the relationship between teacher training and grade repetition?			
<i>What are the requirements for one to be a primary school teacher?</i>			
Responses	Codes	Categories	Patterns
T 1: Lately, C.O.S.C. with 3 or 4 credits	C.O.S.C.	Diploma after high school and/or PTC – new requirement	Not many fully qualified teachers
T 2: You should have C.O.S.C plus three year training course to get teachers' certificate.		Did not complete high school (JC)	Unqualified and/or under qualified teachers are often used
T 6: What I know is that the latest qualification when I qualified was Lower Primary Teacher Certificate.	Lower Primary Teacher Certificate	No teacher training following high school	Uncertainty – they report on what they know which may not be in line with requirements
T 4: Lately the least is a diploma in Primary Education while in the past the requirement was Primary Higher (PH) and PTC	A Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) Primary Higher (PH)	Old qualifications...	Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education
T 5: I once taught as a Para-professional teacher in early years of my teaching after I completed my C.O.S.C.			
PR 1: Oh right! The requirement is of having four credits and passes from C.O.S.C. level. That is the minimum requirement.			
PR 2: The policy says one should have at least PTC III though we still have teachers who still hold Form C and C.O.S.C and they still perform well.	At least PTC III Form C		
PR 3: In our school we have a teacher who holds them. We have one with Junior Certificate (JC). We also have one holding C.O.S.C. Certificate. The rest are those with Diploma and Degrees in primary education.	Junior Certificate (JC) Degree		
PR 4: We have been looking for people with at least Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC). But of late the least certificate produced by our college is Diploma in			

Education Primary (DEP) and Diploma in Primary Education (DPE).	Diploma in Education Primary (DEP)		
PR 5: Recently we are compelled to employ someone with at least the Diploma certificate and above.			
EO: We still have those teachers with APTC, LIET VI, LPTC, and C.O.S.C and due to their experience, we are still retaining also have those with PTC (Primary Teachers' Certificate) who are encouraged to further their studies more. Lately our college produces Diploma in Education Primary as the least qualification.	APTC LIET VI LPTC		
<i>Is there a situation where inexperienced and unqualified people are given pupils to teach?</i>			
PR 5: No, we do not give grants to inexperienced and unqualified people.		It happens in some schools	Shortage of qualified teachers
PR 4: We have never done that.			Unqualified, under-qualified and inexperienced people are often used
PR 3: It has never happened.	Never	It does not happen in others	
PR 2: It does not happen too often since the introduction of School Management Teams.			
PR 1: Yes, inexperienced we can have because we have them fresh from college. I would also say inexperience when one takes those from other schools and bring them in. one finds that (<i>laughter</i>) it may be worse of because of the very wrong practices.	Yes	To utilize their experience	
T 1: Yes, there are schools with inexperienced and unqualified teachers.		High teacher/pupils ratio	
T 4: Yes. It happens when the school is understaffed.			
T 6: It has never happened in my school and I am not sure of the situations in other schools.		Geographical setup	
T 5: Yes, I personally experienced it.			
T 2: At my school 'no'. But in other schools it happens for some reasons.			
EO: Yes, we still have those teachers.			
<i>If "yes", under what circumstances?</i>			
PR 5: They substitute those on maternity leave. And it is only for two to three months. There are teachers who were employed with LIET VI, PTC, and APTC as they are still important.	To substitute those on maternity leave To provide service	Response to education needs	Unqualified, under-qualified and inexperienced people are often used
PR 4: Even the person that we have now who does not have the qualities you mentioned above is not employed.	To gain experience	Decrease unemployment rate	

He is just here to gain experience after which he plans to enrol with LCE.			
T 1: They are employed to teach because there are no other people to employ.	When there is no qualified teacher to employ	Teacher crises	
T 4: When the school is understaffed.	When the school is understaffed		
T 5: I started teaching with no training, experience and/or teaching skills. In my first experience as a teacher, 120 class three children faced me.	To give them experience		
T 2: Qualified teachers look for better pastures. No one wants to teach in the rural areas. Therefore there is no option; employers take anyone.	Geographical setup		
EO: Due to high teacher-pupils ratio, there is a high shortage of teachers. Schools in the remote parts of the country mostly face this crisis. This has then forced the department to recruit unqualified and inexperienced people as well.	Economic crises Shortage of teachers		
Besides the qualifications and experience, what other qualities do employers look for when employing a teacher in a primary level?			
T 1: Subject of specialization, sporting activities, and computer literacy in some cases.	Subject of specialization	Skills	Uncertainty
T 2: They look for---- capabilities and skills.	Personality	Values	Ignorance
T 6: Efficiency, activeness, and behaviour are the outstanding factors. It should be a person who is willing and able to do the work. Someone able to interact with people of different characters and loves children.	Behaviour	Attitudes	
T 4: I would try to find out if the candidate has love for children. If the personality appeals to the job one is looking for. If the person likes the job and understands what it entails. Physical appearance would also count. S/he should be presentable.	Love for children	Experience	
T 3: Behaviour also counts.	Competency in English	Knowledge	
PR 1: When employing a teacher, interviews are conducted. Of course the background of the teacher also becomes a question. Fluency in English is another part of the equation.	Background	Interpersonal/relational competences	
PR 2: We employ people who had their teaching practice at our school and we are satisfied with their personality and everything concerning teaching and learning.	Physical appearance		
PR 3: We look at their behaviour.	Computer literacy		
PR 4: The Management Team looks for the qualities that you have just mentioned. They are also interested in someone's record of work from previous work places.	Love for one's job		

PR 5: We consider someone's personality, the dress code, if s/he is presentable. If the person looks responsible and s/he is fit to stand in front of learners We are also concerned about someone's behaviour.	Sporting activities		
EO: We always encourage School Boards to look for people with love for children, personality, and areas of specialization.			
What does the Education Policy prescribe as the maximum class size?			
T 1: At our school 30.	30	Disparities in respondents' figures	Uncertainty
T 2: We should have at least 45 pupils.	at least 45		
T 5: The government policy says at least 55 children per teacher.	at least 55	Normally between 50 and 60	Ignorance
T 6: I think it is fifty or fifty something.	50 upwards	Rarely between 30 and 50	Large classes
T 4: According to the new policy of FPE, teacher/pupils ratio is 1:60.	1:60		
PR 1: Maximum? Er--, the Education Policy says 53.	53	Signs of unsure response were shown	Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of teaching service regulations and the Act that governs education
PR 2: The policy says a teacher should have 54 pupils.	54 pupils		
PR 3: It says 1: 58.	1: 58		
PR 4: It says 55.	55		
PR 5: If my memory serves me well, since FPE, the policy says 1:60.			
EO: Er----- (not sure) 55.			

Annexure C

Perceptions on teacher training

T = teacher, PR = principal, EO = education officer

<i>Is there any cooperation between the teacher training institutions and schools with regard to teachers' performance?</i>			
T 1: Not at all, once you are out you are on your own.	Not at all	No cooperation between the college and schools	
T 2: None, as far as I know.	None, as far as I know		
T 5: I have not seen any of my tutors coming to check on my performance. I think when someone has been your teacher before; you are a bit scared of him/her so you do not feel free to open up. I say this because when you are new at work, you are a bit excited and scared, so you try your level best to work hard. But when you get used to the place, you relax and at the same time your work rate declines.	Have not seen any of my tutors coming to check on my performance	Lack of quality assurance from the college	Lack of cooperation between the college and schools
T 6: I have never seen any cooperation since I have been a teacher.	Have never seen any cooperation since I have been a teacher	No follow-up on the product	
T 4: There is nothing like that.	There is nothing like that		
PR 1: There is no link between the college and schools. The college does not have the follow-up of any kind.	The college does not have the follow-up of any kind		
PR 2: No, they do not come unless they are called. They forget all about them once they have graduated. It is our responsibility to see that they perform well.	No, they do not come unless they are called. They forget all about them		
PR 3: There is none, though I am not sure about other schools. Once completed, they no longer bother.	Once completed, they no longer bother		
PR 4: There is none.	No link between the college and schools		
PR 5: No, that one has never happened.			
EO: None, there is none.			
<i>If "no", don't you think it is necessary?</i>			
EO: It is highly needed, it is really necessary to have that cooperation.		No cooperation between the college and schools	
PR 5: Yes, I think it is necessary.	Yes, I think it is necessary		A need for support from the college
PR 4: Yes, it is highly needed.		Feeling of deficiency by educators	
PR 3: It is highly needed.			A need for cooperation between schools and the college
PR 2: It is highly needed.		Educators feel a need for support from the college	

PR 1: It could be very necessary.			
T 4: Yes, we really need it.	Yes, we really need it		
T 3: It is necessary.			
T 6: “Yes, it is necessary.”			
T 5: This one is a bit difficult. I think it is necessary, but on one side it is not very necessary. I think when someone has been your teacher before; you are a little bit scared of him/her so you do not feel free to open up. On the other side it would be good.	It is not very necessary		
T 2: I should think so.			
T 1: It is highly needed.			
<i>What have you done to initiate it?</i>			
EO: As far as I know, nothing has been done.	We have not done anything so far.		Ignorance
PR 5: We once made such suggestion. But we were told that we sound to be rebellious against the current training college, we want to remain with old ideas from the previous teacher training. Hearing such comments, we swallowed the idea.	We swallowed the idea.	Action was taken but not at the right time	Fear
PR 4: We have not taken any initiative.	Have not taken any initiative	No collaboration between schools	Negligence
PR 3: No, we have not really thought of it that way. We never consult them.	No, we have not really thought of it that way.	No follow-up was made	Lack of personal commitment
PR 2: We once made such suggestion.		Teachers and principals are threatened	No initiative taken
PR 1: Personally, I have met some college staff and aired my views. But no sign of change.	We never consult them	Only the college initiates meetings with schools – on their issues of concern	
T 4: We have not done anything so far. The department threatens teachers. Teachers receive circulars that instruct them to do this and that and tell them that if they do not obey those orders, they are fired.		Schools never initiate meetings with the college	
T 1: We raised a point that it would be proper that the college should make a follow up on its product.	We raised a point that it would be proper that the college should make a follow up on its product		
<i>What would be prominent issues of discussion?</i>			
EO: Planning, planning is a serious problem with our teachers. Teachers’ activities are more than those of learners. Learners appear to be listening, answering questions, and writing. Moreover, teachers have got no discipline, so there is no way that they can discipline learners. Further more, teaching methods are a problem	Planning, Teachers’ activities Teaching methods	Teacher preparation Instructional planning	Insufficient and irrelevant teacher training
PR 5: Issues like discipline, classroom management,	Discipline	Pedagogical collaboration	Review of content in teacher training

and teaching-learning methods will be very important to address in such meetings.	Classroom management Teaching-learning methods	between teachers and the college is required	programmes is required
PR 4: It would help us to consult them when looking for best teachers. To raise issues concerning the behaviour of their product. This might help them improve discipline of teacher trainees before they come to the field. They are lazy. They go for work only for the salary at the end of the month. They do not care at all about learners.	Consult them for the best teachers Equip teachers with new ideas, new resources, and everything that can help them in education	Programme planning	
PR 3: I think we should tell them their weaknesses. The fact is that, their current product is not of the quality expected to face the daily challenges of teaching and learning. Their product is nothing as compared to the one in the past. They lack methodology. They are confused.	Different approach in terms of training Lack of content Lack of confidence Lack of accountability Lack of commitment Lack of responsibility	Teacher follow-up training	
PR 2: Love for children, love for work should be instilled within the trainees.	Love for children Love for work	Quality teachers required	
PR 1: The way they place student teachers in schools would really have to be addressed. Probably the college would try and have a different approach in terms of training. I commented upon the key elements such as lack of content, lack of confidence, lack of accountability, lack of commitment, and lack of responsibility.	The way they place student teachers in schools They should plan their programmes based on what is required at the field	Classroom leadership qualities	
T 4: We were supposed to be meeting them once a year to share our teaching and learning experiences. That would help them know where to tighten their programmes.	Share our teaching and learning experiences.	Personal competence – self-knowledge and personal characteristics	
T 3: We are old teachers and the teaching methods we use are of our times.	Teaching methods		
T 6: Through my observation, the college produces lazy teachers. I think it would be better if there was a follow up. They should plan their programmes based on what is required at the field.	Lazy teachers Teacher follow up is needed		
T 2: I think we are the first people to get it from. This can make it easier for them to monitor that, to make sure that the teachers are equipped with new ideas, with new resources, and everything that can help them in education.	Get new ideas from us Monitor collection and giving of new ideas		
T 1: To teach us what would benefit us when we are in the primary school classroom.	Teach us what would benefit us when we are in the primary school classroom		
<i>Besides the training teachers get from the college, are there any programmes designed to develop teachers professionally either by the department or schools as learning organisations?</i>			
T 1: Ministry of Education conducts workshops for teachers. You will also find that individual schools have workshops for their teachers.	Ministry of Education and Training	A sort of professional Development programmes are Offered	Professional development programmes are lacking

T 5: What happens is that, there are societies formed by teachers. These societies would host workshops for teachers for different subjects. Besides that you may decide to further your studies.	Teachers' Associations	Not all schools and/or teachers are involved in such professional development programmes	Ignorance
T 2: Teachers in government (public) schools are the only ones who get such workshops.	Individual schools		
T 6: Our school differs from other schools since it is a 'trial' school. Most of the times we get such programmes before other schools.	Furthering one's studies		
T 4: There are panels such as Curriculum Development Task Teams hosting workshops for teachers.	Curriculum Development Task Teams (CDTT)		
PR 2: None. It is up to individuals or schools to hold such workshops for teachers using the same teachers as the resource persons or inviting them from the department of education.			
PR 1: No, I do not think by the ministry, there are any programmes offered. One would say, in our school we try all we can.			
PR 3: Yes, they are there among Catholic schools. I do not know in other schools.	School proprietors		
PR 4: They are not there.	They are not there		
PR 5: The most important thing is that when I notice a problem, I quickly arrange for school based workshop. I invite experts from the MOET in different sections to come and address such issues.			
EO: Yes, we hold workshops for teachers as the department.			
<i>If 'yes', what are they?</i>			
T 1: These are meant to equip teachers on different aspects of education. They are still based on education, how to improve teachers' skills, attitudes, and values.	On education - how to improve teachers' skills, attitudes, and values	Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes – daily and/or weekly workshops are offered	Professional development programmes are lacking
T 2: It is just that they have started with one phase being foundation phase.	How to improve their content		Ignorance
T 5: They discuss problems and share experiences, knowledge and skills. They try by all means to develop each other.	Share experiences, knowledge and skills		
T 4: Now as I say, teachers are hosted Mathematics and Science training workshop. The same training workshop with English inclusive took place in December 2007.	Mathematics and Science training workshop		
PR 1: We try and develop teachers either we develop them in terms of the attitudes, how to improve their content. This is I think as the school we are trying to do.	We develop teachers in terms of the attitudes		

PR 5: The purpose was for them to come and highlight their expectations from teachers.	Highlight their expectations from teachers		
PR 2: We have people from Pretoria who come to train teachers mostly on methodology.	Methodology		
EO: We have Mathematics and Science workshops where we equip them with skills on how to teach these subjects effectively.			
How effective are they?			
T 1: Unless adults are followed up, they do not implement what they learn. They are not as effective as they are expected to be. ”	Unless adults are followed up - They do not implement what they learn	‘Hid and run’ approach	Ineffective professional development programmes
T 6: Very much.	Not as effective as they are expected to be	Very little learning takes place	Ignorance
T 2: They are. They are really effective.	They are really effective		
T 4: They are not. The problem with these workshops though they would be helpful, is that they are run rushed. It is as if we are running away from something. So they leave the trainees the same as before. You will be trained to train other teachers. When you are supposed to offer the training, you are told that there are no funds for workshops. After seven months you are then called to train teachers. At this time you are redundant as the trainer. In most cases the training becomes useless in the sense that there are no facilities for teachers to implement what they are trained.	They are run rushed They have no impact on trainees’ teaching and learning experiences Their funding remains a problem	They helped them maintain their performance standard	
PR 1: They are effective. And because of them we meet the standard.	They are effective We do meet the standard	Not properly planned for	
PR 3: They are very effective. The one that I once attended was really appealing.	No facilities for teachers to implement	Implementation remains a problem	
PR 5: It was very successful.	We do meet the standard	Improper timing	
EO: “They are not as effective as they are expected to be. The reason being, they are offered during the holidays, when the schools open, teachers have forgotten all about what they were trained at the workshop and they simply go back to their usual way of doing things.	Offered during holidays Teachers have forgotten all about what they were trained when schools open	Little understanding of the nature of professional development programmes – daily and/or weekly workshops are offered	
If “no” do you think they are needed?			
T 1: They are highly needed.	They are highly needed	Sense of deficiency	A need for professional development programmes
PR 1: They are imperatively needed. They are definitely required.	They are imperative They are definitely required		
PR 3: I would love all schools to get that because all children would benefit from.	I would love all schools to get them		
PR 2: Yes, I would highly recommend them.	Yes, I would highly recommend them		
PR 4: Yes, they are necessary.	Yes, they are necessary		

EO: I would very much love other schools to have such workshops. They are very much helpful.	I would very much love other schools to have such workshops They are very much helpful		
<i>What needs to be addressed in such programmes?</i>			
T 1: I think generally, they should address ways of handling learners, how to make them love learning. Teachers themselves are the problem.	Ways of handling learners How to make them love learning Teachers themselves are the problem	Learner motivation for learning School management and leadership	A need for professional development programmes
PR 2: It is in such programmes where certain skills, knowledge would be shared amongst the participants.	Certain skills, knowledge would be shared amongst the participants	Development of self-confidence in learners Teaching skills	
PR 1: Participation in terms of teachers involving parents. It should also bring into account the management committees. Resources would also be issues to be addressed.	Participation in terms of teachers involving parents Participation of Management committees Resources	Relations and cooperation between learners Relation and cooperation between colleagues, parents and learners	
EO: They might help with teacher placement. Improve teachers' teaching skills. Principals should be out of classrooms and perform their leadership and management duties	Teacher placement in schools and classes Improve teachers' teaching skills Principals should be out of classrooms Principals should perform their leadership and management duties	Parental development both in school management and teaching-learning purposes Resources in terms of staffing, infrastructure and funding	

Annexure D

Perceptions on class size

T = teacher, PR = principal, EO = education officer

Class size			
What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of class size on grade repetition?			
<i>In practice, what is the maximum number of learners per teacher?</i>			
T 1: But practically they are more than 50 kids.	More than 50	Indefinite	Large classes
T 2: We go as far as 60 pupils per class, per teacher.	As many as 60 pupils	Some 50-60	
T 5: I had to face 120 class three children in my first year as inexperience and unqualified teacher.	120	Others 60-67	
T 6: From my experience, most of the time we are faced by fifty-eight to sixty children.	Fifty-eight to sixty children	Exceptional cases 67-120	
T 3 & 4: It is beyond that.		Feeling of job overload	
T 4: It is 1: more.	1: more		
PR 1: The demand has forced it up to 40.			
PR 2: It goes a way beyond that. Teacher finds him/herself faced by 60 to 64 pupils.	60 to 64 pupils		
PR 3: In my school, they are beyond the expectations. Some teachers have 50 up to 58 while others have 60 up to 67. They are extremely beyond what was expected.	Way beyond expectations 50 to 58 60 to 67		
PR 4: They are far more beyond it.			
PR 5: In big schools the number exceeds the prescribed ratio. But in some schools like this one, it is the exact number in other classes and a bit below in others.			
EO: Because of the introduction of FPE it is 60 or more.			
<i>What impact does the above figure have on: (a) learners?</i>			
EO: Teachers are unable to reach every child. Only fast learners cope with the situation. Slow learners encounter problems and as a result their performance is affected.	Only fast learners may cope with the situation Slow learners encounter problems	Less teaching and learning take place	Large classes
PR 5: It impedes teachers from reaching each and every learner. This affects learners' performance badly and as a result they decide to drop out.	Affects learners' performance badly as a results they drop out	Learners' needs are not met	
PR 4: The situation is too bad. We have large numbers of kids and it becomes difficult for the teacher to reach each and every child.	Situation is too bad It has a great impact	Learners' performance is negatively affected	
PR 3: It has the great impact. They tend to be harsh to the learners and this makes them to be unease and shy	Teachers tend to be harsh to the learners and this makes them unease and shy to	Unprivileged learners are at risk	

to express problems.	express problems		
PR 2: Teachers do teach but they are unable to respond to the needs of all the learners due to a larger number. They get tired on the way. Therefore it is well understood that the teacher manage to assist a very small number of learners to learn and leave slow learners behind.	Unable to respond to the needs of all the learners Teachers manage to assist a very small number of learners to learn and leave slow learners behind	Less learner motivation and development of self-confidence	
PR 1: Er---, its barrier is on understanding because the fewer the kids, the more concentration the teacher has. The more they are in number, the more the concentration begins to be too diverse and therefore, the larger the number, the not so very effective concentration on individual time in the results.	Not very effective concentration on individual time Concentration begins to be too digress in large glasses	Job overload	
T 3: We are unable to reach them all because they are many. When we mark them, we consume a lot of time so much that we compromise other subject's time because they are many. We give children limited activities. It makes us rush and leave those with problems unattended.	Unable to reach them all Marking consumes a lot of time We compromise other subject's time Limited activities	Fast learners may be privileged	
T 6: Bad impact because as teachers we are unable to reach slow learners. You compromise fast learners' time trying to accommodate slow learners.	Bad impact Compromise fast learners' time		
T 5: The fact is that you do very little. It is not so easy for you as teachers to give these children what they deserve. This means that children's learning suffers. Very little learning takes place.	We do very little Not so easy to give children what they deserve		
T 2: The problem is that the teacher unable to meet the needs of the learners.	Unable to meet the needs of the learners Very little learning takes place		
T 1: It means you don't have time for individual kid. If you have 50 minutes to spend with 30 kids, it is different from when you have 50 of them.	Don't have time for individual learners Children's learning suffers		
<i>What impact does the above figure have on (b) teachers?</i>			
EO: Poor teachers try their level best. They try but it is difficult. They get tired on the way due to larger numbers.	They try but it is difficult They get tired on the way due to large classes	Emotional tension	Large classes
PR 5: It is really too heavy for them imagine marking sixty or more compositions, you get exhausted and lose interest even before you mark half of them. It is really too much.	It is really too much	Job overload	
PR 4: They kill them. Even those who seem to be strong, worn out in the middle of the day. It is difficult for them to cover the planned daily work.	Large classes kill teachers Even those who seem to be strong, are worn out in the middle of the day Difficult for them to cover the planned daily work	Job stress	

PR 3: It is very much appealing to someone's strength, energy and time. They lose interest and patience. Teachers lose temper. They are offended by minor things They tend to be harsh to the kids and this makes them to be uneasy. They sometimes end up not marking their scripts.	It impacts negatively on teachers' strength, energy and time They lose the teaching interest and patience Teachers lose temper" Offended by minor things They tend to be harsh to the kids End up not marking the scripts	Role conflict	
PR 2: They complain about too much work due to large numbers of kids. So they are unable to reach all the learners.	They complain about too much work due to large numbers of learners Unable to reach all the learners	Instructional planning and delivery are negatively affected	
PR 1: Well er---er----, it is quit uncomfortable.	The situation is quit uncomfortable	Incomplete tasks	
T 4: As teachers we feel overloaded. When one is overloaded, s/he becomes stressed. S/he comes to work already tired, without interest. Teaches end up deciding to work only with fast learners.	We feel overloaded We become stressed We come to work already tired Without interest Decides to work only with fast learners		
T 6: It is very much painful. We are unable to achieve our plans. Even if you try to drill compositions, you will not be able to mark them all.	It is very painful Unable to achieve our plans Not able to mark them all		
T 5: Since I was overloaded, I could not do much. Children in such situations cannot write but as a teacher you have to get sense out of the nonsense s/he has written. I experienced a hectic situation mainly when it comes to marking piles of scripts, compiling marks and preparing progress reports for such a number of children.	Cannot do much Children cannot write in such situations Hectic situation mainly with marking piles of script, compiling marks and preparing progress reports		
T 2: At the end of the day the teacher is extremely tired and that is when the planning is affected. The teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day.	The teacher is extremely tired at the end Planning is negatively affected Very exhausted		
T 1: I don't have time to explore, to impart all the information, to attend to individual learners. It is a lot of work to do within a short period of time with too many learners.	Don't have time to explore Impart all the information No time to attend to individual learners A lot of work to do within a short period of time with too many learners		
<i>What impact does the above figure have on(c) the classroom environment?</i>			
EO: It is worse. Classrooms are congested. It is difficult for children to hear the teacher. The teacher has to shout to the top of her/his voice. The situation is really chaotic.	It is worse Difficult for children to hear the teacher Teacher has to shout	Negative classroom environment	Large classes

PR 5: It is an uncomfortable situation as it disables grouping. It is very much congested in such classrooms. No space to stand for your observations. The movement is very much impossible. Children end up in conflict as they step and push one another.	Uncomfortable situation Disables grouping No space to stand for observations Movement is very much impossible Conflict They step and push one another	Not conducive to teaching and learning	
PR 4: They are very much crowded. Teaching and learning materials are not well displayed. These children are also noisy. Teachers never stop disciplining so much that they sometimes get out of track.	Teaching and learning materials are not well displayed Children are also noisy Teachers never stop disciplining They sometimes get out of track	Teaching and leadership skills are negatively affected	
PR 3: This is a problem. Classrooms are congested. There is no freedom at all. They are far too noisy whether working or not.	This is a problem Classrooms are congested no freedom at all They are far too noisy	Job stress	
PR 1: Well, well, well, in our case, here it is where you find that the resources become very, or extremely scares, they are affected. And the management of the classroom also is not a very easy one.	Resources become very, or extremely scares Management of the classroom also is not a very easy	learners' performance is negatively affected	
T 3: They are unable to sit properly. Teaching materials are not enough. They are congested. This results in a situation whereby they copy from one another.	Teaching materials are not enough They copy from one another	Learners are uncomfortable	
T 6: It is too bad because they are noisy. Noise disrupts teaching and learning. Children cannot learn in a noisy environment. This kind of environment encourages learners' disengagement.	Too bad They are noisy Noise disrupts teaching and learning The situation encourages learners' disengagement		
T 5: It is not an inviting environment at all. While some of the children would be busy with their class work, others are loitering in the classroom not writing, disturbing others. They would be congested, unable to move. It was really difficult for one to cope in such environment.	Others are loitering in the classroom not writing, disturbing others It is difficult for one to cope in such environment		
T 2: Classrooms are so packed. Learners do not sit comfortably. This makes the situation difficult. The classroom is so congested, so much crowded. The movement of the teacher to make sure that he helps individual learner is difficult.	They are packed learners do not sit comfortably It is a difficult situation The classroom is congested, so much crowded		
T 1: It's chaotic. It's not conducive to have such a large number of learners?	It's chaotic Not conducive to teaching and learning		
<i>What teaching practice techniques have you adopted to suit your classes?</i>			
T 1: I normally divide the kids into two groups; fast learners and slow learners (ability grouping). Sometimes I give fast learners task to do. When they are done, I pair them with slow learners (peer grouping) so that they can assist. In the mean time I attend to slow learners' problems.	Ability grouping	Choice of teaching practice technique sis negatively affected	Large classes

T 2: Actually I group my learners so that I put those with different abilities together. I have mixed ability groups.	Ability groups	Very limited variety of teaching practice techniques	
T 5: I mostly engaged field trips. I never used to stay indoors because they used not to understand. I also opted into the grouping method.	Field trips	A one-size-fits-all approach is often used	
T 6: Peer education.	Peer education		
T 4: In order to accommodate them all, you have to divide them into ability groups and give them work basing yourself on those groups. This gives chance to attend to those that you did not give them time during large group presentation. Peer educating also helps us a lot.	Large group presentation		
PR 1: Yah! In fact you find that they have them in smaller groups in some cases.	Smaller groups		
PR 2: My teachers are really a caring staff. They use teaching methods such as look and say, and demonstration.	Look and say Demonstration		
PR 4: They normally use the chalkboard to explain to all of them.	Chalkboard presentation		
EO: They use grouping more often.			
How effective are they?			
T 1: I think they are, because if I can give an example on reading; if I pair those who are able with those who are disabling, to assist, you will see that there is improvement as the peer educator also tries hard to beat other educators. This way it becomes competitive	They are effective There is improvement Teaching and learning becomes competitive	Seen to be effective	Ineffectiveness of grouping method in large classes
T 2: It helps me a lot because when I am around helping the other group, another group is independent. They do not wait for me. It is very effective. In most cases you might not even notice that they are busy with irrelevant stuff.	It promotes independency It also encourages disengagement	Promotion of cooperative learning	Large classes
T 5: The method is very effective in this situation. I give them group work where they work cooperatively with one another. I would also be moving from one group to another assisting where necessary.	It encourages cooperative work Allows the teacher the opportunity to move from one group to another assisting	Encouragement of competitive learning	
T 4: This gives the teacher a chance to attend to those that were not attended during large group presentation.	Gives the teacher a chance to attend to those that were not attended during large group presentation.	Not properly managed	
T 6: This has been effective since it encourages competition amongst leaders.		Not properly planned	
PR 1: Let's say to a certain extent.	To a certain extent	Nor purposefully used	
PR 2: Teachers fail to give feedback. It takes them time to mark children's scripts.	Teachers fail to give feedback It takes them time to mark children's scripts	Promotes laziness amongst teachers	

PR 3: They consider it to be very effective.			
EO: The method is not effective.	Not effective		
How is the teacher/learner interaction in your classes?			
T 1: I don't want to do things by myself. I want them to participate fully.	Teachers don't want to do things by themselves They want learners to participate fully	Teachers encourage freedom of approach in their classes	Less teacher/learner interactions in classrooms
T 2: It is so smooth. I allow my kid to interact with me freely, to be free in class. I do not want intimidated learners. I allow them to correct me where they think I am wrong and fluently.	It is so smooth They allow learners to interact with them freely To be free in class They do not want intimidated learners I allow them to correct me where they think I am wrong	Learners are open to their teachers	Large classes
T 5: I come down to their level. This gives them freedom to approach me for any kind of help. They should therefore feel free to consult me for any kind of assistance. Children are open with me so do I. They even approach me for their personal ones. It is from there that I assist them with guidance on how to handle different life issues.	I come down to their level I give them freedom to approach me They are free to consult me They are open with me and so do I They even approach me with their personal issues I assist them with guidance	Teacher encourage learner participation	
T 6: They are free children, not scared of anyone.	They are not scared of anyone	Less learner motivation and development of self-esteem	
T 4: Such chance is very limited.	very limited	Limited interaction is also felt	
PR 1: Teacher interaction is, not just as it cannot be very good. In our case it is more of a drive. They try to be effective and as a result the interaction is really fair.	Not as it should be More of a drive really fair	Not good relationships between teachers and learners	
PR 2: There is interaction between teachers and learners.	There is interaction	Little learning takes place	
PR 3: In those classes that I have visited, I have discovered that teachers do move around to listen to different problems and assist where s/he discovers a need.	Teachers do move around Listen to different problems Assist where they discover a need.		
PR 4: Others are harsh so they scare children. Therefore the relationships in this environment are not appealing at all.	Others are harsh They scare children Relationships are not appealing at all		
PR 5: It is not as it is expected to be. It is not good because the teacher is unable to reach each and every child. And as a result, the child whose needs are not met does not have good relationships with the teacher.	Unable to reach each and every child The child whose needs are not met does not have good relationships with the teacher		
EO: The situation is so tense that teachers are unable or don't have time for their learners. They do not manage to mark all their written work.	The situation is so tense Teachers don't have time for their learners They do not manage to mark all their written work		

How is your questioning behaviour? Is there a time when you probe and wait for the learner to think?			
T 1: Questioning can be done in different ways, but I think probing is always the best. Try all you can to guide the learner to get to where you want him/her to.	Accommodate all of them	Teachers guide learners' thinking	Teachers' questioning styles tends to be acceptable
T 2: Like just the one you mentioned. You allow the children time to think. You help them to get to the answer; you guide them until they can come with the answer.	Allow the children time to think Help them to get to the answer	Almost all learners are included in teachers' questioning styles	Large classes
T 5: As I earlier said, I try by all means to accommodate all of them. I try all I can to take them where I want them to be. As I mentioned earlier, I would have work for fast learners while I give myself time to move step-by-step with slow learners. This gives them freedom to express their weaknesses without the fear that they will be laughed. And since I have time to listen to those weaknesses, they try until they get to the right track.	Give myself time to move step-by-step with slow learners Gives them freedom to express their weaknesses without the fear	There is learner motivation	Not all learners are accommodated in teachers' questioning skills
T 6: I try by all means to ask every child including slow learners.	Ask every child including slow learners	Less guidance is given to learners with learning problems	
T 3: We give them a chance to think. As teachers we should also point even those that do not have their hands up.	Point even to those that do not have their hands up	No variety of questions for different learners	
PR 1: There are no questions that would challenge the thinking skill of a child.	No questions that would challenge the thinking skills of a learner	Same questions are put to all learners	
PR 2: They guide them. But most of the time I have seen that more chance is given to slow learners and they are guided towards the answer.	Teachers guide learners More chance is given to slow learners	Very few teachers guide learners' responses to questions	
PR 3: Some really do not care; they pay attention only to fast responses. Others have patience and wait until the learner gets the direction.	Some teachers really do not care They pay attention only to fast responses Others have patience They wait until the learner gets the direction	Advantaged learners are catered for	
PR 4: Teachers with larger classes do not have time for unsure children. They are in a hurry; therefore their eyes are on kids that can give correct answers. They lose patience as they want to cover the syllabus. But those with reasonable number of kids have time for them.	Teachers with larger classes do not have time for unsure children Teachers are in a hurry - their eyes are on kids that can give correct answers Teachers loose patience Those with reasonable number of kids have time for them	Disadvantaged learners are at risk	
PR 5: There are those who are ready to go step-by-step with the child. But at the same time there are teachers who move forward with children ready to move, and leave behind those that are not ready.	Some go step-by-step with the child Some move forward with children ready to move		
EO: It is not good at all. It encourages too much memorization and children who are not good at that, encounter problems.	It is not good at all It encourages too much memorization Learners who are not good at memorization meet problems		

How often do you give and attend to homework assignments given to learners?			
T 1: On daily basis and on different subjects.	On daily basis	Job overload	Home work assignments not always given and attended to
T 2: As I said, it is not easy. I do give them at least three times a week so that I am able to attend to mark the following day.	It is not easy At least three times a week	Less priority is given to home work assignments	Large classes
T 5: When I have given them work to do, I take my time to mark it.	I give and take my time to mark it	Teacher-parent and learner-parent communication is negatively affected	
T 6: It is not always I give them, but when I have given them, I make sure that I mark them.	Not always but marked when given		
T 3: Sometimes you even forget that you gave them home work because you are in a hurry for class work. When you start with the marking of the home work, you spend the whole morning marking and the day's lessons suffer.	Sometimes forget - rush class work Time consuming to mark - day's lessons suffer		
PR 1: Yes, I think it has been followed to quite an extent.	To quit an extent		
PR 2: Home work assignments are given in upper classes (classes 6 and 7) where learners are a bit less. They are rarely given in lower classes where there are more learners.	Only in upper classes - rarely in lower classes		
PR 3: They are given, the majority gives them. Some do mark them, others do not. As I said this marking does not seem to be genuine because it is done on the chalkboard not matters whether every child had done it and done it correct.	Some give and mark – others do not Marking is done by learners on the chalkboard – not genuine		
PR 4: Some yes, others no.			
PR 5: Yes, and they are attend to.			
EO: Due to high teacher-pupil ratio, teachers do not give out home works. Those who give them do not attend to them.	Teachers do not give out home works Those who give, do not attend to them		
How is the noise level in your classrooms?			
T 1: Noise level in most cases is a problem at the beginning of the year when they don't know your teaching style.	Is a problem at the beginning of the year	The noise level is unacceptable	Large classes
T 2: My kids are not so noisy really. They do not make much noise unless I am out.	Not so noisy really, unless I am out	Not conducive to teaching and learning	
T 5: It would be unrealistic not to expect noise in such situations.	Unrealistic not to expect noise in such situations	Classroom management seems to be a problem	
T 6: It is too bad. They are far too noisy.	It is too bad, they are noisy	Classroom management seems to be good with some teachers	
T 4: When one gets into classroom and finds these many and noisy children, s/he becomes annoyed.			

PR 1: I think the management level is really good.	Management level is really good		
PR 2: There is too much noise in these types of classrooms. As of now you can hear the one made by class sevens regardless of the presence of the class teacher.	Too much noise regardless of the presence of the teacher		
PR 3: They are far too noisy whether working or not.	Far too noisy whether working or not		
PR 4: These children are also noisy.			
PR 5: It is really uncomfortable.	The situation is really uncomfortable		
EO: It is difficult for children to hear the teacher.	Difficult for children to hear the teacher		
How do you manage the noise level referred to in the above sub-section?			
T 1: Sit down and discuss what to do and what not to do in the classroom. When some try to make noise, there will be those who keep on silencing them until such a time everybody will know when to talk.	Let them know your expectations while in class	Well thought out classroom management strategies	Large classes
T 2: When we first meet, I always let them know your expectations while in class. They are aware that when they have questions, they raise their hands. Actually, I have books which they read when one has finished the task in hand. If one finishes before the others and I am busy helping others, they have books, magazines, and they take them and read instead of talking and making noise.	Learners raise their hands when they have questions They read books and magazines	Classroom management is a problem	
T 5: I still maintain the point that as the teacher you must know your status when you are in the classroom. You should exercise your authority but not in a way that oppresses children. Your responsibility as the teacher is to control children when they get out of order. Talk to them from time to time like human beings. Keep reminding them that they are still under your control. Communicate your liking and disliking with them the first day you meet each other. They understand and they will respect you for that.	Know your status as the teacher Exercise your authority but not in a way that oppresses them Talk to them from time to time Keep reminding them rules and regulations of the class	Negative disciplinary climate	
T 6: You keep on disciplining them. Sometimes one goes to an extent of spanking them which is also illegal.	Discipline them - spank them	Weak teacher/learner relations	
T 4: It is at this point in time that the teacher will end up deciding to work only with fast learners and hoping to attend to slow learners later.	Decide to work only with fast learners	Emotional tension	
PR 2: Those classes whose teachers are able to discipline children, you will find the acceptable noise.		Improper classroom management strategies	
PR 3: Teachers have even given up.	Teachers give up		
PR 4: Teachers never stop disciplining so much that they sometimes get out of track and punish them.	Teachers discipline learners They sometimes get out of track and punish them		

<p>PR 5: They control it by grouping the children. You find that in a group it is more manageable as it is caused by the discussions rather than when it comes from everywhere about anything.</p>	<p>By grouping learners</p>		
<p>EO: Trying to be heard, the teacher has to shout to the top of her/his voice which also makes things worse. The</p>	<p>The teacher shouts to the top of her/his voice in order to be heard Shouting also makes things worse</p>		

Annexure E

Perceptions on teacher planning

T = teacher, PR = principal, EO = education officer

Teacher planning			
What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of teacher planning on grade repetition?			
<i>Do teachers plan their lessons before teaching?</i>			
T 1: To some extent. But like I said, it does not happen regularly. We do not actually plan the 'how part of it'.	It does not happen regularly Do not actually plan the 'how part of it'	Some teachers plan but not regularly	Irregular and inadequate planning
T 2: Yes we do. We do plan every lesson	Yes we do - we plan every lesson	Some do but not properly	
T 5: This is what I always do as a teacher.		Planning of methodology remains a problem	
T 6: Yes, we do prepare.			
T 3: Yes, as a teacher I prepare before I teach.		Ineffective instructional delivery	
PR 1: To a certain extent. I do not think it is done in a reliable way whereby one would say it is satisfactory.	To a certain extent - not done in a reliable way		
PR 2: Yes, my knowledge gives me that they do plan their lessons before they teach.			
PR 3: Yes they do plan before teaching. It is true that as the principal I cannot warranty that they all do their planning every time because I do not always check their lesson plan books.	Cannot guarantee that they all do their planning every time Do not always check their lesson plan books		
PR 4: Yes, they do.			
PR 5: Yes, they do plan them.			
EO: Yes they do, but not satisfactorily. Teachers really do not plan their daily work. They plan to impress officials.	Not satisfactorily Not genuinely done		
<i>If "yes", how do they do their planning?</i>			
T 1: We note down.	We note down	The syllabus is often used to guide the planning	Inadequate and inappropriate usage of the syllabus
T 2: Normally, we meet as stream teachers. We plan together and we note down our planning.	We plan together	There is collaboration during planning	Irregular and inadequate instructional planning
T 5: As I said earlier, we agree that as teachers we follow the national syllabus. The syllabus is divided into sections. It is very important for one to study, understand and note the work you intent learners to learn.	We follow the national syllabus Study, understand and note the work you intent learners to learn	Planning is noted down	
T 6: We note everything down.		No regular planning	
T 3: Proper planning requires a teacher to note down everything s/he intends to do for the day. This helps us not to forget our daily intentions.			
PR 1: Er---, well they actually sit down and plan their			

lessons.			
PR 2: Since planning is part of their work, they start with scheming, after scheming they identify those that have to be taught first. Then prepare their daily plans as their daily guide. They plan by coming together as stream teachers and decide upon which concepts to be taught from the syllabus, objectives, strategies and the materials.	Start with scheming Decide upon objectives, strategies and the materials		
PR 3: They do write.			
PR 4: They note down their plans. They pick concepts from the syllabus and plan according to what they are intending to teach in those days. That is what I have seen while checking their preparations.	Use concepts from the syllabus		
PR 5: They note everything down.			
EO: When we get to schools, we ask for few preparation books and it is then that we notice that it is not regularly done.			
<i>If "no", why don't they do it?</i>			
T 3: It is in rare cases that as teachers we do not find time to plan.	We do not find time to plan	Job overload	Inadequate instructional planning
T2: At the end of the day the teacher is extremely tired and that is when the planning is affected. It is compromising because at the end of the day the teacher is very exhausted when she is expected to plan for the following day.	Teachers are extremely tired at the end of the day - planning is negatively affected Very exhausted	Insufficient planning time Insufficient planning skills	
T 4: Sometimes we do not plan because we seem to lack time management. We are unable to divide our labour properly so it affects our planning.	We seem to lack time management We are unable to divide our labour properly	Lack of time and work management skills	
PR 3: It is true that as the principal I cannot warranty that they all do their planning every time because I do not always check their lesson plan books.	Cannot warrant that they all do it and do it all the time Do not always check their lesson plan books	Instructional delivery is negatively affected	
PR 1: Mm, primarily one's attitudes, it is aptitude, irresponsibility. When the attitude is not geared for doing work right, they lack actually skills even to understand the very methodology of doing things right.	One's attitudes One's aptitude Irresponsibility Lack of actual skills	Planning not a priority	
EO: Have not got actual reasons for that besides large numbers of learners they have. That might be one of their reasons though I have not heard from them.	large numbers of learners	Lack of commitment to one's work	
<i>What factors do teachers consider when planning their lessons?</i>			
T 1: We base ourselves on the syllabus, time and the level of the learners.	The syllabus Time	Several learners' related factors are considered	Uncertainty
T 2: What is important is (the noise interrupted) to teach	Objectives	Teachers' knowledge not of	Inadequate instructional planning

objectives, what should the learners achieve, and how should we tackle the lesson itself. We dwell on how to do it. That is what we are concentrating more on so that even if you are in a different class at least you may have the same approach to learners.		paramount importance	
T 5: I look at the background knowledge of my children. Since I am aware that the curriculum is developed in a spiral way, I try to find out how much of the previous work my learners learnt.	The background knowledge of my learners	Learners' characteristics not of paramount importance	
T 6: You look at the content, then the objective you would like to reach that day.	The content		
T 4: The first one is the objective. Teaching and learning material that will help me achieve my objective. The methods or strategies I will incorporate in order to achieve my objective. The type of learners I have and the kind of method I will use to suit them all.	The methods, strategies and materials The type of learners I have		
T 3: I have to see to the teaching and learning materials I will use. Set the activities that will be performed by both me as the teacher and the children. I have to include the techniques that I will use to assist them, in my planning.			
PR 1: Effective I say, carrying the correct material and in terms of the substantial material and enough knowledge to support what one puts across.	The correct material Enough content knowledge		
PR 2: They consider children that they teach. Whether what they are planning will suit the type of children they are preparing for or they should twist it a little bit.			
PR 3: They base themselves on the syllabus.			
PR 4: They work from the scheme and record books. Those concepts are from the syllabus. Therefore they base themselves on their scheme and record books.	The scheme and record book		
PR 5: Most of the time their planning is based on the development; teacher's and learners' activities. They do have all the components of the lesson plan model in use, but the main focus is on the activities.	The development - Teacher's and learners' activities.		
EO: They consider content, objectives and sometimes students' background and materials to use.			
Besides text books, what other sources of information do teachers use for their lesson preparations?			
T 1: In most cases a teacher has to find his own materials.	Not easy to get other sources School do not have libraries Costly to get to libraries in town	Not easy to obtain other sources besides text books	Inadequate instructional planning because content knowledge is very limited
T 2: Actually it is not easy to get other sources other	No relevant information in libraries	Teaching and learning resources	

than the text books unless you go to the library in town because we do not have school libraries. This also becomes a problem because it requires money for one to get to the library and sometimes when you get to the library, there is no relevant information that you want. Internet is also not so easy for us to use because we are not even familiar with. Actually, we rely on text books.	Computer illiterate Not easy to access internet	are a problem	
T 5: The teacher must be resourceful. We should not rely on text books. We should learn to improvise.	Be resourceful - improvise.	Learners' text books are the major sources of information	
T 6: Teachers have to find supplementary books themselves. We also use the old collection of books.	Old collection of books	Very limited content knowledge	
PR 1: If one were to say generally why we have poor performance is, among others it is material. Material is really not available and people simply rely on whatever they can collect.	Material is really not available	Complaints but no initiative	
PR 2: There are very little teaching materials. They are few to an extent that teachers have to hunt for teaching aids else they have to share or wait for each other which also waste time.	Share and/or wait for one another	Library use is rare	
PR 3: There are several things used. They use multiplication, division and science charts.	Multiplication, division and science charts	The department provides schools with some sources of information	
PR 4: What I have noticed is that, those who have text books, they use them. Others use any other material relevant to the topic intended to be taught, while others use the charts.		Insufficient teaching and learning resources	
PR 5: Most of the time some of them visit the library.	The library	Insufficient instructional delivery	
EO: The department has given each school Science and Mathematics kits and they are also supplied with charts for different subjects.			
<i>Do teachers acknowledge that learners have different characteristics?</i>			
T 1: I do.		Learners' differences not always acknowledged	Inadequate instructional planning
T 2: It depends. Some do, other do not.	Some do, others do not		
T 5: That is true. There are three levels of understanding. I have slow, average and fast learners.	We try our best to do so	Not all teachers acknowledge them	
T 6: It is true that we try our best to do so.			
T 3: Sometimes I remember.	Sometimes I remember		
PR 1: Yes, definitely this time I think teachers are geared to see it that learners are different.			
PR 2: Some do and others do not.	The majority of teachers are unable to acknowledge that learners have different characteristics		

PR 3: Some do, others do not.			
PR 4: I can say they do.			
PR 5: From the look of things, they were not aware of it initially until we started joined scheming and planning. They are then able to see to it that their planning responds to each learner's needs in the classroom.			
EO: Very few of them do. Because of high teacher-pupils ratio, the majority of teachers are unable to diagnose such differences.			
If "yes", what do they do to accommodate such differences in their daily planning?			
T 1: One has to diagnose problems, know problems learners have so that s/he may give him/herself time to deal with such problems.	Diagnose learners' problems and deal with them	Some teachers appear to be considerate	Inadequate and irregular instructional planning
T 2: What we have to do is that, we have to adapt the lesson to suit each learner. In our classes we have children with different abilities and we have to use different approaches so that we could reach them all, which is not easy because we have so many learners.	Adapt the lesson to suit each learner	Others encounter problems due to large classes	Uncertainty
T 5: I therefore treat them separately. This means that my plans towards them are different.	Use different approaches	Less accommodation of learners' differences in planning	Negligence
T 6: But due to large classes we are daily facing, it is difficult to plan according to each learner's needs.	Not easy because we have so many children	Difficulty in deciding on the teaching practice alternatives	Ignorance
T 3: As I said earlier, it is at this time that I have supplementary techniques.	Have supplementary techniques	Diverse responses in this regard	
T 4: As a teacher you have to decide beforehand the techniques you will use to meet learners' needs as she has already said.		Instructional planning not monitored by principals	
PR 1: Well in their daily planning like I said, the majority was not, but all of them one would say, but in some cases you find that teachers look into where, kids have problems. Say look at, which are the areas that are weak in the learner and those that have to be empowered.	Teachers look at areas that are weak in the learner Teachers incorporate learners' weak areas in their planning		
PR 2: What I have observed is that they divide them into groups – slow and fast learners. Each group is given its work.	Divide learners into groups		
PR 3: They rely more into peer educating. When the fast learners have completed their given tasks, they are assigned slow learners to assist. In some cases the teacher goes around to assist.	Teachers rely more into peer education Fast learners are assigned slow learners to assist The teacher goes around to assist		
PR 4: They do. Even if children can be divided into groups, at the end of the day they come together and discuss what individuals have come up with. Those who encountered problems are assisted.	Teachers bring learners together at the end of the day Discuss what individual learners have come up with Assist those who encountered problems		

PR 5: They are then able to see to it that their planning responds to each learner's needs in the classroom."			
EO: Teachers are unable to acknowledge learners' different characteristics, accommodating them is not an easy thing to do.	Unable to acknowledge learners' different characteristics Accommodating them is not easy		
If "no", what do they present as reasons why they needn't do it?			
T 2: I do not think we are even aware of that. I do not think so. The problem is that we are unable to identify those differences. It is not like we do it deliberately; it is just that we are not equipped with skills that would enable us to identify different learners' characteristics.	We are not aware that learners have different characteristics We are unable to identify those differences We are not equipped with skills that would enable us to identify different learners' characteristics	Lack of skills	Inadequate instructional planning
T 6: But due to large classes we are daily facing.	Large classes	Ignorance	
PR 2: Teachers are aware but how to accommodate that in the teaching-learning still remains a problem.	How to accommodate different learners' characteristics into teaching-learning still remains a problem	Large classes	
PR 3: "I would notice that some were honestly not aware of this fact. But with others it is difficult to understand."	Honestly not aware		
EO: Apart from lack of skills, teachers are loaded with large numbers of learners. It becomes difficult with some of them to realise the importance of some of these issues due to work load.	Work load		
How do teachers find out about their learners' differences?			
T 1: During the time I teach, at the evaluation session. If the child does not perform according to my expectations, I sit down and diagnose the child's problems.	During evaluation	Only classroom performance is evaluated	Inadequate and irregular instructional planning
T 2: In most cases you work until you evaluate them. It is then that you will see whether one has understood or not and then you ask yourself why.	When the learner does not perform according to expectations	External influences are not taken care of	Uncertainty
T 5: I give them some quizzes on concepts in the previous classes."	Give them quizzes	Insufficient learner assessment strategies	
T 6: "The tests they write are the ones that tell us. They write March test.		Lack of assessment skills	Ignorance
T 3: Home works and tests we give them help us identify children with problems. Evaluations that we give after every lesson.	Home work assignments and tests		
PR 1: This would definitely be born the product of really interest of the teacher on the pupils entrusted to teach.	Interest of the teacher		
PR 2: The tests and exams learners write.			
PR 3: At the beginning of every year, we inform them about the kind of kids we have in this school.	We inform teachers about learners' problems		

PR 5: Their reports and records from previous class teacher. Sometimes you find that children proceed with the same teacher and it is obvious that s/he already knows them.	Learners' reports Records from previous class teacher		
EO: Teachers use tests and exams to assess and evaluate learners' performance.			
When do teachers find out about their learners' differences?			
T 1: During the time I teach, at the evaluation session.	During the time I teach At the evaluation session	Only content-based assessment	Uncertainty
T 2: In most cases I work until I evaluate them.		Less attention on out of classroom influences	Inadequate and irregular instructional planning
T 6: It is in March when the teacher notices those children who are fast, average and slow.	During March tests	A longer time is required	Ignorance
T 5: At the beginning of every year, when we meet, I give them quizzes.	At the beginning of every year, when we meet		
T 4: We become aware of such problems when you are already working with them. That is, it is in the middle of the year, not towards the end.	In the middle of the year		
PR 1: No, no, I mean this has to be done as early enough.			
PR 2: They are able to diagnose such differences after March tests.	After March tests		
PR 3: At the beginning of every year.			
PR 4: It is not easy to identify such differences at the beginning of the year. So teachers happen to diagnose them in the middle of the year, towards March.	Not easy to identify such differences at the beginning of the year		
PR 5: Actually they diagnose such differences at the beginning of the year, after the allocation of classes. They must know their learners first before the actual teaching and learning takes place.	Before the actual teaching and learning takes place		
EO: It takes time for an individual teacher to diagnose such differences." For some it is towards March. While others it is after June exams.	It takes time Others it is after June exams		

Annexure F

Perceptions on parental involvement

T = teacher, PR = principal, EO = education officer

Parental involvement			
What are the perceptions of educators on the influence of parental involvement on grade repetition?			
<i>Do parents understand their responsibility as parents for their children's education?</i>			
T 1: They don't. Some don't others do. But the majority doesn't.	Some do not - others do.	Some parents understand their responsibility	Lack of parental involvement
T 2: No, they see their responsibility in a different way.	The majority does not	Others are less involved in education matters	
T 5: Some of them yes, others no. parents throw the whole responsibility unto teachers.	They leave all the responsibility with teachers		
T 3: It is not all who do.			
T 4: Very few do. The whole responsibility is left with the teacher.			
T 6: They are so ignorant.	They are so ignorant		
PR 1: To quite an extent really. We as the school are trying to work hard to bring parents in and get them involved. And it is working to a very fair extent. Their participation I understand it is really very bad.	To quite an extent really		
PR 2: No, not at all. Very few do.			
PR 3: Not all, some of them do and others do not.			
PR 4: Some yes, others no.			
PR 5: The majority the parents have ignored their responsibility.	The majority the parents have ignored their responsibility		
EO: No---, no. our parents don't seem to be clear of what is it that they are expected to do for the success of their children in school.			
<i>If 'yes', how have you come to realise that?</i>			
T 1: Em—(pause sound). It's because you give them a simple task to sign their children's homework, very few will do it. Some will always sign their children's homework, and they even come to school to find out how their children do.	Very few parents sign children's homework And come to school to find out how their children are doing	Few parents understand their responsibility	Lack of parental involvement
T 2: They always claim that they are busy, they do not know; they give many excuses.	They give many excuses.	Parents are less involved in education matters	

T 5: Only those that care visit their schools to report their concerns about their children's performance.	They do not attend teacher-to-parent meetings		
T 6: They cannot respond to our calls.	Parents do not respond to calls		
T 3: We notice this when we give children home work. Children bring excuses that their mothers said they do not know what the home work is all about.	Parents do not bother signing their children's home work assignments		
PR 1: Parents to children with problems shy away. It becomes very difficult to bring them on board and look at what is happening with their children. But at the average, the average learner, you find parents who always respond and at a high rate.	Parents of learners with problems shy away Parents of learners with average performance always respond and at a high rate		
PR 2: They do not attend teacher-to-parent meetings to discuss their children's performance. They do not care whether children have passed or not. Some of those reports remain in my office until the child completes.	Parents do not collect their children's reports		
PR 3: They just dump them at school without exercise books. They claim that education is free.	They just dump them at school without exercise books They claim that education is free		
PR 4: Some parents refuse to buy the lost exercise books. The claim that stationery is free.	Parents refuse to buy exercise books - they claim that stationery is free		
PR 5: There are those who do not bother signing their children's home works. They do not collect their children's report cards. There are report cards which have been in my office since I joined the school. Children's cleanliness also says it all.	They do not care whether children have passed or not		
EO: Most of the reports we get are that parents are not cooperative at all. They always have excuses to give.	Parents are not cooperative at all		
<i>If "no", what have you as the teacher, principal, and the department done to make them aware of their responsibilities?</i>			
T 1: I call a meeting with the parents for kids in my class.		Teachers invite parents to discussions	A need for parental involvement
T 2: We invite parents to school and make sure that they understand their responsibilities.	Invite parents to meetings	Schools make initiative to involve parents	
T 6: Teachers call parents where children's performance is discussed."			
T 4: We use to invite them to parents' meetings. We also invite them for discussions either verbally or by letters through their children.	We normally call parents to meetings		
PR 1: Well, one would say the best thing is that you introduce them to how we approach our business here at school. This is our first line. We give them an induction on the entry of their kids.			

PR 2: We normally call parents meetings at the end of every year. I sometimes hold children's reports with a hope that they will be eager to know their children's performance then come for them.	Hold children's reports		
PR 3: We talk to them. We call meetings and discuss such issues.			
PR 4: We call parents once every year.			
PR 5: We have parents' meetings at least two or four times a year.			
EO: We always encourage principals to have parents meetings where issues pertaining schools are discussed as well as children's performance.	Encourage principals to call parents to meetings		
How have they responded to such information?			
T 1: Very well really.	Very well really	Some parents respond positively	Less parental involvement
T 2: Positively really, they take it positively.		Others respond negatively	
T 6: Some of them respond to calls, others do not.	Some of them respond to calls - others do not		
T 4: Yes, they come. It is in rare cases that they disappoint us.			
PR 1: I think their response becomes relatively very bad. It becomes difficult.	very bad - it becomes difficult		
PR 2: Some of those reports remain in my office until the child completes.	Reports remain at school until the child completes school		
PR 3: It was very exciting and the attendance was very good.	Very exciting		
PR 4: Others refuse to attend such meetings until the child goes out of the school.			
PR 5: Some of them seem to be understanding while others are still tracking behind.	Some understand - others are still lagging behind		
EO: But most of the reports we get are that parents are not cooperative at all. They complain about their wasted time with meetings. They never turn up when called. They always have excuses to give.	Parents are not cooperative at all They complain about their wasted time		
How often do parents, teachers and/or principal meet in an academic year?			
T 1: Twice and then, formally it is twice and they will be this one of calling them when there is a need.	Twice When there is a need	At least once a year with some schools	A need for parental involvement
T 2: At least three times a year.	At least three times a year	More than once a year with others	
T 6: Besides calling them for their children's performance, we have annual general meetings once a year.	Once a year		
T 4: Any time we have problems with children. Besides that, the school has parents' meeting once a year.			

PR 1: We have the annual general meeting and of course any other meetings. We also try to get them involved in terms of some reference letters to parents on what goes on at school.			
PR 2: Once a year.			
PR 3: Quarterly.			
PR 4: Once every year.			
PR 5: We have parents' meetings at least two or four times a year.	At least two or four times a year		
EO: Some principals call parents' meeting once a year while others twice.			
<i>What do they/you discuss?</i>			
T 1: In the two formal meetings that is when they come to collect the reports. And in the urgent meetings it is when I see that the learner has a problem and then we see to it that we solve it.	Collect the reports	Schools meet parents in an academic year	A need for parental involvement
T 2: We discuss the overall administration of the school. Twice a year we discuss the learner's performance, how the progress is, what problems the learner encounters in his/her learning and how s/he should be assisted.	Learners' performance		
T 6: School regulations, school's mission statement, and school administration.	Overall administration of the school		
T 3: Issues concerning administration of the school.	Knowing each other		
PR 1: We also try to get them involved in terms of some reference letters to parents on what goes on at school.	To give them an induction		
PR 2: : We normally discuss their children's work, problems learners have as far as the academic work is concerned as well as knowing each other.			
PR 3: I called them to discuss the letter from Principal Secretary.			
PR 4: We discuss their children's performance.			
PR 5: It is in these meetings where we discuss issues like these ones with parents.	Learners' cleanliness		
EO: Teachers call parents when they discover children's academic problems.	Children's academic problems		
<i>How do parents react when they discover that their children have failed and have to repeat grades?</i>			
T 1: It is painful. It is so painful you can see. Some even shed tears.	It is painful - they shed tears	Some parents become emotionally hurt	A need for parental involvement
T 2: It is painful, it is painful to parents but sometimes they accept it.		Others never comment - accept whatever results	
T 6: They become hurt. But there are some who do not still understand what is happening and accept anything taking place.	Some accept anything taking place		

T 4: They get discouraged mainly those who know that they have been very devoted in helping their children at home.			
PR 2: They become hurt and they put all the blame on teachers complaining that teachers do not do their job.	They put all the blame on teachers		
PR 3: They do not like it.			
PR 4: I have not seen or heard a parent complaining that the child has failed and have to repeat classes. They accept everything.	Have not seen or heard a parent commending		
PR 5: They become hurt and it is very painful.			
EO: It's hurting you know. They really feel hurt to an extent that some of them even come to our offices to complain.			
What reasons do you usually give to convince a parent that his/her child is a failure and has to repeat a grade?			
T 1: If you communicated the kid's problems with the parent the moment you notice them, it will not be a problem at the end of the year. You will not lack words. But if you never communicated with the parent, it will be difficult to convince the parent that his child has failed. It is difficult to say that.	Lack of communication between teachers and parents	Ignorance in learners	Lack of parental involvement
T 2: That the child cannot read and write, the learner is not independent, the learner does not do homework. The learner cannot meet the standard. They have so many excuses.	The child cannot read and write Learners' dependency	High absenteeism rate	Blame shift
T 5: They do not perform well in their final exams. They cannot read and write properly.	They cannot read and write	Reading and writing problems	
T 6: Our learners are very much ignorant as far as schooling is concerned ever since FPE. They give many reasons for their absenteeism.	Ignorance in learners	Learners are below standard	
T 3: Our learners do not consider anything serious. They are not serious at all in everything they do. They do not care. They only enjoy fun.	Absenteeism	Lack of self confidence and motivation	
PR 2: Teachers complain that children's attendance is very poor.			
PR 4: They complain about children's absenteeism. Children do not have passion and interest to learn.	The learner does not do home work assignments		
PR 5: Absenteeism is the major one. Our children do not attend school well. Besides that we regard different capabilities as one of the reasons why children cannot all make it.	Different capabilities		
EO: Most of the times they say children do not know how to read and write. Some say children's attendance is poor.	The learners cannot meet the standard		

Annexure G

Letter requesting permission from the Ministry of Education and Training

9th December, 2007

Principal Secretary
Ministry of Education and Training
P.O Box 47
Maseru 100

Dear Sir/Madam

Application for permission to conduct research in some of Lesotho primary schools

My name is 'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho and I am registered for a Master's Degree in 'Education Management, Law and Policy' at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor is Prof. JL Beckmann. As part of the requirements for the degree, I have to do empirical research and write a dissertation.

I therefore wish to apply for permission to conduct a research project in some of Lesotho primary schools. The purpose of the study is to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators' perceptions on possible but as yet very much unexplored or under-explored causes of repetition. One education official with at least three years' experience in the primary division will be interviewed in this regard. The reason is that his office has an overview of all that happens in this section – number of primary schools, teachers in each, their teaching experiences and qualifications, and the overall performance of every school.

Three school principals with at least five years' experience will also be interviewed of which I will request your education official to help me get in touch with such principals. Seven teachers with at least five years' teaching experience in primary schools and holding Diploma in Primary Education or above will be interviewed. I believe that the results of this study will benefit the country at large as we shall have a clear understanding of factors that have an impact on grade repetition and try to address them in order to reduce grade repetition.

My research will be subject to the ethical requirements of the University of Pretoria in terms which complete anonymity is guaranteed as well as the option to withdraw from participation (which is completely voluntary). Participants will be asked to complete a letter of informed consent and given an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the information that will be made available to every participant.

You are in the circumstances requested to assist me with the education official who shall in turn provide such school principals for facilitation of the same. You are humbly requested to furnish written consent for record purposes.

Thank you in advance for positive anticipation of favourable reply.

Yours sincerely

'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho (Researcher)

Prof JL Beckmann (Supervisor)

Annexure H

Letter of consent from Ministry of Education and Training (See next page)

Annexure I

Letter requesting participation from the education official

11th January 2008

The education official
Maseru Education Office
Maseru 100

Dear Sir/Madam

Invitation to participate in a research project

My name is 'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho and I am registered for a Master's Degree in 'Education Management, Law and Policy' at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor is Prof. JL Beckmann. As part of the requirements for the degree, I have to do empirical research and write a dissertation.

I wish to request you to participate as an interviewee in the research project that I will be conducting in the year 2008. The purpose of the study is to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators' perceptions on possible but as yet very much unexplored or under-explored causes of repetition.

Your participation in this research project is voluntarily as you may decide to withdraw at any stage you wish to do so. Your participation will be in the form of an interview that will last for 30 to 45 minutes. With your consent, the interview will be tape recorded for the purpose of the study.

Please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent and note that participation in this phase of the project does not oblige you to participate in follow-up individual interviews. However, should you decide to participate in follow-up interviews, your participation is still voluntarily and you may withdraw at any time as well. Under no circumstances will your identity be made known, formally or informally, to any stakeholder or school that may be involved or not involved in the research process and/or has some form of power over you. That is, I promise to abide by principles of protection from harm, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity as far as this study is concerned.

Furthermore, I request your permission to conduct interviews with some of the school principals with at least five years' experience. I therefore request your assistance in this regard.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho (Researcher)

Prof. JL Beckmann (Supervisor)

Consent form

I agree to participate in the research on: **“The perceptions of educators on certain factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.”** as described in the accompanying letter.

Name:

Programme:

Signature:

Tel:

Mobile:

Date:

Annexure J

Letter requesting participation from principals

23rd January 2008

The principal
..... Primary school
Maseru 100

Dear Sir/Madam

Invitation to participate in a research project

My name is 'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho and I am registered for a Master's Degree in 'Education Management, Law and Policy' at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor is Prof. JL Beckmann. As part of the requirements for the degree, I have to do empirical research and write a dissertation.

I wish to request you to participate as an interviewee in the research project that I will be conducting in the year 2008. The purpose of the study is to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators' perceptions on possible but as yet very much unexplored or under-explored causes of repetition.

Your participation in this research project is voluntarily as you may decide to withdraw at any stage you wish to do so. Your participation will be in the form of an interview that will last for 30 to 45 minutes. With your consent, the interview will be tape recorded for the purpose of the study.

Please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent and note that participation in this phase of the project does not oblige you to participate in follow-up individual interviews. However, should you decide to participate in follow-up interviews, your participation is still voluntarily and you may withdraw at any time as well. Under no circumstances will your identity be made known, formally or informally, to any stakeholder or school that may be involved or not involved in the research process and/or has some form of power over you. That is, I promise to abide by principles of protection from harm, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity as far as this study is concerned.

Furthermore, I request your permission to conduct interviews with some of your teachers with at least five years' teaching experience and holding certificates in Diploma in Primary Education. I therefore request your assistance in this regard.

Thank you in advance for your attention.

Yours sincerely

'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho (Researcher)

Prof JL Beckmann (Supervisor)

Consent form

I agree to participate in the research on: **“The perceptions of educators on certain factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.”** as described in the accompanying letter.

Name:

School:

Signature:

Tel:

Mobile:

Date:

Annexure K

Letter requesting participation from teachers

23rd January 2008

The teacher
.....Primary School

Maseru 100

Dear colleague

Invitation to participate in a research project

My name is 'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho and I am registered for a Master's Degree in 'Education Management, Law and Policy' at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor is Prof. JL Beckmann. As part of the requirements for the degree, I have to do empirical research and write a dissertation.

I wish to request you to participate as an interviewee in the research project that I will be conducting in the year 2008. The purpose of the study is to explore possible reasons why so many learners repeat grades in Lesotho primary schools by probing educators' perceptions on possible but as yet very much unexplored or under-explored causes of repetition.

Your participation in this research project is voluntarily as you may decide to withdraw at any stage you wish to do so. Your participation will be in the form of an interview that will last for 30 to 45 minutes. With your consent, the interview will be tape recorded for the purpose of the study.

Please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent and note that participation in this phase of the project does not oblige you to participate in follow-up individual interviews. However, should you decide to participate in follow-up interviews, your participation is still voluntarily and you may withdraw at any time as well. Under no circumstances will your identity be made known, formally or informally, to any stakeholder or school that may be involved or not involved in the research process and/or has some form of power over you. That is, I promise to abide by principles of protection from harm, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity as far as this study is concerned.

Thank you in advance for your attention.

Yours sincerely

'Maitumeleng Ntho-Ntho (Researcher)

Prof JL Beckmann (Supervisor)

Consent form

I agree to participate in the research on: **“The perceptions of educators on certain factors contributing to grade repetition in Lesotho primary schools.”** as described in the accompanying letter.

Name:

School:

Signature:

Tel:

Mobile:

Date:

Annexure L

Ethical Clearance Certificate (See next page)