

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

One of the claims made with the introduction of OBE is that OBE represents a “paradigm shift” in teaching and learning (Pretorius, 1998:v; Musker, 1997:10; Claassen, 1998a:36; DoE, 1997b:1; DoE, 1997c:8; & Free State DoE, 1998:4). The claim, according to the Department of Education, required of teachers to break away from the traditional approach to teaching and learning and to adopt a totally new and innovative approach to teaching and learning (DoE, 1997a:28). At the heart of this claim of a paradigmatic change is the notion that education had to move from an *instructionist* approach to a *constructivist* approach.

From a philosophical perspective, OBE learning assumes constructivism (Moll, 2002:6; Messerschmidt, 2003: 107; Mackrory, 2000: 13; Malcolm, 1999: 103; Arjun, 1998: 25). Thus, OBE supposedly in its ontological, epistemological and anthropological nature is underpinned by constructivist principles. A movement from traditional (objectivist and behaviourist) to constructivist approach, reflects a theoretical shift in perspectives of learning and instruction that emphasises the social and contextual nature of learning.

Constructivist’s theory of learning is based, among others, on the assumptions that: knowledge is not a transferable commodity; learning is contextual and dependent on the prior knowledge the learner brings to the experience. This notion calls for a radical shift in classroom focus away from the traditional transmission model of teaching toward one that is much more complex and interactive (Prawat & Floden, 1994:37). Considerable literature (Scheurman, 1998:6; Smith, 1999; Slavin, 1994:225; Kampulainen & Mutanen, 2000:144) suggests that constructivism has many significant implications for classroom practices (teaching and learning), for the definition of knowledge, for the relative emphasis on the individual versus social learning, for the role of the teacher, and for the definition of successful instruction.

During the training of teachers in OBE much time was devoted on teaching them about the principles of OBE and the outcomes to be achieved, yet very little attention, if any, was given to training them on changing their approach to classroom management (DoE, 2000a:19). This omission may imply that the developers of the new approach either assumed that the “paradigm shift” does not require a shift in classroom management practices, or that such a change would naturally follow from the implementation of OBE.

From research done as part of my master’s degree it became clear that although teachers accepted the fact that OBE represented a so-called “paradigm shift” towards teaching and learning, they did not change their classroom management practices (Pitsoe, 2001:149). This leads us to the conclusion that the assumption that change in management approach will simply follow the implementation of OBE is not a valid assumption. The omission of dedicated training in a constructivist approach to classroom management to ensure effective management of OBE classroom environments should thus be interrogated.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

In the paragraphs below, the focus will be on the motivation for the research and background to the problem, and the problem statement.

1.2.1 Motivation for the research and background to the problem

Part of my motivation to engage in this study can be ascribed to my interest in classroom management. The shift from instructionist to constructivist classroom management, more specifically in terms of the leadership roles of the teacher; and inconsistency between Revised National Curriculum Statement (South African OBE policy) and philosophical principles of constructivism intrigued me greatly.

Contesting arguments exist on whether or not OBE does represent a “paradigm shift”, but for the purpose of the study, the preliminary assumption is that it does represent a move from *instructionalist* to *constructivist* teaching. OBE (at least at a conceptual level) is

moving from an instructionist (teacher as transmitter of knowledge) to a constructivist approach (teacher as mediator and facilitator in the construction of meaning).

If OBE implies a move from an instructionist approach to teaching to a constructivist approach, does it of necessity imply that classroom management should also change? According Brophy and Alleman (1998) this change does not imply a paradigm shift in classroom management, but a refocus and redefinition of roles. This study will explore how classroom management within a constructivist mode differs from traditional classroom management.

Research emanating from Scheurman (1998:6) suggests that constructivism has many implications for classroom practices, for the definition of knowledge, for the relative emphasis on the individual versus social learning, for the role of the teacher, and for the definition of successful instruction. Wood's (1994:336) research in mathematics, asserts that the alternative perspective that constructivism offers by defining learning as a process of personal construction of meaning offers a potentially powerful way in which to rethink educational practice. Incorporated into this pedagogical practice, a constructivist view of learning must necessarily imply specific implications for the teacher's role and the nature of the activity of teaching.

This movement, from an instructionist approach to teaching to a constructivist approach, will require that teachers move from a traditional teacher-centred classroom to a learner-centred classroom and this raises issues of classroom control and discipline and a change in the traditional teacher-leader role to shared leadership and new social interaction in the classroom, placing high demands on both teachers and learners on the creation and redefinition of classroom roles.

Wyssusek *et al.* (2000:3) argue that constructivist classroom management differs radically from instructionalist classroom management. They assert that many of the modernist assumptions on which traditional classroom management is based, do no longer hold in our world today and this led philosophers to question modern issues using

a different paradigm. In addition, classic (i.e. modern) conceptions of knowledge, regarding it as an objective entity, are superseded by conceptions which view knowledge as culturally determined, subjective or social (ibid). The study will explore classroom management theory compatible to constructivism.

Most management theories of the previous century (especially pre-1990) and particularly in as far as education management theory is concerned, are firmly rooted in Fordist and Taylorist tradition with its strong cause and effect underpinnings that are typical of a modernistic approach to science. This scientific grounding is in its ontological, epistemological and anthropological roots, firmly rooted in modernistic science and consequently focuses its management theory in a functionalistic approach. Again, at least at a theoretical level, there seems then to be a hiatus between classroom management theories as it applies to an instructional learning-based environments and constructivist learning environments.

Management of change in this study will be viewed from a situational or contingency perspective. From a situational perspective, the teacher is a leader and the learner a follower. Contingency or situational theory holds that appropriate management action depends on the particular parameters of the situation, and attempts to identify contingency principles that prescribe actions to take, depending on the characteristics of the situation (Bartol & Martin, 1991:67).

There are many similarities between the Australian and the South African models of OBE (though the two models are not the same) (Malcolm, 2001:200). However, OBE in Australia was introduced into a situation where teachers were known to have experience in curriculum design and assessment, school management and teamwork (Malcolm, 2001:222). In addition, constructivist theories and organic management were widely known. It could be argued that the policy symbolism underestimated the form of training (influenced by fundamental pedagogics) received by the majority of teachers in South African institutions of higher learning prior to the introduction of OBE.

In the case of the South African situation, (Malcolm, 2001:223) there were no significant attempts to explore teachers' existing beliefs and practices, interests and hopes, as bases for the reforms. It is possible that prevailing beliefs were dominated by behaviourism and fundamental pedagogics. Naicker (1999a: 57) holds that South African teachers could be located in any of the following paradigms: radical humanist, functionalist and interpretivist. Further, a large number of South African teachers have been trained within a paradigm that had to do with prediction and control, and belief in the soundness of a non-democratic system. In a different dimension, Jansen (1999d:92-93) holds that changes expected from the policy routinely underestimate the complexity of the system into which such change is introduced, and the policy intended to simply change teacher behaviour is very likely to be short-lived and inconsequential unless the focus shifts to changing teacher understanding.

According to Sayed (2001:188), educational policy developments have been wide-ranging and comprehensive, and a number of important policies have been introduced since 1994. However, this flurry of policies is characterised by policy symbolism – policies signal and provide images of desired educational outcomes and focus on “frameworks” rather than specific content of educational policies. Jansen (2001b:272) claims that the making of educational policy in South Africa is best described as a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism, to mark the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid society.

Fundamental to this study, is the assumption that OBE classroom management should move towards constructivist policy guidelines. The main problem stemming from this assumption is: What are conceptually the key features of classroom management in an OBE classroom? Flowing from this it could also be asked how these features differ from the traditional features associated with classroom management and how these features will affect the roles of classroom teachers. There is need to establish guidelines that will place constructivism at the centre of development of teaching and learning policy for South African schools.

1.2.2 Problem statement

This study aims to conceptually interrogate the notion of constructivist classroom management. It is postulated that constructivist classroom management as a distinct entity can conceptually be defined, analysed in terms of its essential features and distinguished and differentiated from any other form of classroom management practice that exist. Constructivist classroom management appears to constitute an own body of knowledge within education management. Consequently, this study will argue that the constructivist classroom management required to support the implementation of OBE, can conceptually be envisioned and should have been included in the training of classroom teachers if success with OBE implementation is to be achieved.

1.3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study is exploratory in nature. It sets out to investigate how classroom management within a constructivist mode differs from traditional classroom management within an instructionist approach. The study does not attempt to enter into the debate on whether OBE constitutes a paradigmatic change to education, but rather attempts to depart from the assumption that, at least at a conceptual level, OBE requires a move from a traditional instructional approach (the teacher as transmitter of knowledge) to a constructivist approach (the teacher as mediator and facilitator of the construction of knowledge).

In order to achieve this general aim, the following will serve as specific aims, namely to:

- Investigate conceptually the key features of an OBE classroom management environment as envisaged and embedded in policy;
- Develop a conceptual understanding of constructivist classroom management
- Determine how traditional classroom management differs from constructivist classroom management; and
- Explore the implications of constructivist classroom management on classroom practices.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative in nature. Hussey and Hussey (1997:12) define qualitative research as an ‘*approach, which is more subjective in nature and involves examining and reflecting perceptions in order to gain an understanding of social and human activities*’. Qualitative methodology should have the following characteristics:

- Consider words as the elements of data;
- Be primarily an inductive approach to data analysis;
- Result in theory development as an outcome of data analysis; and
- Be an alternative to the experimental method (Leedy, 1993:140).

According to Neuman (1997:328), qualitative methodology contains several techniques (e.g., ethnography, grounded theory, life history, conventional analysis). In this study, conceptual analysis will be employed. Textual data will be used as a source to undertake conceptual analysis. In *conceptual-analytical* studies basic assumptions behind constructs are first analyzed; theories, models and frameworks used in previous empirical studies are identified, and logical reasoning is thereafter applied (ibid:328).

A detailed account of the research methodology employed in this study appears in Chapter 2.

1.5 CREDIBILITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Just as a quantitative study cannot be considered without validity and reliability, a qualitative study cannot be called credible unless it is not trustworthy. Literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:300; Merriam, 1998:44; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:276) stress that researchers should pay sufficient attention to the criterion of trustworthiness when carrying out a constructivist inquiry. The four terms *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* are, then, the naturalist’s equivalents for the conventional terms *internal validity*, *external validity*, *reliability* and *objectivity* (Lincoln

& Guba, 1985:300). In this investigation, interpretation of primary and secondary data was used to examine and distinguish between the defining attributes of the concepts “*instructionist classroom management*” and “*constructivist classroom management*” and their relevant attributes in conceptual analysis has to reflect the participants’ views in relation to the same phenomenon.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) content that credibility is achieved through the following procedures: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy (extensive field notes), peer debriefing (review) and member checks. This study does not deal with much of an exact measurable finding in a qualitative research as it is an emerging reality that we describe and analyse. In this regard Richardson (as quoted by Nieuwenhuis, 2007) argues that triangulation is based on the assumption of a fixed point or object that can be triangulated. She proposes that we should not triangulate but crystallize.

In light of the above, I adopted the concept *crystallization*, replacing the concept *triangulation* in this study. Two types of *crystallisation* were adopted: a) crystallisation of empirical materials: the materials were textual data in the form of professional journals, scholarly books, monographs, dissertations, human/personal documents, official documents and mass media and virtual output (internet sources); b) Methodological crystallisation: Several sources of empirical materials instead of focusing on one source only were used. Literature review/conceptual historical analysis, conceptual analysis, conceptual cartography and hermeneutic analysis were employed on relevant documents.

Peer debriefing is essential “to provide inquirers the opportunity to test their growing insights and to expose themselves to searching questions” (Guba, 1981:85). The concept of peer debriefing was achieved throughout my meetings with my senior supervisor, Dr J. Nieuwenhuis. To enhance the credibility of this study, discussions regarding the literature review, conceptual analysis and hermeneutic analysis that emerged from the analysis of the empirical materials were carried out between the senior supervisor and the writer.

During these discussions, the consistency of the application of review and analysis was also checked.

Confirmability (authenticity) is the degree to which the findings are the products of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher (Mouton, 2001:27). It takes six classes of data, namely, raw data, data reduction analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, material relating to intentions and dispositions, instrument development information (ibid:278). The technique that was followed to enhance authenticity, involved describing and explaining the situation or case as truthfully as possible. Also, authenticity was ensured by taking a personal view from some distance. In an attempt to increase the dependability and confirmability of the current inquiry, an external audit process was carried out.

1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Concepts are building blocks of theory – ideas are expressed as symbols or words. According to Neuman (1997:40), everyday culture is filled with concepts, but many of them are vague and full of definitions. In addition, values and experience of people in a culture may limit everyday concepts. Quite often, in social sciences, concepts are expressed in the form of words. Neuman (1997:40) notes that the use of everyday words in specialised ways in social science may create confusion. Thus, Sallies (1993:21) holds that it is imperative to clarify concepts in the study as they may bear different meaning for different people, and as a result, may lose their connotative meaning.

The concepts clarified below are critical to an understanding of the discourse in this study. More detailed explanations are provided in relevant sections of the study.

1.6.1 Outcomes-based education (OBE)

The meaning of the concept “outcomes-based education” is slippery and illusive, implying and conjuring up different ideas to people. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7) define OBE as a *learner-centred, results-oriented* approach to learning.

According to Spady (as quoted by Towers, 1994:625), OBE is not a programme, but a means of designing, developing, delivering and documenting instruction in terms of intended goals and, a means of organising for results, basing what we do instructionally on the outcome we want to achieve. In Malcolm's (1999:78) view, it is a *management system* – an approach to managing curriculum control, curriculum design, assessment reporting teachers' accountability, change and innovation.

For the purpose of this study, OBE will refer to a learner-centred; result-oriented system/design; a means of designing, developing, delivering and documenting instruction in terms of intended goals, and management system.

1.6.2 Constructivism

Fleury (1998:157) defines constructivism as a range of ideas about the *production of knowledge and its construction by groups and individuals*. It involves a process whereby learners *construct their own reality or* at least interpret it, based upon their perceptions of experiences, so an individual is a function of one's prior experiences, mental structures and beliefs that are used to interpret objects or events (<http://members.lycos.co.uk/jmoreea/im2141.htm>).

In this study, the concept “constructivism” will mean a process whereby the learner constructs his/her own understanding, reality and knowledge of the world he/she lives in, through reflection of his/her experiences and through his/her interactions with the environment.

1.6.3 Instructionist

The concept “instructionist” is a noun of the verb “instruct”. It originates from a Latin word “*instructus*” which means “*to teach; to train in some special field; give skill in some art or field of specialisation; impart knowledge systematically*” (New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1991:202). In educational settings, Jonassen, Myers and

McKillop (1996:93) see instructionism as *sponge* method of teaching and the banking concept of learning where the goal of learners is to absorb and accumulate what they are given until the examination, at which time the information is wrung out of them.

In this study, “instructionist approach” will imply *sponge* method of teaching and the banking concept of learning, where the goal of learners is to absorb and accumulate what they are given until the examination.

1.6.4 Classroom management

According to Cruickshank, Bainer and Metcalf (1995:468), classroom management can be defined as the provision and procedures necessary to create and maintain an environment in which teaching and learning can occur. Weber (1986:272) on the other hand, sees classroom management as a process that involves establishing and maintaining conditions in the classroom (*through planning, organizing, leading, control, creating a positive climate and discipline*) to ensure effective learning.

In this study, classroom management denotes methods used to organise classroom activities, instruction, physical structure and other features to make effective use of time, to create a happy and productive learning environment, and to minimise behavioural problems and disruptions.

1.6.5 Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

According to DoE (2001a:1), RNCS (policy) is the result of a decision in mid-2000 by the Council of Education Ministers and Cabinet. It is built on the vision and values of the constitution and the Curriculum 2005. Official documents (DoE, 2001a:16; DoE, 2003a:5; DoE, 2004:18) claim that RNCS is underpinned by the following principles:

- Social justice;
- Healthy environment;
- Human rights;

- Inclusivity;
- Outcomes-based education;
- A high level of skills and knowledge; and
- Balance of progression and integration.

1.6.6 Leadership

Kruger (1994:388) defines leadership as the process by which a particular person, the leader, influences a group of people (subordinates) in such a manner that they will subsequently be willing to strive to achieve objectives that the leader presents; and a human factor that leads an institution towards realizing definitive objectives through cooperative and voluntary effort of all the people in the enterprise. Hellriegel and Slocum (1991:G7) see leadership as the ability to influence, motivate and direct others in order to attain desired objectives. In the teaching and learning situation, the teacher is in a “natural” leadership position; and should be able to lead his/her pupils, to meet with them, to understand their personal needs, and to make it clear through his/her behaviour that he/she respects them as individuals (Kruger & Badenhorst, 1995:87).

In this study, leadership implies a process whereby the teacher influences, motivates and directs the learners to achieve learning outcomes.

1.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

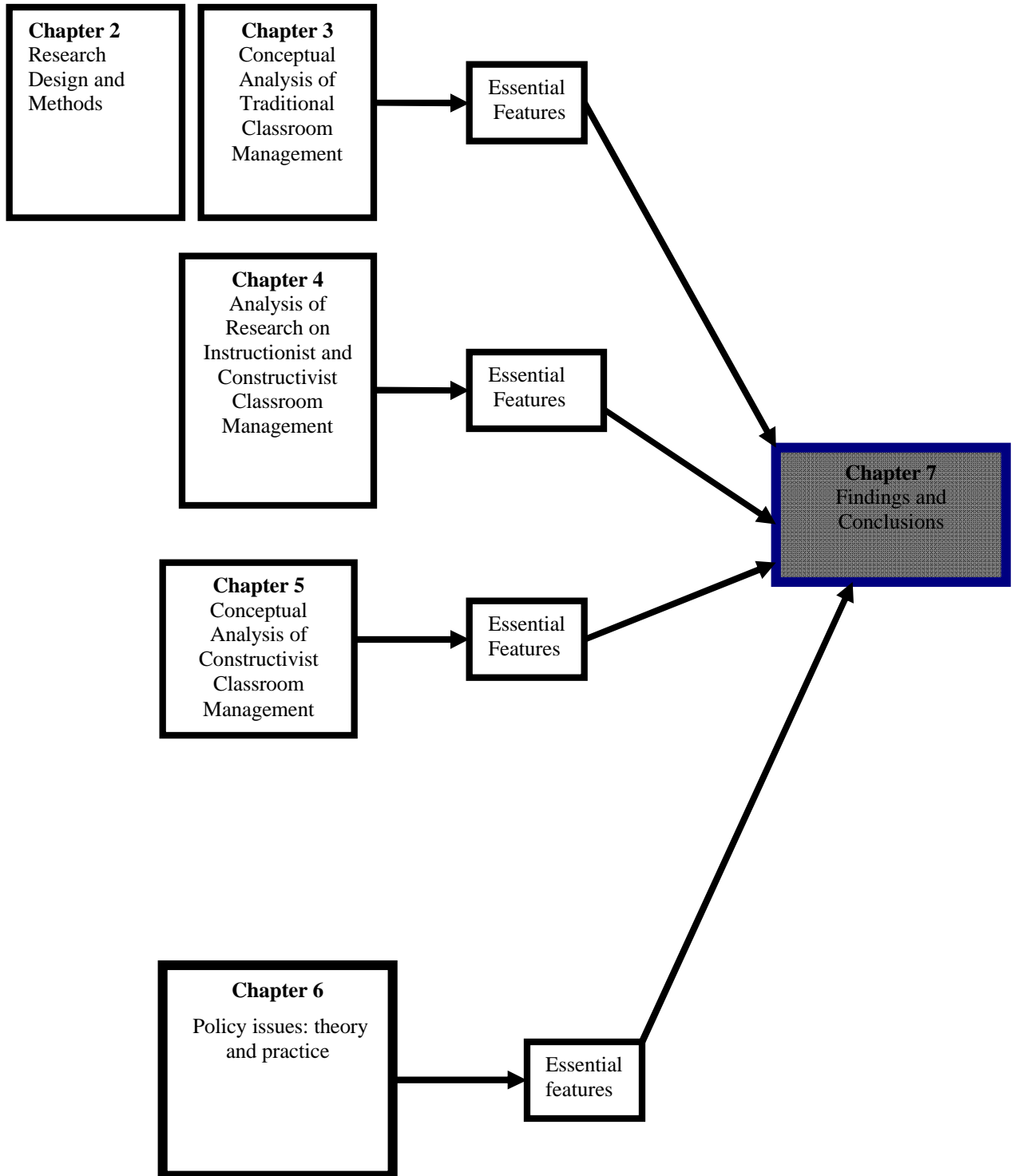
The study is exploratory and provisional. It is based on the assumption made in pronouncements that OBE in South Africa constitutes a paradigm shift in classroom teaching and learning. If this is the case then an important aspect such as classroom management, that is of pivotal importance to effective teaching and learning, cannot be left to chance. The study sets out to interrogate the constituent features of constructivist classroom management and to juxtapose it to traditional classroom management and to analyse C2005 and RCNS to establish the policy taken on classroom management. Through critical and deductive reasoning, I would like to establish if the assumptions

made in the pronunciations can be theoretically substantiated or whether they simply constitute some form of policy symbolism. In essence it remains exploratory and theoretical in nature and will provide us with provisional answers to the claims made and it will therefore shed light on why teachers were not trained on alternative classroom management strategies.

1.8 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The main contribution of this study lies in the conceptual analysis of classroom management within the two paradigms of an instructionist versus a constructivist approach offered and its analysis of features of C2005 and RNCS that answers the question as to whether these innovations really constitute a “paradigm shift” to teaching and learning in South Africa. More importantly, it makes a significant contribution to our understanding of classroom management from a post-modern perspective and begs the question of whether such an approach is attainable in developing the countries’ context. The analysis offered provides some conceptual clarity of the conceptual quagmire surrounding concepts that are often used to describe practices that do not meet the conceptual parameters for which they were intended. In general, modernist assumptions on which traditional classroom management is based do not hold for constructivist classroom management. This requires classroom management in a constructivist setting to be approached from a situational approach perspective – a new set of principles is apposite.

1.9 PLAN OF THE STUDY



1.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter an introductory overview, background and aims to the investigation were presented. Also, the research methodology was outlined and the key concepts used in this study were clarified. In the next chapter, the research methodology underpinning this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Interrogating classroom management from a constructivist perspective necessitates an approach that is firmly rooted in qualitative epistemology. In line with this, the research will be based on an interpretivist method. According to Borg and Gall (1989:8), interpretivism is an approach to qualitative studies that is descriptive and holistic in nature. It is underpinned by the theory and principles that human discourse and action can not be analysed with the methods of natural and physical science.

Borg and Gall (1989:8) contend that for the social interactions, interpretation comes via understanding of group actions and interaction. In Neuman's (1997:68) view, the interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct detailed observation of people in a natural setting in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create (construct) and maintain their social world.

Interpretivism has a local rather than a global orientation that is concerned more with the nature-bound frameworks of particular schools and the ways individuals understand and act in specific social contexts than with finding general laws or all-encompassing explanations (Gultig, Lubisi, Parker & Wedekind, 1999:80). Hence, working from an interpretivist paradigm will enable me to interpret and explore the following:

- The impact of policy symbolism on implementation issues;
- The OBE implementation challenges in the South African context;
- Why OBE calls for different learning approaches, acquisition of new classroom management roles; and
- Socially constructed meanings.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The concepts “*research design*” and “*research methodology*” are often confused, but these are two different dimensions of research. This section attempts to clarify the difference between these concepts. Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) provide a more detailed account on the differences between “research design” and “research methodology”.

A plethora of “*research*” definitions exists. The development of an understanding of research may be approached from a variety of perspectives. Almost every researcher in the field of research, be it pedagogical, psychological or business, has an own definition or interpretation of this concept. Hussey and Hussey (1997:1) posit that research is a critical element to both academic and business activities, however there is no consensus view on a definition of research.

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (1986:720) defines research as: “*systematic investigation undertaken in order to discover new facts, get additional information*”. For Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003:3), research is:

“...*something that people undertake in order to find out new things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge...*”

In Tull and Hawkins’ (1987:26) view, research is a process that involves identifying a management problem or opportunity; translating that problem/opportunity into a research problem; and collecting, analysing, and reporting the information specified in the research problem.’

Hussey and Hussey (1997:1) synthesise several definitions, offering that research the areas of agreement defined as follows:

- Research is a process of enquiry and investigation;
- Research is systematic and methodical; and
- Research increases knowledge

The goal of qualitative research is defined as describing and understanding (*verstehen*) rather than the explanation and prediction of human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270). According to Hussey and Hussey (1997:2), its purpose is to do the following:

- Review and synthesise existing knowledge;
- Investigate some existing situation or problem;
- Provide solutions to problems;
- Explore and analyse more general issues;
- Construct or create a new procedure or system;
- Explain a new phenomenon;
- Generate new knowledge; and
- Combine any of the above.

In Hussey and Hussey's (1997:54) opinion, the concept "methodology" refers to the overall approach to the research process, from the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of the data. According to Leedy (1993:121), methodology refers to merely an operational framework within which the facts are placed so that their meaning may be seen more clearly.

Mouton and Marais (1993:193) see research design as exposition or plan of how the researcher decided to execute the formulated research problem. For Durrheim (2004:29), research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge research question and the execution or implementation of the research. A research design is a plan of how you intend conducting the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74).

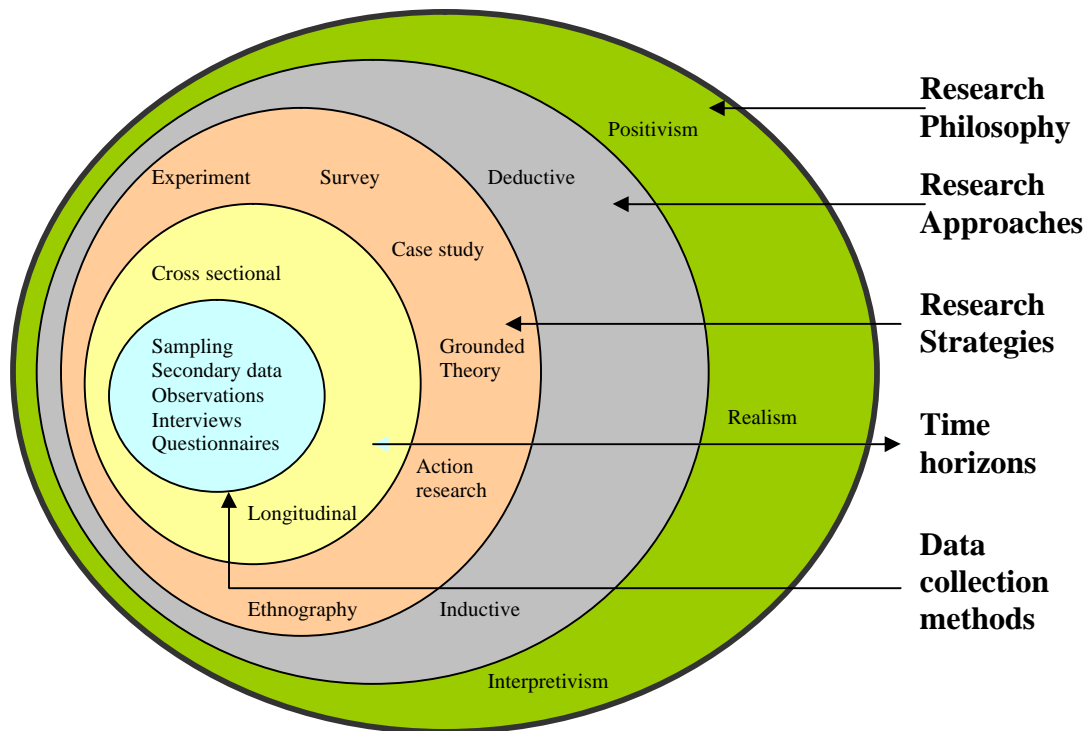
Silverman (as cited in Hussey & Hussey, 1997:54) defines pure research methodology as follows:

"Methodologies refer to the overall approach to the research process, from the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of data. Like theories, methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful".

2.3 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

For the benefit of this study, Saunders *et al.*'s (2003:83) research process “onion”, which illustrates the range of choices, paradigms, strategies and steps followed by researchers, was adopted. This is presented in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: The research process onion (Saunders *et al.*, 2003: 83)



The research process “onion” gives a concise and useful summary of the main issues that need to be reviewed before any research study is undertaken. These “layers” of the “onion” provide a platform from which to consider the following:

- The research philosophy adopted by a researcher;
- The research approach taken by a researcher;
- The research strategies followed by the researcher;
- The research time lines that are under review by the researcher; and
- The data collection methods employed by a researcher.

These main layers of the onion are used as a guide in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study sees *instructionist classroom management* and *constructivist classroom management* as belonging to two different worldviews, and therefore requires different approaches and training. Because this cannot be done empirically (it cannot be proven through the scientific method), it needs to be tackled at a conceptual philosophical level. Thus, in this study, qualitative research design will be adopted.

Literature (Van der Merwe, 1996:283; Kruger, 2000:6; Neuman, 1997:14) suggests that “*qualitative*” is an umbrella term for research based on the theoretical orientation, such as phenomenological approach, natural observation, case studies, symbolic interaction, ethnography, ethnomethodology, cultural studies, narrative reports and constructivism. Qualitative research usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the analysis of data (Bryman, 2001:506). For Van der Merwe (1996:283), the emphasis is on improved understanding of human behaviour and experience. As a research strategy, it is inductivist, constructivist and interpretivist (Bryman, 2001:506; Janesick, 2004:10).

In ontological perspective, qualitative research is underpinned and guided by the principles of interpretivist philosophy – it rejects positivist thinking. Basically, it refuses to reduce human behaviour to a mere number. This tradition (interpretivist) holds that people may or may not experience social or physical reality in the same way (Neuman, 1997:70). Also, it sees social reality as consisting of people who construct meaning and create interpretations through their daily social interaction.

Merriam (1991:7) maintains that non-experimental or descriptive research is undertaken when description and explanation (rather than prediction based on cause and effect) are sought, when it is not possible or feasible to manipulate the potential causes of behaviour and when variables are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted from the study.

Qualitative research focuses on processes, meaning and understanding. According to Le Compte and Preissle (1993:31) and Creswell (1994:11), it is concerned with meaning people make, thus such studies are

“framed by descriptions of, explanations for or meaning given to the phenomena by both the researcher and the study participants rather than by definitions and interpretations of the researcher alone”.

Qualitative research is also linked to the construction of social reality, cultural meaning and focuses on interactive processes and events (Neuman, 1997:14; Creswell, 1994:15). Van der Merwe (1996:283) claims that it aims at the development of theories (grounded theory) and understanding. In addition, he maintains that its objective is to promote self-understanding and increase insight into the human condition.

Qualitative research methods are humanistic. Hussey and Hussey (1997:12) assert that qualitative research is an approach which is “more subjective in nature and involves examining and reflecting perceptions in order to gain an understanding of social and human activities”. Further, on the human factor in phenomenological (qualitative) research, the researcher’s own experiences and behaviour influence the interpretation of the results (ibid:152). This in fact describes the core of action learning in a sense.

Qualitative research is to be regarded as a “warm” or personal approach to research (Leedy, 1993:142) with the following characteristics according to Leedy (1993:140):

- Words are considered as elements of data;
- It should be regarded as an inductive approach to data analysis; and
- The results derived from data analysis form part of theory development.

Qualitative research employs an inductive strategy. In an inductive approach, emphasis is on gaining an understanding of the meaning humans attach to events, a close understanding of the research context. Hussey and Hussey (1997:19) see inductive research as a study in which theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality; thus general inferences are induced from particular instances. In the inductive

approach, the researcher constructs a picture that takes shape as the parts are collected (Creswell, 1994:5).

This study is also of a non-empirical, unobtrusive and analytical nature. It is non-empirical because it relies on existing and secondary textual data – document text, conversation and interview transcripts. Babbie and Mouton (2001:78) contend that non-empirical studies include philosophical analysis, conceptual analysis, theory building and literature reviews and these elements lie at the heart of this study.

2.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM (PHILOSOPHY)

In this section, the concept “paradigm” will be defined. Also, the discussion will focus on the research paradigms and on *truth* and *reality* as seen through mechanistic and holistic worldviews.

2.5.1 The concept “*paradigm*”

There are many definitions of the concept *paradigm* - Kuhn himself used the term in at least 21 different definitions. It originates from the Greek word “*paradeigma*” which means to represent something or offer it as a model (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1986:13; Knill, 1991:52). In the opinion of Hussey and Hussey (1997:47), it refers to the progress of scientific practice based on people’s philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge. For Arjun (1998:21), it means a philosophical scheme of thought or a theoretical formulation on a subject which relates to a set of concepts, categories, relationships, values and methods which are generally accepted by a community of practitioners at any given period of time.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:645), a paradigm is a model/framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand it. In Jordaan and Jordaan’s (1986:13) view, it is a thought framework within which about which human nature can be proposed and answered. Put differently, a paradigm is a set of

assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular worldview – it addresses fundamental assumptions taken on faith, such as beliefs about the nature of reality (the ontology), the relationship between knower and known (epistemology), and assumptions about methodologies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:15; Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105).

Quantitative and qualitative researches are often described as two research paradigms, but they are more than that – they represent two worldviews that need to be understood. Hence, Lincoln (1985) states that a paradigm is much more than a model or pattern; it is a view of the world – a *weltanschauung* that reflects our most basic beliefs and assumptions about the human condition.

Fundamental to understanding the concept paradigm, it is necessary to understand its characteristics. According to Jordaan and Jordaan (1986:13), a paradigm has a basic proposition or series of propositions, it is influenced by and influences cultural climate or spirit of the time in which it arose; influenced by the psycho-epistemologies. Also, different paradigms can exist concurrently. Arjun (1998:21-23) discusses these characteristics. These, among others, include disciplinary matrix, view of the world, types of paradigms, scope of paradigms, period of “normal science”, extra ordinary science, and scientific revolution: paradigmatic crisis, growth science, set of assumptions and practice of discipline.

Kuhn differentiates three types of paradigms: *metaphysical*, *sociological*, and *construct*. The *metaphysical* paradigm represents the most extensive consensus possible within a science: a worldview or *Weltanschauun* (Wyssusek, Schwartz & Krallmann, 2000:7). Worldview, as understood by Kuhn, thereby implies that perception is influenced by experience (ibid:7).

According to Wyssusek *et al.* (2000:7), a change in our *Weltanschauung* does not imply a change in our environment, but in the way we perceive it. They maintain that changing one’s worldview from one way to another is no continuous process, but a radical shift. It

is impossible to view the world through one or the other 'lens'. The world, as seen with the old worldview, has a different 'Gestalt' than the one seen with the new one. The two cannot be compared, they are incommensurable (ibid:7).

Kuhn (as quoted by Wyssusek *et al.*, 2000:7) held that the *sociological* paradigm encompasses "*the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community*" and is a concretion of the metaphysic paradigm. Paying regard to the social dimension in describing sciences, exposes the socially contextualized subjectivity of their self-conception, and at the same time, the notion of objectivity in science has to be dismissed (ibid:7). In Kuhn's (ibid:7) opinion, the *construct* paradigm is the most concrete form of a paradigm. It refers to the methodic layer of science, to specific tools, instruments and procedures for producing and collecting data.

It is apparent, then, that paradigms serve as the lens or organizing principles by which reality is interpreted. In this regard Nieuwenhuis (2007) described paradigms as enabling us to tell a coherent "story" by depicting a world that is meaningful and functional but culturally subjective. Thus, in the study methodological paradigm, will serve as the lens or organizing principles by which text and theories are interpreted.

2.5.2 Research Paradigm

This research is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm. According to Borg and Gall (1989:8), interpretivism as an approach to qualitative data analysis, has a long intellectual history. It is underpinned by the theory and principles that human discourse and action cannot be analysed with the methods of natural and physical science. For the social interactions, interpretation comes via understanding of group actions and interaction (ibid:8).

Within the interpretivist research paradigm research is qualitative, descriptive and holistic in nature. Neuman (1997:68) contends that an interpretive approach is the systematic

analysis of socially meaningful action through direct detailed observation of people in a natural setting in order to arrive at understanding and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world.

Interpretivism has a local rather than a global orientation that is concerned more with the nature-bound frameworks of particular schools and the ways individuals understand and act in specific social contexts than with finding general laws or all-encompassing explanations (Gultig, Lubisi, Parker & Wedekind, 1999:80). Hence, working from an interpretivist paradigm will enable me to interpret and explore the socially constructed meanings of constructivist classroom management by thoroughly reviewing the literature on the topic and develop a conceptual understanding of constructivist classroom management so as to juxtapose it to traditional classroom management practices discussed in the literature.

Positivism and interpretivism are two poles of the same continuum. Table 2.1 below illustrates the differences between the paradigms.

Table 2.1 Positivistic and Interpretivist/Phenomenological Research Paradigms

Positivistic Paradigm	Interpretivist/Phenomenological Paradigm
Tends to produce quantitative data	Tends to produce qualitative data
Uses large samples	Uses small samples
Concerned with hypothesis testing	Concerned with generalising theories
Data is highly specific and precise	Data is rich and subjective
The location is artificial	Location is natural
Reliability is high	Reliability is low
Validity is low	Validity is high
Generalises from sample to population	Generalises from one setting to another

(Adapted from Hussey and Hussey, 1997: 54)

2.5.3 Worldview as paradigm

Various attempts to define “worldview” are found in the literature. It would seem that there is a great diversity of opinion regarding the worldview perspectives. Depending on the perspective from which worldview is studied and described, certain features seem to be stressed and others neglected. Worldview refers to the culturally-dependent, generally subconscious, fundamental organization of the mind (Cobern, 1991:3). This organization manifests itself as a set of presuppositions or assumptions, which predispose one to feel, think and act in predictable patterns. In Kearney’s (1984:1) view, worldview is culturally organized macro-thought: those dynamically inter-related basic assumptions of a people that determine much of their behaviour and decision making, as well as organizing much of their body of symbolic creations and ethno-philosophy in general.

To be rational means to think and act with reason, or in other words, to have an explanation or justification for thought and action (Cobern, 1991:3). Such explanations and justifications ultimately rest upon one’s worldview, one’s presuppositions about the world. In other words, a worldview inclines one to a particular way of thinking. According to Kearney (1984:41), a world view consists of basic assumptions and images that provide a more or less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world.

Specifically, a worldview defines the self. It sets the boundaries of who and what I am. It also defines everything that is not me, including my relationships to the human and non-human environments. It shapes my view of the universe, my conception of time and of space. It influences one’s norms and values (Cobern, 1991:3). Often one thinks of a worldview as religion or philosophy, for example the *Christian* worldview or the realist worldview. Religion is indeed an especially powerful formative force on the mind of a growing child, greatly influencing the contours of a child’s worldview (Cobern, 1991:3).

Lincoln and Guba (1985:15) assert that:

“Paradigms represent what we think about the world (but cannot prove). Our actions in the world, including the actions we take as inquirers, cannot occur without reference to those paradigms: ‘As we think, so do we act.’”

Thus, as a worldview, paradigm guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105).

Within the social sciences, there are two main competing paradigms: the scientific, mainly quantitative paradigm and the phenomenological, interpretive, mainly qualitative paradigm of inquiry. The former was first established at the beginning of the twentieth century when social sciences were born and their methodology was adapted to the positivist thinking of the natural sciences. The phenomenological paradigm has gradually emerged since World War II. It is now well established and arguably the predominant paradigm for the new millennium. Evidence for this claim is provided by the many reference books on qualitative methods of inquiry published in recent years (e.g. Strauss & Corbin, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Dey, 1999; Glesne, 1999; Dick, 1999).

It is useful here to briefly outline the characteristics of and differences between the traditional and emerging worldviews. It is more appropriate to distinguish between two main research paradigms than to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative methods. Table 2.1 on the next page illustrates the differences between traditional and emerging worldviews.

TABLE 2.2 Differences between traditional and emerging worldviews

Emerging worldview	Traditional worldview
Holism Mutual causality Perspectival reality Observer in the observation Indeterminism Equal focus on exteriors and interiors Focus on relationship between entities Dialogical research methods Non-linear relationships Polarity thinking Focus on feedback Quantum physics perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - influence occurs through iterative non-linear feedback - the world is novel and probabilistic Postmodern De-differentiation Focus on heterarchy (within level) Understanding/sensitivity analysis/explanation Equality Based on biology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structure, pattern, self-organization, life cycle Focus on patterns Focus on variation Local control Behaviour emerge from bottom up Metaphor of morphogenesis Focus on ongoing behaviour Generalist Little or no transference of models Theory is narrowly applicable Irreversible time Generation of symbols Mind creates matter	Reductionism Linear causality Objective reality Observer outside the observation Determinism Primary focus on exteriors Focus on discrete entities Monological research methods Linear relationships Either/or thinking Focus on directives Newtonian physics perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - influence occurs as direct result of force exerted from one person to another - expecting the world to be predictable Modern Differentiation Focus on hierarchy (between levels) Prediction Patriarchy Based on 19th-century physics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equilibrium, stability, deterministic dynamics Focus on averages on pace Focus on averages Global control Behaviour specified from top down Metaphor of assembly Focus on results or outcomes Specialist Easy transference of models Theory is widely applicable Reversible time Transmission of symbols Matter creates mind

(Adapted from Nieuwenhuis, 2007)

In the literature, both paradigms are often cast in opposition: traditional versus emergent; experimental versus naturalistic; prescriptive versus descriptive; reductionist versus holistic; nomothetic (study of general laws and trends) versus idiographic (study of individual characteristics, case studies); normative versus interpretive; positivist versus non-positivist; etc.

Although it is true that in the traditional paradigm the methods used are predominately quantitative, and in the alternative paradigm they are predominately qualitative, both

quantitative and qualitative methods may be – and indeed have been – used in both paradigms. However, it is the inquirer’s philosophical assumptions that mainly determine which methods s/he will choose, especially when the inquirer is conscious of his or her epistemological framework. Thus, methods play a secondary role; the paradigm or theoretical framework is of primary importance and must be made explicit, so that the reader/examiner can evaluate the process, methods and outcomes, using relevant criteria from the inquirer’s particular perspective.

In the light of the above, the emerging worldview is in essence about post-modern thinking and that is related to constructivism. This study holds that the aspects listed in table 2.2 may provide the type of indicators that will aid in the conceptual analysis of constructivist classroom management. Thus, it could be used conceptually to analyse and define constructivist classroom management. In the subsequent paragraphs, *reality* and *truth* in terms of mechanistic and holistic worldviews and the humanist perspective are presented.

2.5.4 Truth and reality: as seen through mechanistic and holistic worldviews

The study of the nature and form of reality (that which is or what can be known) is called “*ontology*”. Guba and Lincoln (1989) distinguish two possibilities. The first is that there is one objective reality that is observable by an inquirer who has little, if any, impact on the object being observed – the object has ontological status in itself and, therefore, can be studied objectively from the outside. This statement implies that there is some objective independent law of nature (very much like in the project of the natural sciences) to which human life is subjected and that it is the project of research to discover and describe these objective laws. Understanding these will aid prediction and control of human life. Supporters of the conception of reality as an objective entity that is separate from the researcher and the researched are broadly classified as positivists and advocates of the “scientific method”.

Guba and Lincoln's (1989) aim is to discover *truth* as a verified and tested thing or at least to ensure correspondence between the research account and the 'what is the case' account. This is important to this study because an instructionist approach to teaching and classroom management finds its roots in the positivist thinking. In epistemological, ontological dimension, this section will attempt to address the following questions: How does the world work? What is the relationship between the knower and the known? What role do values play in understanding the world? Are causal linkages possible? The discussion will be based on the Table 2.3 below.

TABLE 2.3 Matrix of Paradigmatic Value Systems

	Scientific	Emergent
View of knowledge	Rational Perceptual Absolute: Fairly Dogmatic	Relational Tentative: Largely perceptual
View of phenomena -	Simple Reductionist Empirical	Complex Holistic Ideational Empirical process
Relationships between entities -	Discrete units Hierarchical orders	Fluid, systemic, integrative orders, largely heterarchical
View of causation	Linear cause-effect and unidirectional interaction, explained by deductive reasoning	Mutual causation, - with multi causal factors, explained by deductive, inductive and integrative reasoning
View of change/ orientations to - the future	Determinate Predictable and controllable by humans	Indeterminate Unpredictable Morphogenetic
Descriptive metaphor	The Newtonian clock	The hologram

(Adapted from Nieuwenhuis, 2007)

How does the world work? The traditional paradigm, often labeled "positivistic", views reality as being uniformly structured and transparent. When different observers give it their attention, they must, in principle, arrive at a comparable image (Moser, 1999). One

can posit a unified scientific procedure - as represented by the classical methodology of empiricism - in order to comprehend reality in a scientifically "objective" manner. This is to say that by carefully dividing the unified world into constituent parts and studying them, one can understand it as a whole. Theories are conceived in the framework of a progress model in which they become more and more refined and explain larger and larger parts of the world. Science can thus be understood, in terms of a Popperian metaphor, as the building of a tower, where one stone is laid upon another (ibid).

The emerging paradigm, on the contrary, assumes there are "multiple realities." These are socio-psychological constructions with which subjects grasp their world from different standpoints (Moser, 1999). *Truth* does not follow the criteria of corresponding to its object any longer, but is concerned instead, with finding out which of the various explanatory attempts is better informed. And it cannot be ruled out that individual attempts at explanation are limited in time and breadth according to their standpoint (ibid).

Human behaviour, unlike that of physical objects, cannot be understood without reference to the meaning and purpose with which human actors associate with their activities (Moser, 1999). Constructions are not more or less "true" in any absolute sense, but are simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. Thus, Guba and Lincoln (1994:111) assert that constructions are alterable, as are their associated "realities".

What is the relationship between the knower and the known? In the traditional paradigm the knower stands outside of what is to be known. Keeping distance is an essential criteria for achieving objective knowledge. In contrast, the emerging paradigm recognizes the interdependency of the knower and what is known (Moser, 1999). This becomes especially clear in the post-modernist approach and its emphasis on different forms of representation which ought to fit each respective object. Though it would seem to be sensible here to maintain a certain distance in a research situation which involves a emerging paradigm, this does not consist simply in choice of method (e.g. construction of an artificial experimental situation) but in the reflectivity about the position of the

researcher himself (ibid).

What role do values play in understanding the world? An essential criteria of empirical research was to divert the question of values to matters beyond scientific concern. Scientific work was to be very clearly value-free (Moser, 1999). Only in the case of (non-scientific) transfer into concrete actions, according to this methodological stance, were the questions of judgment and value attribution again relevant. Hence, the quality of "good" scientific work lay precisely in letting as few value decisions as possible find their way into scientific research and "distorted" it (ibid).

In the emerging paradigm, to the contrary, values convey and shape everything that is to be discovered and understood. From a constructivist view of things the positioning of one's own epistemological standpoint is already inextricably bound up with norms and values (Moser, 1999).

Are causal linkages possible? The traditional paradigm assumes that one event precedes another and that one can say it "causes" the event. Basically the idea is to draw up a chain of events as cause and effect and, in this way, describe causal connections which remain stable over time and space (Moser, 1999). But the problem with such chains of causality is that they are often woven into a net of conditions and circular processes that make it very difficult to clearly identify what is cause and what is effect. Instead events often have a reciprocal relationship, thus making it often a matter - as the new paradigm maintains - of discovering multi-directional relationships or describing interrelated patterns of behaviour which cannot be given clear attributes (ibid).

Methodologically the traditional paradigm is bound up with processes such as "induction" and "deduction," by means of which it is attempted to explain observations and derive prognoses. In contrast to this, the network thinking of the emerging paradigm is represented by the concept of "abduction," which is more heavily oriented toward puzzle-solving within complexly structured situations (Moser, 1999).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:54), social research in the 19th century was dominated by the positivist ideals of universal laws, objectivity and quantification. The concept *positivism* refers to scientific claims that have been “posited” (or “postulated”) on the basis of empirical evidence as opposed to claims that are based on religious or metaphysical beliefs (ibid:22). Auguste Comte (1798-1857) developed the main ideas of positivism between 1826 and 1829 when he wrote his major work – the *Cours de philosophie positive* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:21; Neuman, 1997:63). He maintained that all branches of knowledge pass through successive stages: the *theological* (or fictitious), the *metaphysical* (or abstract) and the *scientific* (or positive).

Positivism holds that there is only *one* logic of science, to which intellectual activity aspiring to the title of *science* must conform (Neuman, 1997:63). Further, it sees social science as an organised method for combining deductive logic with empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic casual laws that can be used to predict general pattern of human behaviour.

Neuman (1997:64) asserts that modern positivists hold that social and physical reality is real – it exists *out there* and is waiting to be discovered. For them, social reality is not random, it is patterned and has order. Two other assumptions are that the basic patterns of social reality are stable and knowledge of them is additive. The regularity in social reality does not change over time, and laws discovered today will hold in future (ibid:64). With reference to basic nature of human beings, this school of thought holds that people operate on the basis of external causes, with the same cause having the same effect on everyone. Also, *mechanical model of man* or a behaviourist approach assumes that people respond to the external forces that are as real as physical pressures on objects.

In this study, an argument regarding instructionist classroom management will be explored later in Chapters 3 and 4. The principles underpinning traditional classroom management involves a number of mechanistic functions aimed at structuring and managing the classroom in a way where negative behaviour is punished and positive behaviour rewarded, an ideal management style is advocated to which all and sundry

must adhere, etc. Among others, positivist paradigm is underpinned by mechanistic world-view. Black (1999:24) asserts that the understanding of reality in the mechanistic worldview, emerges from the confluence of dualistic rationalism of Descartes, mechanistic physic of Newton, the biological determinism of Darwin, individualistic philosophy of Locke and the materialistic psychology of Freud.

Mechanistic world-view is based on several key principles. Among others, as stated by Black (1999:24), these principles advocate that: (1) scientific knowledge can achieve absolute and final certainty; (2) in the material world and in system, the dynamic of the whole can be understood from the property of the parts; (3) the world is a dualistic world in which the mind is superior to the body, human beings are superior to nature, the rational is superior to the non-rational, male is superior to female and objectivity is superior to subjectivity; and (4) the common good is enhanced when the potential and material wealth of the individual is maximised.

In 1979 Schwartz and Ogilvy undertook a survey that documented changing patterns of thought and belief in terms of research paradigms. The movement charted was from a dominant paradigm which favoured explanations which were simple, hierarchic, mechanical, determinate, linearly causal, based on assembly and objective towards an emergent paradigm which saw explanations as needing to be complex, heterarchic, indeterminate, mutually causal, concerned with morphogenesis and acknowledging perspective. Capra (1989:101) therefore claims that modern science has come to realize that:

“...all scientific theories are approximations to the true nature of reality; and that each theory is valid for a certain range of phenomenon. Beyond this range it no longer gives a satisfactory description of nature, and new theories have to be found to replace the old one, or, rather, to extend it by improving the approximation.”

The rise in dissatisfaction with the traditional worldview – or what Capra (1989) calls a crisis of perception and says it occurs when people hold to a mental model, which no

longer achieves their standards of accuracy – made way for a new emerging view that is not only limited to the social sciences, but also found its origin in the natural sciences and quantum physics. Other writers have called this same phenomenon a period of dislocation or a time when we are between "stories" (Moser, 1999).

In contrast to mechanistic world-view, holistic stance sees multiple realities. The realities are socio-psychological constructions forming an interconnected whole. The central image of the world-view is the holon – subsystems which are both wholes and parts (Black, 1999:31). Further, in the holistic world-view, the whole is always greater than the sum of the parts and, paradoxically, the whole is contained in each part while no whole is complete in itself. This world view sees the world as a community of subjects that includes all living beings which share the planet with human kind (Black, 1999:31). In chapters 5 and 6, the discourse will explore features of constructivist classroom management through the lens of the emerging paradigm.

2.5.5 Seeing reality and truth through the humanist lens

In the holistic world view, reality consists of an individual's mental constructions of the objects with which he/she engages, and that engagement impacts on the observer and the situation being observed. According to Neuman (1997:69), in interpretive social sciences, social reality is not something waiting to be discovered, and it is based on people's definitions of it, and is not fixed. This means that reality is interpreted as something that has been shaped over time and history by a series of "social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors and then crystallized into a series of structures that are now inappropriately taken as "real" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110; Neuman, 1997:69). The implication is that human life can only be understood from within and not as some form of external reality. Social life and reality as constructed entity is thus, a purely human product and the human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning.

Romm and Alant (1993:44) posit that the world in which humans live is structured by acts of consciousness as a world of meaning – human consciousness actually reshapes *the*

world into a lifeworld. They maintain that world is the world of meanings – the world is constructed by people in terms of their experiences. The social world therefore, does not exist independent from the human mind and is not predetermined by some independent law of nature. “Reality” as portrayed by qualitative researchers therefore tends to follow the constructivist cue that reality is a social construction, accepts that the researcher cannot be separated from the research and asserting that research findings are *created* rather than *discovered*. *Truth* is therefore not an objective phenomenon that exists independently of the researcher (Romm & Alant, 1993:44).

Whereas ontological assumptions concern the nature of reality, epistemology relates to how things can be known - how truths or facts or physical laws, if they do exist, could be discovered and disclosed (Romm & Alant, 1993). Epistemology therefore, looks at how one knows reality, the method for knowing the nature of reality, or how one comes to know reality - it assumes a relationship between the knower and the known. For natural scientists, the way of knowing reality is by using the “scientific method” – also known as the experimental design. In contrast to natural scientists, social scientists in knowing the reality use interpretive methods.

For educational researchers using qualitative research methods, the way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon – an attempt to see how others have constructed reality by asking about it. Qualitative research as stated earlier, therefore acknowledges an interactive relationship between the researcher and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) as well as between the participants and their own experiences and how they have constructed reality, based on those experiences. Within this worldview, people's stories of their experiences are counted as empirical evidence. This epistemological view acknowledges the assumption that the personal experiences, beliefs and values narratives are biased and subjective, but it accepts it as true for those who have lived through those experiences about which we are collecting empirical data. The stories, experiences and voices of the respondents are the mediums through which we explore and understand (know) reality and these “stories” could be in the form of “academic texts” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

We could visually juxtapose positivist understanding of reality and knowledge with post-modern views of reality and knowledge in terms of the following Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Positivist and post-modern views of reality and knowledge

Positivist	Post-modern
Both approach research in a planned and systematic manner based on their ontological understanding of reality	
Belief that reality can be studied objectively	Beliefs that reality can only be known subjectively
Thinking tends to be deductive (testing theory)	Thinking tends to be inductive (generate theory)
Search for truths/findings that are generally applicable	Search for findings that reflect an emerging reality

(Adapted from Nieuwenhuis, 2007)

In the light of the above, qualitative and quantitative paradigms seem to have implications for classroom management in terms of ontological and epistemological assumptions. Thus, in dealing with the conceptual key features with the two issues: instructionist vs. constructivist classrooms management, this study will conceptually analyse instructionist classroom management from a positivist stance (in Chapter 3) and constructivist classroom management from an emerging perspective (in Chapter 5).

2.6 RESEARCH METHODS

Given that this study is qualitative, non-empirical and analytical, literature reviews/conceptual historical analysis, conceptual analysis and hermeneutics as research strategies have been used. In theoretical studies, the researcher produces his/her evidence to support argument from existing facts or information (Van der Merwe, 1996:290).

2.6.1 Literature review/ Conceptual historical analysis

The concept “review” is defined as examining critically or thoughtfully; to go over again in the mind (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 1986:727). In this study, an extensive and relevant literature review is made in an attempt to provide a

theoretical foundation for the study. It is hoped that it will provide scientific explanation to the research questions. A thorough study of the available literature enables the scientist to verify his/her findings and to compare these with the work of others (Manamela, 1993:43).

The study relies on textual data. Textual data includes documents, texts, conversations, and interview transcripts (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:77; Bryman, 2001:369; Van der Merwe, 1996:283). According to Hart (2003) and Creswell (1994:27) the term “documents” covers a very wide range of different kinds of sources, including, personal/human documents (diaries, letters etc.), official documents (deriving from the state and private sources), mass media and virtual output (internet sources), professional journals, scholarly books, monograph and dissertations.

In Neuman’s (1997:89) view, literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from and build on what others have done. Literature review takes various forms, namely: context, historical, theoretical, integrative, methodological and meta-analysis review. Each type of review has specific goals. Neuman (ibid:89) lists the goal of a literature review as follows:

- To demonstrate a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establish credibility;
- To show the path of prior research and how current the project is linked to it;
- To integrate and summarise what is known in an area; and
- To learn from others and stimulate new ideas.

This study employs a historical review which is underpinned by goals two and three of Neuman. Neuman (1997:90) asserts that historical reviews traces the development of an idea or shows how a particular issue or theory has evolved over time. In this research, the purpose of literature review was to explore the widely accepted models/definitions/theories of constructivism, and compare conceptually the key features of the traditional and constructivist classroom management. Also, it was used to investigate what competing theories (traditional/behaviourist and constructivism) say

about classroom management – how classroom management within a constructivist mode differs from traditional classroom management within an instructionist approach.

2.6.2 Conceptual analysis

Through concept analysis, the characteristics or attributes of a concept can be examined. The focus in this section will be on defining and describing concept analysis, and its purpose and uses. Also, research strategies and techniques of concept analysis will be explored.

2.6.2.1 Definition and description

There are multiple definitions of the term “*concept*” in literature. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:109), the process of coming to an agreement is conceptualisation and the result is called a *concept*. Concepts are building blocks of theory (Morse, Mitcham, Hupcey & Tason, 1996:386; Neuman, 1997:39). For some scholars (Neuman, 1997:39; Mouton & Marais, 1993:58; Seaman, 1987:43), it is an idea expressed as a symbol or in words. Mouton and Marais (1993:59) see concepts as primary instruments which we employ in coming to grips with our experiences.

In the opinion of Morse *et al.* (1996:386), a concept is a mental formulation of empirical experience – complex *cognitive representations* of perceptible realities formed by direct or indirect experiences. On the other hand, Walker and Avant, (1994:25) argue that a *concept* is a mental image of a phenomenon; an idea or construct in the mind about a thing or an action. Also, concepts contain within them the defining characteristics or attributes that permit us to decide which phenomena are good examples of the concepts and which are not. They represent categories of information that contain defining attributes.

Neuman (1997:41) avers that a concept has two parts: *symbol* (in form of words or term) and a *definition*. In a similar perspective, Mouton and Marais (1993:58) see two basic

elements or dimensions as connotation (*sense*) and denotation (*reference*). The cognitive mapping of behaviours provides concepts with structural features, and it is these features that are assessed when conducting concept evaluation (Morse *et al.*, 1996:386). The structural features are underpinned by (1) a definition, (2) characteristics, (3) boundaries, (4) preconditions and (5) outcomes.

According to Mouton and Marais (1993:102), by means of analysis the constituents of variables or factors that are relevant to understanding the phenomenon or an event are isolated. Walker and Avant (1994:28) states that in “*analysis*”, one clarifies or sharpens concepts, statement, or theories. Thus, concept analysis is a strategy that allows us to examine the attributes or characteristics of a concept (ibid: 37). It is a formal, linguistic exercise to determine those defining attributes.

Huysamen (1995:154) asserts that conceptual analysis involves the careful analysis of the constructs (concepts) and their relationships (as postulated by a theory). Conceptual analysis was developed from the work of the analytical philosophers. It requires that the implications of these constructs are clearly spelt out, possible inconsistencies between their definitions be pointed out and modifications to them be proposed (Huysamen, 1995:154).

Nieuwenhuis (2007) contends that the defining characteristics of a conceptual study is that it is largely based on secondary sources, that it critically engages with the understanding of concepts, and that it aims to add to our existing body of knowledge and understanding – it is generative of knowledge. In conceptual analysis studies, the data with which we work are concepts and the understanding thereof and our means of analysis could be discourse analysis, hermeneutic, phenomenological, deconstruction or critical analytic (ibid). Conceptual analysis studies therefore, tend to be abstract, philosophical and rich in their theoretical underpinning (ibid).

2.6.2.2 Purpose and uses

Concepts play a vital role in research. As tools of science, concepts express generalisations from particulars and enable us to impose some sort of meaning on the world: through them reality is given sense, order and coherence (Cohen & Manion, 1989:17). Thus, they form the theoretical realm of a discipline, and they are the means by which, through rigorous developing, testing and modifying, a discipline advances (Morse *et al.*, 1996:386).

According to Huysamen (1995:154), the objective of the conceptual analysis is to identify and to construct a conceptual framework at the point at which theory is formulated and its constructs are operationalised. The basic purpose of concept analysis is to distinguish between the defining attributes of a concept and its irrelevant attributes (Walker & Avant, 1994:38). Concept analysis can be used in a number of cases. According to Walker and Avant (1994:39), it can be useful in refining ambiguous concepts in theory; it can help clarify those overused vague concepts that are prevalent in nursing practice so that everyone who subsequently uses the term, will be speaking the same thing; or used in tool development and in developing nursing diagnosis.

In this study the Wilsonian concept analysis will be used to examine and distinguish between the defining attributes of the concepts “*instructionist classroom management*” and “*constructivist classroom management*” and their relevant attributes.

2.6.2.3 Research strategy and techniques/procedures

There are a number of techniques and approaches in concept analysis. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), this range from the more positivist type “concept analysis” to deconstruction, critical hermeneutics, analytical concept analysis and conceptual cartography. For Huysamen (1995:154-9), conceptual analysis is constituted by the following three strategies:

- *Generic-type analysis* – It is aimed at defining the essence or core meaning of a concept by defining the features which examples of it have in common and which distinguish it from examples of other concepts;
- *Differentiation-type analysis* – It distinguishes between the basic uses and meaning of the concept and provides a clearer picture of the logical domain covered by such concept; and
- *Conditions-type analysis* – It deals with cases that are termed polymorphous concepts, where there are no indisputable model examples and counter examples of the concept under study.

Nieuwenhuis (2007) contends that the classical concept analysis-type studies (sometimes referred to as Wilsonian) approach their work in a more “step-by-step” approach. Walker and Avant (1994:39) list the following modified 8 basic steps, developed by Wilson, used in concept analysis:

(1) Select a concept; (2) Determine the purposes of the analysis; (3) Identify all the uses that you can discover. (4) Determine the defining attributes; (5) Construct a case model; (6) Construct borderline, related, contrary, invented and illegitimate cases; (7) Identify antecedents and consequences; and (8) Define empirical referents.

Although the approach proposed by Huysamen (1995:154-9) dominates the study, the Wilsonian concept analysis is infused. In this study, I used Generic-type analysis in an attempt to trace the origins, development and the shifting meaning of the concepts “traditional classroom management” and “constructivist classroom management”. Through analysis of documents, I traced how the concepts “instructionist management” and “constructivist management” evolved over time until its inclusion in the South African education policies (C2005, NCS and RNCS).

In this study, data is classified as non-empirical and secondary. For the purposes and the scope of this study, a typology of non-empirical questions recommended by Babbie and

Mouton (2001:77) in Table 2.5 and Huysamen's (1995:154-9) conceptual analysis steps in Table 2.6 in the next page will be adopted.

Table 2.5 Typology of non-empirical questions

Question type	Question	Examples
<i>Meta-analytic questions</i>	What is the state of the art regarding x? What are the key debates in domain x?	What is the current state of research on constructivism? What are the key debates in constructivist learning environment? What are the leading positions/paradigms in research on constructivist classroom management?
<i>Conceptual questions</i>	What is the meaning of the concept x?	What is the meaning of constructivism? What are conceptually the key features of constructivist classroom management?
<i>Theoretical questions</i>	What are the most plausible theories of/models of x? What are the most convincing explanations of y?	What are the most widely accepted models/definitions/theories of constructivism? What do competing theories (traditional/behaviourist and constructivism) say about classroom management?
<i>Philosophical/normative questions</i>	What is the ideal profile of x?	What is meant by constructivist classroom management?

(Adapted from Babbie and Mouton, 2001:77)

Table 2.6 Conceptual analysis steps

Generic-type analysis	Differentiation-type analysis	Conditions-type analysis
Step 1	Step 1	Step 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile an inventory of the ways (examples) in which the concept is normally used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile an inventory of the ways (examples) in which the concept is normally used (on the basis of typical examples of the concept). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify examples and counterexamples of the concept in question.
Step 2	Step 2	Step 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the examples into subsections to compile a typology of them. • Abstract features common to all the examples of the concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the examples into subsections to compile a typology of them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate and abstract conditions
Step 3	Step 3	Step 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create categories to accommodate all uses of the concept. • Ensure that the concept Does not exclude things should be excluded in terms of intuitive conceptualisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create categories to accommodate all uses of the concept. • Ensure that the definition concept Does not exclude things should be excluded in terms of intuitive conceptualisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a <i>test of necessity</i> (on a condition). • Check whether all model examples have this condition in common. • Check whether it can produce examples in which condition in absent.
Step 4	Step 4	Step 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish features of different categories (of the initially compiled typology). • Perform a <i>test of necessity</i> in each of the features (and on others which may occur during the course of analysis). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish features of different categories (of the initially compiled typology). • Perform a <i>test of necessity</i> (in terms of examples and counterexamples to ensure that the respective categories are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a <i>test of sufficiency</i> (by checking if by changing the context, a counter example may be found in which is the feature is still present but the concept no longer applies. • Identify further necessary features – until no context can be conceptualised in which conditions identified as being necessary do not guarantee the presence of the concept in question.

(Adapted from Huysamen, 1995:154-9)

2.6.2.4 Wilsonian concept analysis

In this study, Wilsonian concept analysis (steps) below will be adopted. The steps in conducting the Wilsonian concept analysis will be discussed as if they are sequential. In fact, many of these steps occur simultaneously.

(a) Identify the concept of interest

According to Walker and Avant (1994:40), it is important to choose a concept in which you are already interested, one that is associated with your work, or one that has bothered you. The concepts of *instructionist classroom management* and *constructivist classroom management* have been identified in the research design as the central focus of this study. The concept *instructionist classroom management* has links with views on traditional (instructionist) teaching and learning, objective and/or behaviourist tradition. Also, the concept *constructivist classroom management* has links with views on constructivist teaching and learning and phenomenological or constructivist tradition.

Developments around the concept of *instructionist classroom management* and *constructivist classroom management* appear in chapters three and five respectively.

(b) Determine the aims or purpose of the analysis

The aims and purpose of the analysis are informed by the research question and objectives in section 1.3 (see Chapter 1). The aim of this conceptual analysis is to explore the attributes, antecedents and consequences of the *concepts instructionist* and *constructivist classroom management*. Another aim is to distinguish between the normal, ordinary language usage of the concepts and the scientific usage of the same concepts. Given that the research questions cannot be answered and the research objectives cannot be achieved by the conventional concept analyses of the nursing sciences, conceptual historical research and conceptual cartography will be adopted as alternative research tools of this study.

(c) Identify and select an appropriate realm or sample for data collection

This study takes a literature-based analysis – it employs conceptual historical and concept analysis. The sources are drawn, among others, from the educational management theory, literature, the disciplines of education, law, philosophy, cultural studies and political philosophy, non-governmental organisations and official documents.

(d) Identify uses of the concepts

The uses of the concept of instructionist and constructivist classroom management and its definitional structure are explored in Chapters 3, 4, 5. In the use of conceptual cartography as a methodological innovation, this study highlights the varied and shifting meanings of instructionist and constructivist classroom management as the concepts evolve in different settings.

Analysing the range of meanings of the concept is what Bear and Moody (as quoted by Keet, 2006) prefer to name this phase. It requires extensive reading (see Chapters 3 and 5) to probe the various uses and misuses of the concept (Keet, 2006). In chapters 3 and 5, “related terms will be discovered” and the meanings of “the concept within past and current contexts is explored and the semantic space of the concept is delimited. Rogers (as quoted by Keet, 2006) suggests that data should be of such a representative nature to allow for the identification of “surrogate terms and related concepts” as is the case in this study.

(e) Identify attributes, antecedents and consequences of the concept

The anatomy of a concept is informed by its structural features, namely, definition, characteristics, boundaries, preconditions and outcomes. Morse *et al.* (1996:386) contend that a concept must be labelled and have a meaningful definition. This enables the concept to be referred to, to be communicated and to be recognisable to others (ibid:386).

According to Morse *et al.* (1996:386), all concepts must have characteristics (or attributes, or features) that define the concept. These characteristics must be present in all instances in which the concept appears, but they may be present in different strengths of association and different forms (*ibid*:386). For Walker and Avant (1994:41), as one reads and make notes of the characteristics of a concept that appear over and over again, the defining attributes are determined. Thus, the concepts that appear under the same label will have the same constituent characteristics, but may be qualitatively different (Morse *et al.*, 1996:386).

All concepts are delineated, or have a boundary. Morse *et al.* (1996:386) posit that the boundary is identified when an exemplar is no longer an instance of a particular concept. Also, the boundaries are usually identifiable because (a) all attributes are no longer present, (b) the attributes that are present are weak, and/or (c) new characteristics appear in examples (*ibid*:386).

Morse *et al.* (1996:386) note that all concepts must be preceded by similar conditions (i.e. have similar antecedents). In addition, it is these conditions that give rise to the behaviours that distinguish the characteristics. The defining attributes are immutable – they may change slightly over time if the concept changes; or they may change when used in a different context than the one under study (Walker & Avant, 1994:41). Something cannot become an antecedent and an attribute at the same time. Antecedents are those events or incidents that must occur prior to the occurrence of the concept; and they are also useful in helping the theorist identify underlying assumptions about the concept being studied (*ibid*:45).

In Morse *et al.*'s (1996:386) view, all concepts must be followed by similar outcomes (i.e. have similar consequences) that are a result of the concept. Consequences are those events or incidents that occur as a result of the occurrence of the concept; and are useful in determining often neglected ideas, variables or relationships that may yield new research directions (Walker & Avant, 1994:45).

The covert and overt features and assumptions on the concepts of instructionist and constructivist classroom management are embedded within traditional/scientific and emerging worldviews/frameworks respectively. In this study, concepts under investigation will be labelled and given a meaningful definition. Also, structural features of the concepts “instructionist classroom management” and “constructivist classroom management”, will be applied in defining their attributes, antecedents and consequences.

(f) Identify a model case of the concept, if appropriate

Walker and Avant (1994:42) note that at about the same time that one is developing the list of defining attributes, one should begin to develop a model case or cases. A case model is a “real life” example of the use of the concept that includes all the critical attributes of the concept (ibid:42). A model case provides an example “of the concept that demonstrates clearly its attributes, antecedents and consequences in a relevant context” (Rogers, as cited by Keet, 2006). In this study a number of model cases of “instructionist classroom management” and “constructivist classroom management” are explored, especially those empirical research in traditional and constructivist teaching and learning classroom. Other cases emanating from the works that have developed outside of this mainstream framework include those from NGOs and the Department of Education.

(g) Define empirical referents

The final step involves determining the empirical referents for the critical attributes. According to Walker and Avant (1994:46), empirical referents are classes or categories of actual phenomena that, by their existence or presence, demonstrate the occurrence of the concept itself. Once they are identified, they are extremely useful in instrument development because they are clearly linked to the theoretical base of the concept, thus contributing to both content and construct validity of any instrument. In this study, “transmission/transfer of knowledge, values and skills” will be used as an empirical referent of “instructionist/traditional classroom management” whilst “socially

constructing own reality and knowledge” will be used as an empirical referent of “constructivist classroom management”.

2.6.2.5 Limitation of the Wilsonian Model

This study recognises the limitation of Wilsonian methods. According to Keet (2006), the limited use and value associated with the linear and evolutionary approaches to concept analysis relates to its shallow treatment of the context of the concepts and its inability to view concepts as fluid and floating meaning-making structures on a conceptual map. Morse *et al.* (1996:387) assert that Walker and Avant’s method has been criticised as being poorly understood, lacking philosophical foundations and contributing little to ‘intellectual progression’. For Keet (2006), the discontinuation of using the Wilsonian methods of concept analysis is because of its lack of adequate data; lack of depth in analysis; lack of reasoning; etc. The use of this for concept evaluation is inappropriate – it reveals what is known about the concept and does not provide criteria for evaluating the features of the concept (Morse *et al.*, 1996:387).

Thus, in this study, conceptual cartography will be employed to facilitate an in-depth conceptual analysis instructionist and constructivist classroom management.

2.7 CONCEPTUAL CARTOGRAPHY

Conceptual cartography takes the process of critical analytical studies further since cartographies are both analytical tools and products of analysis itself (Nieuwenhuis, 2007 & Keet, 2006). The argument in this case is that a conceptual analysis and concept historical analysis of instructionist and constructivist classroom management, should be enriched and juxtaposed with a conceptual cartography since the meaning of the concepts takes on different shapes as it is deployed within various conceptual frameworks.

Nieuwenhuis (2007) asserts that conceptual historical analysis, for example, is intertwined with conceptual cartography since the historical construction of a concept is

constantly configured and re-configured within the innumerable theoretical temperaments of conceptual orientations (ibid). In addition, the complexity and interwoven nature of different approaches are best illustrated by Paulston and Liebman's (as cited by Nieuwenhuis, 2007) notion of post-modern mapping. Paulston and Liebman (as cited by Nieuwenhuis, 2007) presents us with a 'post-modern' map that situates "paradigms and theories on the spatial surface of paper". They assert that:

"This heuristic map identifies intellectual communities and relationships, illustrates domains, suggests a field of interactive ideas, and opens space to all propositions and ways of seeing the social milieu. What appears as open space within the global representation is space that can be claimed by intellectual communities whose discourse is not yet represented on the map".

According to Keet (2006), the social framework and space presented in the heuristic map is inclusive of mini and meta-narratives. The appropriateness of such a map for this discussion resides in the many spaces and possibilities that are opened up through the map and also the infinite number of relations that are assumed within the spatiality of the map (ibid). Therefore, the grand paradigms or meta-narratives such as positivism, interpretivism and critical theory are represented by the overarching orientations of either "functionalist, radical functionalist, humanist and radical humanist" (ibid). Thus, though the meanings of instructionist and constructivist classroom management are certainly informed by these meta-narratives, they do not necessarily provide the ultimate meaning frameworks for instructionist and constructivist classroom management.

2.8 HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

Hermeneutics is a broad subject. In this section, the focus will be on historical background of hermeneutics and philosophical background of critical hermeneutics.

2.8.1 Definition and description

Hermeneutics, as a method of textual analysis, means to interpret. In etymological perspective, the term "hermeneutics" was derived from two words – the Greek verb

hermeneuein, meaning to interpret, and the noun *hermeneia*, meaning interpretation (Byrne, 2001; Hull, Grondin, 1994:18; Palmer, 1977:13). It has two derivations. One is from the Greek god Hermes in his role as patron of interpretive communication and human understanding, while the other is from the syncretic Ptolemaic deity Hermes Trismegistus, in his role as representing hidden or secret knowledge (Byrne, 2001; Hartill, 1966:7; Neuman, 1997:68). As an approach of textual analysis, it is an artful form of understanding and a process of exposing hidden meanings.

The meaning of the concept “hermeneutics” evolved greatly. From the beginning, the word has denoted the science of interpretation, especially the principles of proper textual exegesis. In chronological order, it has been interpreted as: (1) theory of biblical exegesis; (2) general philological methodology; (3) the science of all linguistic understanding; (4) methodological foundation of *Geisteswissenschaften*; (5) phenomenology of existence and of existential understanding; and (6) the systems of interpretation, both recollective and iconalistic, used by man to reach the meaning behind myth and symbols (Palmer, 1977:33).

2.8.2 Historical background

Hermeneutic tradition has a very rich historical background – it stretches from Medieval interpretation of text, Renaissance, modernism to postmodernism – and has a number of versions. Historically, it has been associated with the interpretation of theological texts (Bryman, 2001:383; Byrne, 2001; Neuman, 1997:68; Palmer, 1977:3). Religious leaders sought to identify the literal or authentic meanings of religious texts so they could explain how to live a *Christian* life. Early monks analysed literary works through a method termed reconstruction (i.e. forming a new perspective) to find the original intended meaning. Hermeneutics has evolved from an analysis of biblical texts to a method used to gain understanding of human nature.

The historical development of hermeneutics as an independent field seems to hold within itself two separate foci: one in the field of understanding and a general sense, and the other on what is involved in the exegesis of linguistic text, the hermeneutical problem

(Palmer, 1977:67). It is rooted in the tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, whose adherents look to hermeneutics as a general body of methodological principles which underlie interpretation. On the other hand, there are followers of Heidegger who see hermeneutics as a philosophical exploration of the character and requisite conditions for all understanding (Palmer, 1977:46). However, there are differences among several forms of hermeneutics, but there are also many underlying similarities.

Hermeneutics, however, takes on a whole different meaning in the eighteenth century, when it moved into secular philosophy with publication of Johann Martin Chaldenius' *Introduction to the Correct Interpretation of Reasonable Discourse and Books*, which sought, with true Enlightenment idealism, to create a system of interpretation that would provide science a unity of understanding (Honeycutt, 1995). This dream is similar to the positivist project of the early twentieth century to use logic in the service of a scientific language of perfect understanding.

Honeycutt (1995) asserts that in the nineteenth century, hermeneutics was built upon a rich tradition of works by such thinkers as Schleiermacher, Humboldt, and Dilthey, who, though they varied in their ideas about hermeneutic understanding, generally agreed on the general process of interpretation, sometimes known as the "hermeneutical circle" This interpretative process involved examining a certain text or event through a systematic investigation of generals and particulars, the results of which, in turn, are related to what is already known by the interpreter (ibid).

In the twentieth century, hermeneutics takes a different path from the earlier hermeneutical tradition, especially with publication of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which shifted the entire focus of hermeneutics to ontology (Honeycutt, 1995). This paradigm shift in hermeneutics had several results. Firstly, hermeneutics moved from the "epistemological concerns" of the nineteenth century to a phenomenological investigation of existence. Secondly, earlier hermeneutical attempts to build a system of understanding through re-enactment of the relationship between an author and his or her original audience, gave way to extreme scepticism of any such an understanding (ibid).

According to Honeycutt (1995), Heidegger's hermeneutics stressed that language could no longer be seen as a means by which to express experience, but instead *was* experience itself, what Hans-Georg Gadamer has called the "hermeneutic experience". Gadamer studied for a number of years under Heidegger, but strongly disagreed with his mentor's later attempts to transcend metaphysics through the use of quasi-poetical language. Having broken with his master, Gadamer offered his own philosophy of hermeneutics in his 1960 *Truth and Method*, in which he seeks to show how works of art are an "emergence of truth" in that they give enlightening structure to otherwise confusing and chaotic human experiences (ibid).

In the next paragraph, philosophical background to critical hermeneutic, which is employed in this study, is presented.

2.8.3 Philosophical background of critical hermeneutics

Philosophers associated with critical hermeneutic perspectives include Paul Ricoeur, Jurgen Habermas, and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer's hermeneutics emphasizes the embeddedness of language in our understanding of our world. His work helped extend philosophical hermeneutics to critical hermeneutics by stressing the importance of tradition, background and history in our ways of understanding (Byrne, 2001). In addition, Gadamer believed that understanding comes from interpretations embedded in our linguistic and cultural traditions, which contribute to our inherent prejudices.

Gadamer had a number of philosophical assumptions on the concept "experience". Palmer (1977:196-8) asserts that Gadamer held that experience is a matter of multi-sided disillusionment based on expectation, negativity and disillusionment which are integral parts to experience; and that every experience runs counter to expectation if it really deserves the name experience. True experience is experience of one's own historicity. As one experiences the meaning of text, he comes to understand a heritage which briefly addresses him as something over or against him, yet as something which is at the same time part of a non-objectifiable stream of experiences and history in which he stands (ibid:198).

Gadamer's philosophy assumes that understanding is both an epistemological and ontological phenomenon. According to Palmer (1977:215), Gadamer held that the keys to understanding are not manipulation and control, but participation and openness, not knowledge but experience, not methodology but dialectic. For Gadamer, experience has its dialectical fulfilment not in a knowing experience in openness for experience, which is itself set in free play by experience (Palmer, 1977:195). In Gadamer's opinion, it refers to non-objectified and largely non-objectifiable accumulation of *understanding* which we often call wisdom. Gadamer maintained that experience often suggests the pain of growth and new understanding; and has to be constantly acquired and nobody can save us from it.

Two embedded assumptions of hermeneutics are that humans experience the world through language and this language provides both understanding and knowledge (Byrne, 2001). According to Bryman (2001:382), the central idea behind hermeneutics is that the analyst of a text must seek to bring out the meanings of a text from the perspective of its author. As a method of textual analysis, it emphasizes the socio-cultural and historic influences on qualitative interpretation. Also, it exposes hidden meanings.

In Gadamer's opinion, understanding is always a historical, dialectical and linguistic event (Palmer, 1977:215). He perceived hermeneutics as the ontology and phenomenology of understanding; and its purpose is not to put forward rules for "objectively valid" understanding but conceive understanding itself as comprehensively as possible. For Gadamer, understanding is: a historical act and as such connected to the present; not fixed but historically formed.

In the following paragraphs, historical, dialectical and linguistic philosophical perspectives will be presented.

(a) Historical perspective

Grondin (1994:106) claims that in making language the essence of hermeneutics, Gadamer followed the Heidegger's radicalisation of historical thrownness. His aim was to reconcile radicalisation with Heidegger's hermeneutical starting point – understanding. In

his work *Truth and Method*, Gadamer argued against the idea fostered by historicism and positivism, that the human sciences had to work out proper methods for themselves before they could attain the status of science.

Gadamer sees the concept of prejudice as prejudgment. Thus, prejudices are preconceived notions of things arising from our past experience and socialisation. Some believe that the way to eradicate prejudice is to maintain objectivity by not considering previous experiences (Byrne, 2001). Gadamer, however, believed this was impossible. He believed that to understand each other, we cannot shed our past experiences, and that these experiences actually enhance our understanding. Gadamer advocated continually striving to identify our prejudices. In support of this, (Byrne, 2001) states that:

To be engaged in a conversation with a text is to bring one's prejudices into play. On the basis of one's prejudices' one is able to understand the content of what the text says. The reader is engaged from a definite point of view and is only able to understand the content of the text from this perspective. The very fact that we question the text suggests that we are trying to transcend our own prejudices.

In a historicist perspective, Gadamer maintained that prejudices or fore-understandings should be considered almost like transcendental “condition of understanding”; and our historicity is not a restriction but the very principle of understanding (Grondin, 1994:111). According Palmer (1977:200), as Gadamer’s critique of historical consciousness indicates, the horizon of meaning within which a text or historical act stands is questioningly approached from within one’s own horizon. Also, one does not leave his own horizon behind when he interprets, but broadens it as to fuse it with that act or text. The heritage itself speaks in the text. The dialectic of question and answer works out a fusion of horizons (Palmer, 1977:201).

Whenever we understand, history effects the horizon, never susceptible of our ultimate clarification of everything that can appear meaningful and worth inquiring into. For Gadamer, history acquires the function of authorizing and affecting each individual act of understanding; and interpenetrates our “substance” in such a way that we cannot

ultimately clarify it or distance ourselves from it (Grondin, 1994:114). Thus, our consciousness is affected by history.

(b) Dialectical perspective

Conversation as a way of coming to an understanding (sometimes called a dialogic structure of understanding) is linked to the work of Gadamer. He describes conversation thus:

[It] is a process of two people understanding each other. Thus it is a characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other to such an extent that he understands not a particular individual, but what he says. The thing that has to be grasped is the objective rightness or otherwise of his opinion, so that they can agree with each other on a subject (Gadamer, 1979: 347).

In conversation, knowledge is not a fixed thing or commodity to be grasped. It is not something *out there* waiting to be discovered. Rather, it is an aspect of a process. It arises out of interaction. The metaphor that Gadamer uses is that of the horizon. He argues that we each bring prejudices (or pre-judgments) to encounters. We have, what he calls, our own 'horizon of understanding'. This is “the ranges of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (Gadamer, 1979:143).

According to Palmer (1977:199), in hermeneutical dialogue, the general subject in which one is immersed – both the interpreter and the text – is the tradition, the heritage. In etymological perspective, the concept “dialogue” has its origin in the Greek words *dia* meaning “two or between or across” and *logos* meaning “speech or ‘what is talked about’”. Burbules (1993:19) sees dialogue as a speech across, between or through two people. For Romm and Alant (1993:48), dialogue refers to mediations between the past, present and future as acts of consciousness. It entails a particular kind of relationship and interaction. In this sense it is not so much a specific communicative form of question and

answer, but at heart a kind of social relation that engages its participants (Burbules, 1993: 19).

Dialogue and conversation are sides of the same coin. Through dialogue, people are supposed to create new understandings which are explicitly critical and aimed at action, wherein those who were formally illiterate now begin to reject their role as mere “objects” in nature and social history and undertake to become “subjects” of their own destiny. Thus, the purpose of dialogue is to reveal the incoherence in our thought. In so doing, it becomes possible to discover or re-establish a ‘genuine and creative collective consciousness. The process of dialogue is a process of “awakening” – it entails a free flow of meaning among all the participants.

To understand another human being requires an insight into the other’s subjective view of life, because the phenomena of his experience are at the very heart of his existence (Swanepoel, 1989:35). This suggests that meanings are created in specific situational contexts. Romm and Alant (1993:48) posit that social situations – as structure of meaning – have a fluid character because they become definable only in terms of the people which attribute to them (and these meanings are contextually bound). In a social setting, meaning is not predictable; it is largely hinged on specific conditions that are present. Thus, human behaviour must be understood contextually.

Palmer (1977:200) contends that when a transmitted text becomes an object for interpretation, it places the question to the interpreter which he is trying to answer through interpretation. Thus, to understand the text implies to understand this question. In interpreting the text, the first requirement is to understand the horizon of meaning or of questioning within which the direction of meaning of the text is determined (ibid:200).

(c) Linguistic perspective

Language shapes man’s seeing and his thought – both his conception of himself and his world (Palmer, 1977:9). His very vision of reality and shape of his feeling is conformed by language. As a social institution, it provides much more than a pipeline for the distribution of information or messages from one to the other. It confirms the existence

of the human world in which people mutually bring about in their efforts to apprehend and appropriate all that is around them (Alant, 1993:67). Being cultural, language also bears witness to the creative tension, historical form and content and the changing scene of present experience.

Fundamental to Gadamer's conception of language is the rejection of the *sign* theory of the nature of language (Palmer, 1977:201). For Gadamer, language is most itself not in propositions, but in dialogue (Grondin, 1994:120). He held that against propositional logic, in which the sentence consists in a self-sufficient unity of meaning, hermeneutics reminds us that a proposition can never be prescinded from the context of motivation – that is, the dialogue – in which it is embedded and which is the only place it has any meaning (ibid:120).

In the light of the above, Palmer (1977:202) maintains that to see words as signs rob them of their primordial power and make them mere instruments or designators. Everywhere that word is seen in its mere sign function, the primordial relationship of speaking and thinking is turned into an instrumental relationship. The word becomes the tool of thinking and stands over against thinking and the thing designated. No demonstrable organic relationship is seen between the word and what it designates; it is merely a sign (Palmer, 1977:202).

Gadamer's hermeneutics assumed that understanding is *in principle* linguistic, it is because language embodies the sole means for carrying out the conversation that we are and that we hope to convey to each other (Grondin, 1994:120). Understanding, itself is always linguistically formed and dealing with things verbal, must be capable of engaging the whole content of language in order to arrive at the being that language helps bring to expression (ibid:120). The essential linguisticity of understanding expresses itself less in our statements than in our search for the language to say what we have in our minds and hearts.

According to the Gadamer's school of thought, language as a symbolic form, seems to do injustice to what may be referred to as the linguisticity human experience. As static

concept, it robs the word of its character as event, its power to speak, its status as far more than a mere tool of subjectivity (Palmer, 1977:203). Words are not something that belong to man, but to the situation. In Gadamer's view, one searches for words, the words belong to the situation (ibid:203).

Central to hermeneutic linguistics is the notion that the formation of words is not a product of reflection but of experience. It is not the expression of spirit or mind but situation and being. Palmer (1977:203) asserts that the starting and ending point in the formation of words is not the reflection but the matter that is coming to expression in words. Form cannot be separated from content, but when we think of language in instrumental terms, we automatically do so. Thus, Gadamer posited that languages should not be typed according to form but according to what the language transmits to us historically (ibid:204).

Language itself has an intrinsically speculative structure. For Gadamer, it is not fixed and is dogmatically certain, but because it is in process an event of disclosure, it is ever moving, shifting, fulfilling its mission of bringing a thing to understanding (Palmer, 1977:209). Also, the movement of living language constantly is resisting the fixity of bald and final statements.

Mathipa (1994:17) notes that the use of *hermeneutic circles of understanding* helps the pedagogicians to meaningfully understand the information contained in the information contained either in the primary or secondary sources of information. Thus, in this study, the use of this method becomes more important especially when a study of the primary sources of information is undertaken with the aim of explaining the information contained in both primary and secondary sources – through the use of *hermeneutic circles of understanding*. Also, an attempt will be made to interpret the meaning of individual experiences of educative interaction as reflected in the human documents.

In the light of the above, of typology of non-empirical questions mentioned above, the meaning will be established mainly through the three hermeneutic principles: grammatical, historical/cultural and philosophical interpretation.

2.9 CONCLUSION

We can only understand instructionist classroom management if we locate and analyse it in the context of modernity within which it originates just as we can only understand constructivist classroom management by locating it within the emerging paradigm of post-modernism. Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, will conceptually locate and analyse the two concepts in their paradigmatic homes but not as diagonally opposed constructs but as evolving constructs that could find themselves within a cartographic conceptual map.