

**REDEFINING THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN MANAGING THE NEEDS OF  
ORPHANED LEARNERS**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Teresa Auma Ogina (student number 98048075), declare that this thesis (Redefining the role of educators in managing the needs of the orphaned learners) has not been submitted by me before at any other university. It is my original work and I have acknowledged all the sources consulted and quoted in the bibliography.

TERESA A. OGINA.

AUGUST 2007

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my mother, Veronica Wanjeri Ogolla. Although she never received formal education, she was determined that her daughters go to school, and encouraged us to achieve the highest possible level of education. I also dedicate this work to all the educators working in schools with orphaned learners under challenging and unique conditions. May your commitment continue to inspire other well-wishers. To orphaned learners, may your experiences be a source of motivation to achieve your goals in life.

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the way in which educators identified and managed the needs of the orphaned learners they encountered in their situation as educators in a school setting. The sample in the study consisted of a total of 12-orphaned learners and 8 educators from one primary and one secondary school in the rural part of Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. Data on how orphaned learners viewed their situation were collected using draw-and-write strategy and observation followed by in-depth interviews and follow-up interview questions. The aim of interviewing the orphans themselves was to explore their own views of the realities of their lived experiences of orphanhood and their expectations of the world around them. Data on how educators identified and responded to the needs of the orphaned learners were collected using in-depth interviews and follow up interview questions.

The experiences of the orphaned learners interviewed indicate a need for social and emotional support besides the obvious material need. Two distinct identities (among the educators themselves) emerged from the interviews with these educators:

- There were educators who responded positively by providing support to the orphaned learners.
- And there were educators who responded by referring the orphaned learners to *the educators who help orphaned learners*.

The findings of the study revealed that internal motivational factors had a strong influence on the choices these educators made in responding to the needs of the orphans; and lack of knowledge and skills in identifying and responding to the orphans' emotional needs could have a negative impact on educator response. The findings also showed that the level of interaction and involvement in a relationship with the orphans determined the way the educators identified and responded to these orphans' needs. The study suggest the need for training educators to be in a position to provide care and build relationships, as a means of helping fulfill the social and emotional needs of these learners.

**KEY WORDS:**

orphaned learners

needs

pastoral care

educators' role

relationships

grieving process

empathy

role of parents

responsibility

behaviour

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## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
FHI	Family Health International
<i>HIV</i>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SCOPE/OVC	Strengthening the Community Partnership for the Empowerment of Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SASA	South African Schools Act
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USAIDS	US Agency for International Development

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In an assignment<sup>1</sup> submitted by an honours degree student recently, she narrated the following incident:

*Before short break I send my grade 2 class to the toilet. One of the learners came to call me that a fellow learner had fainted in the toilet. On investigating I found out that the learner who fainted had a sister in a higher grade. In talking to the sister I learnt that they were staying alone and had only tea to live on. The younger sister fainted out of hunger.*

How do educators respond to situations like these? The narrated incident may not be an isolated case. International organisations such as UNAIDS (2004), UNICEF (2003), USAIDS (2001) and FHI (2001) have reported an alarming orphan<sup>2</sup> prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of these publications quote the statistics from the Children on the Brink report (UNAIDS, 2004). The report estimates that the total number of orphans in sub-Saharan Africa by the year 2000 was approximately 39.2 million and projects that the figure will increase to 50 million by 2010. In South Africa, the number of orphaned children was estimated to be 1.8 million in 2000 and the forecast figure for 2010 is approximately 3.1 million (UNAIDS, 2004). Although the figures mentioned may not be accurate because the number of children who are likely to be orphaned was calculated by estimating the number of people who are likely to die from HIV/AIDS and other causes, the projection suggests significant orphan prevalence. Despite the statistics and the growing body of research on the emergence of orphaned children there is little systematic empirical and theoretical research on how educators construct theories of orphanhood and

<sup>1</sup> B.Ed (NMP 780) Managing Values Human Rights and Democracy Research Project June 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The term “orphan” has been described in other studies as an individual younger than 15 years whose mother (maternal) or father (paternal) or both parents (double) has passed away (Hepburn, 2001; Bennell, Hyde & Swainson, 2002; Richter, Manegold. & Pather, 2004). In this study the term “orphan” will be used to refer to a child younger than 18 years who has lost one or both parents (Foord, Jallow, Paine & Sarr, 2004) and not limiting the death to HIV/AIDS but other causes as well.

respond to the needs of orphaned learners. Most of the international studies (Thompson, Kaslow, Kingree, King, Bryant & Rey, 1998; UNICEF, 2001; Bicego, Rutstein & Johnson, 2002; Makame, Ani & Grantham-McGregor, 2002; Adato, Kadiyala, Roopnnaraine, Biermayr-Jenzano & Norman, 2005; Atwine, Cantor-Graae, Bajunirwe, 2005; Gillespie, Norman & Finley, 2005; Andrew, Skinner & Zuma, 2006) focus on analysing the orphans' circumstances with the aim of making recommendations for intervention programmes that would benefit orphans and other vulnerable children, and not on how educators cope with the needs of the orphaned learners in the school setting.

This study seeks to explore the realities of educators' experiences in identifying and responding to the needs of orphaned learners. The knowledge produced from this study may be crucial to understanding the complexities in identifying the unique needs of orphaned learners, and the role capacity of and the extent to which educators support the learners. The findings of this study may also contribute towards educators' understanding of the needs of orphans and to defining the role they play in schools with orphans.

## **1.2 RATIONALE**

Managing the needs of vulnerable children has been my concern since I started teaching more than ten years ago. My personal experience with vulnerable children goes back to the early years of my teaching career. My first posting was in a rural school where the majority of learners came from very poor families. The learners' parents were unable to pay school fees or buy school uniforms and stationery. After teaching for four years in this school I was transferred to a Catholic sponsored mission school in an economically disadvantaged area in the city of Nairobi. Learners in this school had unique needs that demanded attention that was beyond the scope of instruction. Apart from their inability to meet the school requirements there were other reasons that kept them out of school, such as drug peddling and criminal gang activities, along with other social and economic problems. We, as educators in that school, had to counsel the learners and encourage them to attend classes so that they could benefit from education. Our role was more like that of social workers than of educators. My experience of the two groups of vulnerable

children piqued my interest in that the challenges were diverse and unpredictable and needed to be managed before teaching and learning could take place.

When the problem of managing the needs of the orphaned learner surfaced while I was collecting empirical data for my Master of Education dissertation (Ogina, 2003), I started reflecting on my own experiences with vulnerable children. The research question posed was: *How do school principals understand and implement HIV/AIDS policies in schools?* Managing the needs of orphaned learners appeared to be a common problem in the ten schools that were included in the master's study. Similar concern has been raised by several researchers who have reported HIV/AIDS as leading cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa (De Cock, Mbori-Ngacha & Marum, 2002; Stover, Walker, Garnett, Solomon, Stanecki, Ghys, Grassly, Anderson & Schwartlander, 2002). It has been estimated that more than 14 million children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS, the majority (95%) in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2004). The projection of the number of orphaned learners by 2010 is predicted to increase to 40 million and remain high through 2030 (Foster & Williamson, 2000). Foster and William (2000) argue that even if the rate of new infections of HIV/AIDS drops, mortality rates will remain high because of long incubation period of the virus. The number of orphaned children will therefore continue to rise even if the rate of new infection decline and would have impact on our education system. Educators are not excluded from this changing academic, social, cultural economic reality within the context of HIV/AIDS.

The principals interviewed in the study noted that the number of orphans in the schools was increasing and the schools lacked the resources to cater for their needs. The main concern for principals seemed to be the inability of the orphans to pay school fees, and buy books and school uniforms. In addition, this appeared to alienate the orphans from the other learners because of their inability to comply with the school requirements. The principals' response regarding managing the orphans' needs aroused my curiosity and interest. I started wondering what the situation was like in other schools with orphaned learners. How do educators identify these learners and their needs? How do the educators cope or not cope with the needs identified? Who do the educators consult in a situation

where there is no guardian, as in the case of child-headed families? These are some of the questions that puzzled me. There seemed to be no simple answers to these questions so I decided to do an exploratory inquiry into how the educators experience orphaned learners and how they respond to the learners in a secondary and a primary school.

### **1.3 CONTEXT**

This study involved a secondary school and a primary school as an in-depth case study on how educators respond to the needs of orphaned learners. I will refer to the two schools as School A and School B to conceal their identities. Both schools are in Mpumalanga Province. I purposely identified the two schools after I had approached the Bachelor of Education (Honours) students during their contact session at the University of Pretoria and shared my research interest with them. Most of these students were educators currently teaching in different primary and secondary schools. Some of them confirmed that they had many orphaned learners in their schools and they volunteered to introduce me to their school principals so that I could explore the possibility of collecting data from their schools.

In seeking permission and gaining access for the purposes of my research to School A, I approached Kwamhlanga North East Circuit Office, and for School B I approached the Tweefontein North Circuit.

- School A is an intermediate day school (Grade 8 to 12) in the rural area of Kwamhlanga. The school serves two villages and was established in 1988 as a result of fighting between three villages. The community in which the school is built is made up of people expelled from the three villages because of their vigilante activities and for political reasons. After the expulsion, this group of people settled in the present location and built their own school for their children. The school expanded over the years and at present the school has three classes for every grade, 865 learners and 25 educators. Most of the learners come from disadvantaged families where parents are unable to pay school fees. The majority

of the learners' parents work in the city. Some of the parents commute every day, leaving their homes as early as 3 am and returning home at 9 pm. The children usually look after themselves and low parental involvement in school activities is generally a problem.

- School B is a primary school (Grade R to 7) established in 1985. The learner population is 1190 and there are 29 educators at the school. The enrolment of learners in the school fluctuated a great deal between 1991 and 2000, falling from 1150 to 850. The school grew again after vigorous marketing and the introduction of computer literacy to the teaching programme, which attracted higher income parents from a radius of 25 km around the school. The school is inclusive, in that it admits learners with physical disabilities. Most of the learners in the school are from a poor socio-economic background. The majority of the parents are migrant workers and unemployed. Most of the parents are between the ages of 18 and 28 years. Single parenthood is a common phenomenon and the majority of the learners do not have fathers. Most of the orphaned learners live with their grandparents, aunts or other relatives after the death of their parent/s.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Orphanhood and child-headed households are becoming common phenomena in some schools (Hepburn, 2001; Giese, Meintjes, Croke & Chamberlain, 2003), and even the children are becoming more aware of friends and classmates whose parents have passed away. In a school setting, orphans may need different kinds of support compared to non-orphaned children because of the gap created by the death of the parents. Williamson (2002) asserts that, in addition to good physical care, children need affection, attention, a sense of personal identity and social connections that families and communities can provide. Furthermore, orphaned children need more emotional support than children who have not gone through the painful process of losing one or both parents because they may experience trauma when their parent die (Turkington, 2002; Makame et al, 2002).

In a study on the psychological effects of orphanhood in the Rakai district in Tanzania, Sengendo and Nambi (1997) found that educators lacked the appropriate training that would enable them to identify the psychological and social needs of the orphaned learners. The question that needs to be addressed is whether the role of educators living and teaching in environments where there are low numbers of orphaned children can be the same as those living and teaching in schools with a high number of orphans. This gives rise to a number of analogous questions, such as:

- If a child's parents pass away, who should take over the educative role in terms of the full development of the child?
- Is it a reasonable expectation to demand that educators play a greater educative role in the lives of orphaned children?
- Who should counsel learners traumatised by the death of their parents in the school environment?
- What should be the role definition of an educator working in schools where there are many orphaned children?

From these analogous questions I drew the research purpose and the questions that guided the study.

## **1.5 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was based on three significant grounds:

- Firstly, parents are normally expected to fulfil physical, social and psychological needs such as love, affection and a sense of belonging, among the other needs of their children (Pringle, 1975; Berger, 2000; USAID, 2000). Parents also form a partnership relationship with educators and learners. In this traditional triadic relationship the role of the educator is to create teaching and learning situations

and parents play a supportive role in this teaching and learning task (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005). It has been established that the care, support and encouragement that children receive from their parents have positive effects on their achievement in school (Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005). Furthermore, the partner relationship between the educators and parents enables the educator to inform the parent about the child's academic progress and/or disciplinary problems (Jarolimek, Foster & Kellough, 2001). This implies that when a child is orphaned a gap is created in this relationship, in the learning experiences and in the provision of support for the needs of the child. Zappulla (1997) suggests that, in such situations, educators may be the only adults that the orphans can look up to for fulfilment of the needs that are normally provided for by parents. What is not known and the question that needs to be addressed is: How do educators identify and manage the needs that emerge as a result of the gap created when parents die?

- Secondly, an official education policy that advances learner centredness, such as the new curriculum design defined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS),<sup>3</sup> expects the educator to be able to identify the needs of learners and to develop programmes that respond to the needs identified. It has been argued that when educating a child one cannot separate emotional and social factors from cognitive factors, as they are interrelated (Powell, 1983; Hamm, 1987; Miller, 1990). This argument suggests that the teaching and learning process is more than a cognitive exercise. In this process educators are expected to be able to deal with intellectual, emotional, social and other aspects of a child's development. This seems to be a move toward a holistic approach to education, which asserts that the *whole child* should be educated (Powell, 1983). The aim of holistic education is to achieve cognitive understanding, and appropriate emotions and attitudes (Hamm, 1989). The *whole child* approach to education is relevant to all children and perhaps more important to the orphaned learner, who may need more guidance and emotional support than non-orphans (Hepburn, 2001).

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<sup>3</sup> South Africa Department of Education Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R – 9 (schools) Department of Education 2001.

- Lastly, there are studies that have acknowledged the critical role that the school could play in supporting orphaned learners and have recommended strategies that could be implemented to support such children (USAID, 2001; Richter, 2003; Giese et al., 2003). What is not adequately addressed in these studies is the possibility of the changing role of educators working in schools with orphaned learners. Department of Education (2000) Norms and Standards for Educators give seven roles of the educator and the competences within each role.

The seven roles of the educator are:

- Learning mediator
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials
- Leader, administrator and manager
- Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner
- Community, citizenship and pastoral role
- Assessor
- Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist

For the purpose of understanding how educators identify and manage the needs of orphaned learners in this study, I will concentrate on the educators' pastoral role. The community, citizenship and pastoral role requires an educator to "demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators". The practical competence of the pastoral role includes demonstrating care and protection and the holistic development of the child. Despite the fact that national education policy stipulates the role of pastoral care, the way in which the educators understand their role in terms of pastoral care and their willingness and readiness to take up the pastoral role remains under researched (Schierhout, Kinghorn, Govender, Mungani & Morely, 2004). For example, Rob McBride (2002) in his research project on HIV/AIDS education in primary and secondary schools in the Zomba area of Malawi reports "there is lack of

understanding about the sorts of lives experienced by orphans, their educational needs and school responses” (McBride, 2002:143).

To address the gaps identified in literature, the purpose of this constructivist grounded theory inquiry was to explore and describe how educators experienced orphans and conceptualised the role educators play in responding to the needs of orphaned learners. My intention was to develop a substantive theory grounded<sup>4</sup> in the lived experiences of orphaned learners and their educators. The reason for using a constructivist grounded theory approach in this study is because of the potential and rigor of the strategy in generating substantive theory that could explain educational processes, such as managing the needs of orphaned learners. I chose to do exploratory research because the approach is open, flexible and inductive (Durrheim, 2002) enabling me to investigate how the educators encountered orphaned learners and how they made sense of the learners’ needs. In addition, I have provided rich description of the experiences of the educators and the learners through their narrations. Punch (2005) asserts that the explanation of a phenomenon requires descriptive knowledge of what is happening. In this study the narrations of the educators and the learners provided a base from which I drew my conclusions. Thick description also gives the reader a picture of the settings being described, what happened and how it happened, so that the reader can give their own interpretation, meaning and significance to the study (Patton, 2002).

### **1.5.2 Research questions**

- How do educators experience and respond to the needs of orphaned learners?

#### Sub-questions

- What are the lived experiences and expectations of orphaned learners?

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<sup>4</sup> Grounded theory is a research approach where substantive theory is generated from data which has been systematically produced and inductively analysed, making it suitable for explaining or understanding the phenomenon under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1999)

- How do educators identify and manage the needs of orphaned learners?
- What explains the dominant understandings and behaviours of educators towards orphaned learners?

## 1.6 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

For the purpose of this study, I assumed that the orphaned learners themselves could describe the reality of their needs because they have firsthand experience of what it means to be an orphan. For us to understand the needs of orphans it is necessary for us to know what the orphans are going through by interacting with them. Such an assumption is also evident in the study done by Cook, Fritz and Mwonya (2003). These researchers conducted needs assessment research on understanding the psychological and emotional needs of AIDS orphans in Africa. They interviewed an eight-year-old orphan to determine the psychological and emotional needs of the orphan. The child was able to describe her reality of the consequences of AIDS. She gave firsthand information about her own experiences of psychological and emotional needs.

Likewise, in a study of changing patterns of orphan care, resulting from the HIV epidemic in Western Kenya, Nyambedha, Wandibba and Aagaard-Hansen (2003) used in-depth interviews to collect data from a sample of 20 orphans. The researchers reported interesting narrations of lived experience of emotional neglect and psychological abuse from a fifteen-year-old boy and a ten-year-old girl. In other research on children experiencing orphanhood, a ten-year-old boy was able to describe his experiences of living conditions at home in relation to the experiences and expectations at school (Giese et al., 2003). These studies revealed that children can articulate their lived experiences, and from their narrations and responses, researchers were able to establish their needs. For example, Nyambedha et al. (2003) concluded that the orphans in their study needed education, food and medical care, and lacked adequate emotional care due to rivalry between brothers and co-wives. After reflecting on these studies, I decided that to gain firsthand knowledge of the needs of the orphaned learners I needed to explore the experiences of the orphans by interacting directly with them.

Apart from interacting with the orphans, I conducted in-depth interviews with the educators who teach orphaned learners and collected rich descriptive data on their lived experiences. Researchers have also used interview methods in other studies to explore the experiences and perceptions of educators with regard to the needs of orphaned learners. Giese et al, (2003) for example used the interview approach to collect data on how principals from different schools in Limpopo Province addressed the needs of children made vulnerable in the context of HIV/AIDS. Similarly, Schierhout and others (2004) used interviews to establish how educators perceive their role in providing support for needy children. From my observation, when interviewing principals in another study, I realised that the principals were willing to talk about their experiences with the orphaned learners. Based on these studies and my own experience, I proposed that by employing in-depth interviews I would be able to collect rich data from orphaned learners and their educators.

## **1.7 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

This study focused on understanding how educators experience and respond to the needs of orphaned learners. The theoretical perspective underpinning the methodology in this study is symbolic *interactionism*. Herbert Blumer describes symbolic interactionism as the process of making meaning through interaction (in Nelson, 1998). The assumption that underpins the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism is that people do not respond to stimuli in an automatic manner but take an active role in giving meaning to the stimuli they experience and then act according to meaning they attach to other human beings or things (Denzin, 1992; Prus, 1996). This point of view suggests that human beings have active minds that can construct meaning, define and redefine meaning and evaluate situations through interaction (Wallace, 1971). The interaction process involves interpretation of the meaning of the actions and remarks of others (Wallace, 1971).

The symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective is relevant to this study because it provides the premise for understanding and establishing the meaning of action. Departing

from the premise of symbolic interactionism, my assumption about the present study was that the way educators respond to the needs of orphaned learners depended on how they perceived orphanhood and then constructed the needs of the orphans. The theory generated in this study was rooted in the analysis and interpretation of the meaning that orphaned learners and their educators attach to their lived experiences and the corresponding action they took.

The ontological stance underpinning this study was that reality exists through people's experiences of the world. Furthermore, the reality that exists is socially constructed from symbolic processes among people and the meaning of experiences that reflects reality is mentally constructed and transmitted through social interaction (Ritzer & Smart, 2003). It follows that different people attach different meanings to things or people; therefore, to understand the behaviour of a person the researcher is required to see the world of meaning through the eyes of the people being investigated, so as to gain a deeper understanding of how they construct their reality (Ritzer & Smart, 2003). This means that a researcher whose work is positioned within the symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective, would seek to explore the perspectives of the participants through their lived experiences, interpret their construction and present the deconstructed versions of participant realities as research findings.

The assumptions of reality, how we get to know the relationship between the researcher and the participant, and the methodology in symbolic interactionism, are embedded in *interpretive/constructivist epistemology*. The aims of research procedures embedded in interpretivist or constructivist epistemology are to explain subjective meaning and reasons behind social action and to show how different versions of reality are produced and how the reality influences the actions people take (Terre Blanch & Durrheim, 2002). I probed how orphaned learners interpret their situation and how educators attach meaning to their experiences with the orphans. I further investigated how the meaning the educators attach to their experiences guided the actions they take toward orphaned learners. Consistent with this theoretical and epistemological stance I adopted grounded

theory as an appropriate methodological approach for this study because I intended to generate a substantive theory based on the multiple realities of the experiences of the orphans and their educators.

The process of theory building in this study is that of the constructivist design research approach developed by Charmaz (2000). This approach focuses on understanding the empirical world by exploring the feelings, views, values, beliefs and assumptions the participants in the study attribute to the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2000). Charmaz (2000) points out that the Glaser and Strauss grounded theory research approach is framed within a traditional positivist paradigm, since the two researchers advocate the objective external reality of the researcher engaged in the theory building process as being that of a neutral observer. Constructivist grounded theory, in contrast to the objective positivist research approach (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), assumes relativism of multiple social realities, encourages mutual creation of knowledge between the researcher and the participant, and focuses on interpretive understanding of the participants' meaning (Charmaz, 2000). Charmaz further argues that the focus on meaning builds on interpretive understanding of the phenomenon under study. I chose the constructivist research approach to theory building, based on my assumption that the orphans and their educators can provide the knowledge that would present insight into how the needs of the orphans are identified and managed in schools.

In this study I applied the basic procedures of theory building, that is, back and forth systematic data collection and data analysis, theoretical sampling, the constant comparative data analysis procedure and memo writing, to construct conceptual themes, identify core categories and explore them to develop a theory (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Charmaz, 2000). Another feature of grounded theory building is that a researcher does not refer to other existing theories at the beginning of the research; rather the researcher collects empirical data and allows the theory to emerge from this data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Departing from this premise, in the current study I introduced

the problem, then discussed my research methodology, after which I proceeded to the field to collect data.

The data collection methods employed in this study were drawings and written narrations, interviews and field notes. These techniques involved human interaction and interpretation of responses. Conducting interviews with various educators enabled me to explore the meanings that they attributed to their actions. I interacted with the orphaned learners and their educators on a continual basis; listening, asking questions for clarity and depth, and then interpreting the responses. The interaction process provided the opportunity for meaning to be mutually constructed and interpreted (Johnson 2002). I made multiple field visits to saturate the categories emerging from data analysis. After analysing the data, a comprehensive literature review was done to help generate the theory. The purpose of the literature review was to relate the ideas from the emerging theory to the existing body of knowledge (Glaser, 1978). A detailed research design is discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

## **1.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on orphaned learners in schools and a few of the educators who teach them. The focus of this study was limited to the lived experiences of orphans and educators in two schools in the greater Mpumalanga region. The study does not include the opinions and the lived experiences of non-orphans or caregivers. The initial purposive sampling and subsequent snowballing process identified eight female educators. The experiences of male educators with the orphaned learners that might have been different were thus not explored.

This study aimed at presenting a theoretical perspective of the participants from the two schools under study, with no intention of generalising the findings beyond the context of the field of study. Generalizability is the extent to which the findings and interpretive account of a study can be applied to a broader population as well as contexts other than the one being studied (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002; Kelly, 2002; Fraenkel & Norman,

2006). Although it is not possible to generalise the findings of this study to other contexts, the insights and the theory developed from this study could contribute to understanding how educators cope with orphaned learners in their schools. In addition, this study provides thick descriptions and detail information about the setting and the participants, enabling the reader to decide whether the conclusions drawn from the findings of this study could apply to their own situation – thus the concept of transferability (Seale, 2000; Huberman & Miles, 2002; Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002).

## **1.9 ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF THE STUDY**

Seale (2000) describes several approaches to enhancing quality in qualitative research. In this study, I focused on enhancing the credibility, transferability, dependency and confirmability of the study. The credibility of qualitative research is determined during the research process when the researcher provides a rich account of the research process and looks for discrepant evidence or rival explanation (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002; Patton, 2002). To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, I triangulated data collection methods by using drawing and writing, interviews and reflective journaling. I asked the orphaned learners to draw a picture and or write (Appendix A) about a typical day in their lives or about a particular incident they would like to share with me. The learners then narrated what was happening in their drawings. Another form of triangulation in this study was seeking multiple perceptions from the learners and the educators to present different ways in which the phenomenon is being experienced and clarify the meaning of the experiences (Stake, 2000).

A detailed description of the context of the study and of the participants is provided to give a vivid picture of the phenomenon that would enable the reader to determine the transferability of the research findings to their own context or setting. A trail of data collection and data analysis procedures in this study is provided to confirm the findings of this study. In addition, evidence is provided to convince the reader of the findings of the research (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002).

The measure that I took to ensure a dependable result in data collection was to record the interviews on audiotape and to make additional notes in my reflective journal after every session (Appendix B). The reflective journal contained descriptive field notes and reflections on how and why I chose certain participants, nonverbal communication during the interviews, decisions taken during the data collection and data analysis and the reasons for taking those decisions. Follow-up interviews were used to verify information collected from the orphans and the educators. Field notes, drawings and narrations corroborated and verified interview data and crystallised the emerging themes.

Data analysis and interpretation was an interactive and iterative process between the participants and the researcher. Analysis and interpretation of the data were taken back to the participants to verify interpretation and understanding. Transcripts of data analysis were submitted to critical readers to verify the integrity of the data. Details of how credibility and trustworthiness were incorporated into this research are discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Research that directly involves children has methodological and ethical implications (Mahon, Glendining, Clark, & Craig, 2002; Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002). This study involved educators and learners as research participants. Some of the ethical issues that I was concerned about were dealing with the vulnerability of the learners and guarding against exploiting them. All children are considered vulnerable participants because of their level of maturity. Orphaned children are even more vulnerable because of the absence of parents. In my study I took care to ensure that the procedures used to collect data were ethical. Before I started the fieldwork, I applied for ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of the University of Pretoria (Appendix C). I obtained written permission from the Department of Education district offices, under which authority the two schools fall (Appendix D). Verbal permission was obtained from the school principals of the two schools where I collected the data.

Since the study involved human participants, and more particularly children, the issues of informed consent, privacy and confidentiality were to be taken into account (Coyne, 1998). Before seeking informed consent from the participants, I informed the participants about the nature and the consequences of the research (Creswell, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Once I communicated the information about my study, I sought informed consent from the educators, the caregivers and the orphans. I asked the educators' consent to participate in the research because participation is voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the research at any time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Struwig & Stead, 2001; Creswell, 2002; Durrheim, 2002). The participants in this study included children younger than 18 years; in such cases the educators assisted me by obtaining oral consent by proxy (from the person responsible for care of the children) before interviewing the learners. In addition to the permission from the caregivers, I also sought consent from the orphans because, after I had explained what my research was about, they had the right to make a choice as to whether they wanted to participate in the research or not. I regarded the orphaned learners as authority figures in this study because their perspectives provided insight into the experiences of orphanhood and the needs of orphans. I prepared a consent form, which I asked the educators and the learners to sign before they participated in the research (Struwig & Stead, 2001; Creswell, 2002). The educators were reluctant to sign written consent forms although they did give verbal consent. Further consent was obtained to record the interviews.

The code of ethics in research requires measures to protect the identities of participants against unnecessary exposure (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Before starting the interviews, I explained to the participants that their identity and the information they gave me would be treated with strict confidentiality to protect the identity of the participants and the schools, so as to adhere to the code of ethics in research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I used pseudonyms when reporting the results of the interviews to conceal the identity of the participants and the schools. Using the learners' drawings and writing posed ethical challenges such as right to privacy, confidentiality in the use of drawings and in dissemination of findings and consent to use the drawings and written narrations (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). To protect the participants, I obtained consent from

the learners and used pseudonyms on the drawings for anonymity and confidentiality (Yuen, 2004).

## **1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

### **Chapter 1**

In Chapter 1, an overview of this study is provided. This includes a brief background and rationale of the study, the context of the two schools is explained, and a problem statement and research questions are presented. Further to this, the assumption on which this study is based and the theoretical perspectives are discussed. Strategies for ensuring the credibility of the study and the ethical considerations are briefly explained.

### **Chapter 2**

In Chapter 2, the research design is described. The methodological grounding is presented; the choosing of the research site and sampling and the methods used to collect the data are explained. The data analysis strategy and my role as researcher is discussed and the ethical guidelines adhered to. A description of how I enhanced the quality of the study is also presented.

### **Chapter 3**

In Chapter 3, the stories of three orphaned learners are narrated to represent the three different life worlds in which the orphaned learners who participated in this study live. Data from drawings, written text and interviews with orphaned learners is presented. The emerging themes were identified and presented. Furthermore, the research question: 'What are the lived experiences and the expectations of the orphaned learners?' is addressed. A description of the lived experiences of the orphans is reported on and, emerging from these experiences, their needs are deduced.

#### **Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 reports on the data collected from the interviews with eight educators on how they experience and respond to the needs of orphaned learners. Lastly, constant comparative analysis of the data collected from the interviews is presented.

#### **Chapter 5**

In Chapter 5 the core research category and the other related categories, main themes and a set of propositions that summarises the dominant understanding of educators' responses towards orphaned learners are presented.

#### **Chapter 6**

In Chapter 6 the findings of a literature review on the existing studies that relate to the emerging findings of this study are presented. This helps to establish whether the emerging theory extends, confirms or disconfirms what is already known about fulfilling needs of orphaned children and their behaviour.

#### **Chapter 7**

In Chapter 7 a summary of the research is presented, conclusions are offered in respect of the theory generated and the shortcomings of this study are discussed. Finally, recommendations and the focus for further research are suggested.

### **1.12 SUMMARY**

When a learner is orphaned it seems that a gap is created between the support structure and the learning experiences of the child. There is a need to address the gap created to ensure that the learner gets the full benefit of the educational experiences. Educators, being the adults in the lives of the orphans, are expected to fill this gap on a daily basis, as is suggested in the definition of the educator's pastoral role. Yet, little is known about how the educators experience and respond to the needs of such learners. The intent of this study was to explore the changing role of the educators, as judged from the experiences of the educators who participated in this study. Methodologically, I used the grounded

theory research approach, because it is based on the principles of theory building in which the researcher collects empirical data and allows the theory to emerge from the data, instead of departing from other existing theories at the beginning of the research (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a discussion is presented on how data were collected and analysed to identify emerging themes that provided insight into the changing role of the educator. I used the research questions raised in the previous chapter, namely, *What are the lived experiences of orphaned learners and how do educators experience and respond to emerging needs of orphaned learners?* with the intention of exploring the learners' experiences and expectations, and to discover how the educators identify and respond to the needs of the orphaned learners. My aim was to generate grounded theory that explains the role of educators in responding to the needs of orphans, based on the empirical data from the orphaned learners' and the educators' lived experiences.

The research design described in this chapter includes the paradigmatic assumptions that underpinned the research methodology, the way in which I selected the site and participants for the study, the data collection methods I used and the data analysis strategies implemented. I account for how I addressed the issue of research quality and explain my role as a researcher. I also discuss the ethical considerations that I adhered to.

#### 2.2 PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS

Many studies of children portray them as passive victims of their situation or objects of investigation; in reality children are capable of defining what they think, experience and expect (Mahon et al., 1996; Kitzinger, 2001; Fielding & Prieto, 2002). In recent years there has been a paradigm shift from adults observing children and recounting their experiences to researchers seeking information directly from children (Driessnack, 2006). Researchers who interview children give children a voice to express their own

interpretations and thoughts, instead of merely depending on adult interpretations of the children's lives, which may indeed not be accurate (Mahon et al 1996; Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Fielding & Prieto, 2002). Scott reminds us that:

*The best people to provide information on child's perspective, action and attitude are the children themselves. Children can give reliable account of events that are meaningful to them (Scott, 2002:99).*

Imelda Coyne concurs with Scott and remarks that:

*Increasingly there is growing acceptance that children have the right to be consulted over decisions affecting them and have their views taken into consideration by adults (Coyne, 1998:409).*

The work by Scott, Coyne and other researchers illustrates that children are social actors and are capable of constructing their own reality through the process of making meaning of their lived experiences. The study done by Howard and Gill (2001) is an example of how children construct meaning of citizenship and national identity. The research was inspired by a lack of consideration of the ways in which children conceptualise their own identity. Through the analysis of the children's talk, Howard and Gill (2001) were able to deduce how the children in their sample constructed their national identity.

Another example is Francis's (1997) study on primary school children's construction of gender and power. In his study, data was generated through children's group play and interviews. The findings revealed that the children's constructions of gender and power were differentiated according to their experience of masculinity and femininity. Boys' construction of gender was empowering while the girls constructed gender as disempowering.

Apart from interviewing children, draw-and-write techniques are a bottom-up approach that enhances the participation of children in research and presents opportunities to explore the meaning of children's experiences (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). According to Yuen (2004), drawing gives children a voice to express their observation

and interpretation of their experiences enabling the adult researcher to understand the children's perception better. Driessnack (2006) used draw-and-tell conversations as a research method that is child-centred and child directed, arguing that traditional observation, directed interviews and questionnaires are adult dominated and biased.

The search for alternative data collecting strategies that involve children is motivated by the fact that adult researchers who research children are often faced with the challenge of presenting the children's perspectives rather than imposing their own interpretation on the children's experiences (Yuen, 2004). Driessnack (2006) used draw-and-tell conversations with children about fear to provide insight into how children describe their experiences. The research findings revealed that the use of drawing increased the amount and nature of the information that the children shared compared to the use of other methods such as observation and interviews. The work of these researchers and others demonstrate how I, as a researcher, can include children in my study and approach the research problem by placing the study within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm.

The methodological approach in interpretivist/constructivist paradigm sets guidelines that enabled me to deconstruct the realities of how orphaned children made sense of their lived experiences in terms of their needs, and how the educators experienced the learners' needs and responded to them. I blended insights from the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms because the two paradigms are focused on the process of interpreting and creating meaning from the participants' unique lived experience. Within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, reality is subjective and constructed (Crotty, 1998). This implies that what the orphaned learners and their educators constructed as their experience was real and since they had different experiences multiple realities emerged.

Constructivist researchers assume multiple realities based on their belief that reality is constructed on personal experience, which differs from one individual to the next (Crotty, 1998; Charmaz, 2000; Trochim, 2001; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The research done by Attanapola (2003) on the health of female workers, demonstrates the existence of multiple realities gleaned from listening to the participants'

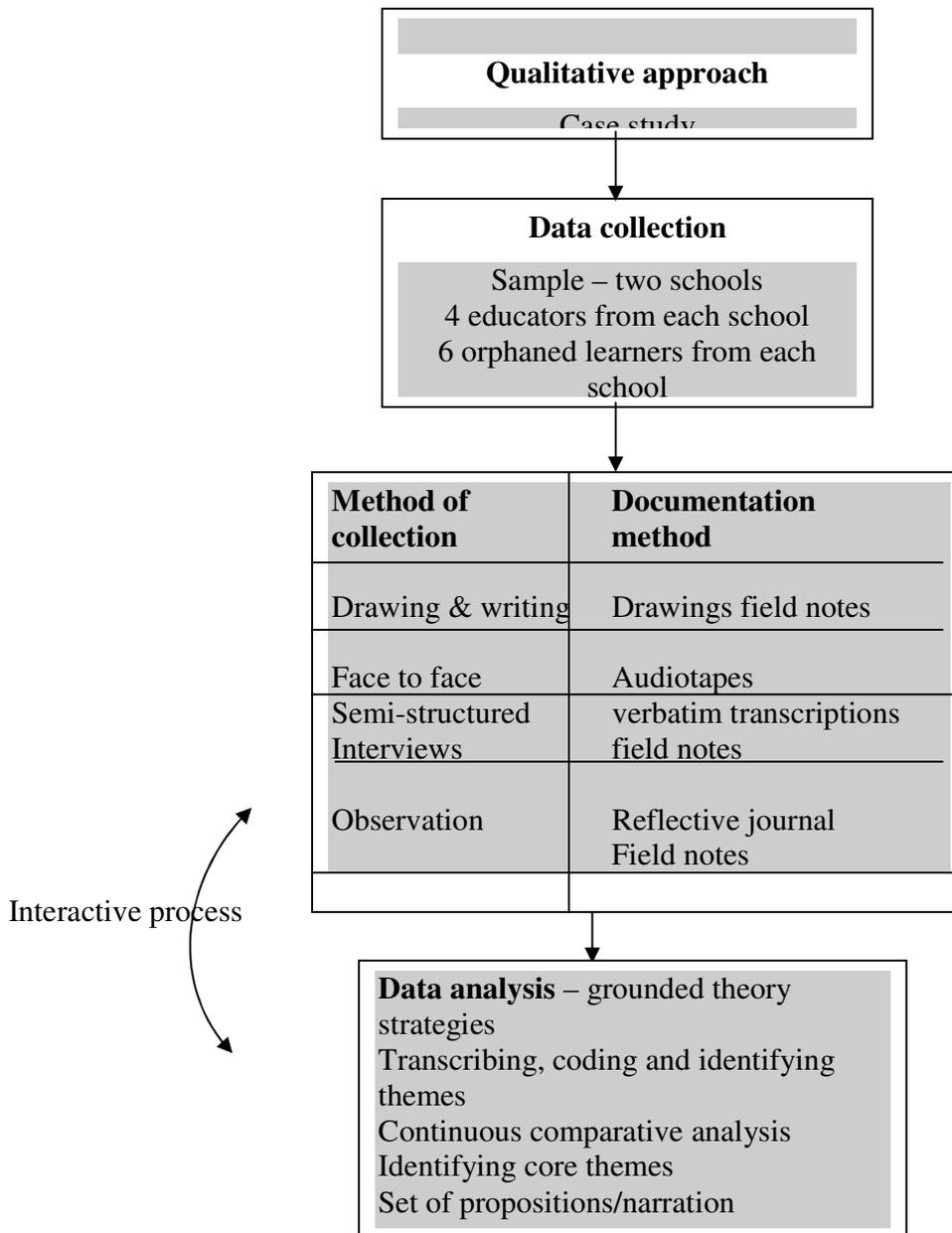
voices on their experiences and perceptions of health. Likewise, Barry (2002) found that by using different methods to collect data he was able to bring out different versions of reality from the research participants. These studies illustrate the existence of multiple realities, which can be sought by exploring the lived experiences of the participants in the study. In this study I believed that reality and knowledge about how the needs of orphans are managed could be established by exploring how the educators working in schools with orphaned learners make sense of their daily experiences with the orphans and how they construct knowledge of the needs of the learners.

In beginning, to understand the realities being constructed, we need to see the world through the eyes of these learners and their educators, and to analyse the meanings constructed, based on their lived experiences. To see the reality of the participants I explored the views of the learners and the educators by listening to different voices representing different experiences and realities to identify diverse perspectives of the experiences. I weighed up different versions of reality to gain a balanced perspective; then built up a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon from the multiple versions of lived experience of the learners and the educators.

The interpretive and constructivist paradigms that guide this study complement each other when it comes to the researcher-participant relationship. Whereas in the interpretivist approach the researcher creates a trusting relationship with the participant that enables the researcher to explore their experiences, the constructivist recognises mutual interaction between the researcher and the participant in constructing a meaning (Crotty, 1998; Terre Blanch & Durrheim, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 2003). I, as an interpretivist and constructivist researcher, combined both strategies in my study by taking an active role of co-creating a meaning during the data collection and analysis processes, and the interpretation of the data. I established rapport before commencing the data collection process and throughout the entire research process.

## 2.3 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Figure 2.1: Research process<sup>5</sup> flow chart



<sup>5</sup> Dates of field visits (see Appendix E)

To answer the research questions and generate grounded theory, I obtained in-depth perspectives of the orphaned learners and their educators to better understand and explain the activities in the schools (Cohen, Marion & Morrison, 2000; Trochim, 2001). I chose a qualitative research approach to this study because qualitative inquiry focuses on understanding the meaning people attach to their lived experiences (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative research approach made it possible for me to explore the lived experiences of the orphans and their educators by building a trusting interactive relationship that encouraged the learners and their educators to talk about their perceptions and opinions.

The strength of the qualitative research approach was that I was able to collect rich descriptive data and details from the participants, such as feelings, thought processes and emotions – which cannot be achieved using quantitative research methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). By using data collection methods that are flexible and sensitive to the underlying meaning of the participants' experiences (Merriam, 1998) I was able to explore the needs of the orphaned learners and the way in which the educators experience and respond to the orphans. Another reason for choosing the qualitative research approach is that the research was conducted in the participants' natural setting, which provided holistic understanding of the behaviour of the learners and the educators as it occurred naturally (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

One of the challenges of using a qualitative research approach was that collecting rich descriptive data required me to employ interactive methods, such as drawing-and-writing techniques, the individual interview and observation, each time we interacted, which was a time-consuming process. Another aspect of the qualitative research approach is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis (Merriam, 1998). It is therefore essential that the researcher should have knowledge and training on how to do observation and conduct interviews. In preparation for my study, I attended research support sessions that prepared me for conducting interviews and making observations. In the qualitative research approach there is a possibility of researcher bias owing to lack of rigor in the research process. To ensure rigor in my research process, I

used a reflective journal (Appendix B) and memos (Appendix F) to record and reflect on the details of the choices I made in sampling, and how I collected and analysed my data.

## **2.4 DATA COLLECTION**

This study is a case of the experiences of orphaned learners and their educators. Selection of schools in which the data was collected was done before the selection of the participants.

### **2.4.1 Identification of the data collection sites**

In the process of identifying the schools from which I collected the data, I approached the BEd Honours students from the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, during one of their contact sessions and shared my research interest with them. Most of the students were educators currently teaching in different primary and secondary schools in South Africa. Some of the students confirmed that they had many orphaned learners in their schools and they volunteered to be my gatekeepers. The students made appointments for me with their school principals so that I could visit their schools and explore the possibility of collecting data from some of these schools.

I used convenience sampling in selecting the schools that were accessible and where I could make multiple visits to saturate my data (Stake, 2000). The criterion for choosing the two schools was that the schools had orphaned learners and educators who were willing to participate in the study. A convenience sampling strategy takes cases according to their availability especially when it concerns a rare phenomenon, such as in the case of this study, schools with orphaned learners (Kelly, 2002). The advantage of choosing convenience sampling was that it was convenient for me as the researcher to access the site and the participants (Fraenkel & Norman, 2006). The disadvantage of convenience sampling is the possibility of the researcher being biased in selecting the site and the participants. Another disadvantage of convenience sampling is that the sample may not

be representative of the population under study (Trochim, 2001; Fraenkel & Norman, 2006). The issue of representation in convenience sampling is more likely to be a limitation in studies that intend to generalise findings. The main purpose of this study, however, is to explore how educators identify and respond to the needs of orphaned learners with the aim of providing insight and understanding of the phenomenon, and not necessarily to generalise the findings to other settings.

To gain access to my data collection site, I got the relevant telephone numbers for four schools from these students and contacted the school principals. Two of the four principals declined to participate in this study. The principals of the other two schools agreed to be involved in my study and were willing to assist me in identifying orphaned learners and educators who would be willing to participate in my research. To conceal the identity of these two schools for this research study, I refer to them as School A and School B.

School A and School B are both in Mpumalanga Province. To gain access to school A, I sought permission to conduct my research from Kwamhlanga North East Circuit Office and for School B the permission was obtained from Tweefontein North Circuit (Appendix D). In my study, School A and School B were used as research sites to provide better understanding of how the needs of orphaned learners are identified and managed (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000). The reason for using two schools was to enable me to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by exploring the meaning of the lived experiences of the learners and educators who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon within a bounded system – which in this case is a school (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000).

The case study approach applied to this study provided rich descriptions of the lived experiences of the learners and educators who participated in the study. I explored, examined and compared the common and uncommon experiences of these learners and educators in terms of what was happening, the relationships that existed and the overall

situation in the two schools (Stake, 2000). The advantage of a case study is that it presents a real-life situation, and provides a holistic account of the phenomenon and insights that would enable the reader to visualise the experiences of the people in the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). The limitation of the case study research approach in this study is that one case study in either of the two schools may not produce findings that can be generalised to other schools (Lewis & Lindsay, 2000).

#### **2.4.2 Selection of the participants**

The selection of learners to participate in the study was done through purposive sampling. The rationale for purposive sampling is to seek information-rich cases to provide in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling was a suitable strategy for this study because the objective of the study was to explore the lived experiences of the orphaned learners and the educators to provide an understanding of how educators identify and manage the needs of the orphaned learners. The advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher selects the participants based on the purpose of the study (Trochim, 2001) thus choosing participants who have experienced the phenomenon and have first-hand information relevant to the study.

Purposive sampling is convenient because the researcher is able to reach the participants quickly (Trochim, 2001). Since it is the responsibility of the researcher to choose participants who are able and willing to provide the relevant data, there is a possibility that the researcher could be wrong in choosing suitable participants for the study (Fraenkel & Norman, 2006). Taking this limitation into consideration, in this study I informed the principal and deputy principal of the two schools visited of my research so that they could assist me in identifying educators and learners with information needed for the study. Another disadvantage of purposive selection is that given the intensity of the data collection procedures, only a few cases are involved in the study (Patton, 2000). To address the limitation of small numbers of selected cases, I used more than one data collection method to elicit the in-depth information required in this study.

I also used purposive sampling in the draw-and-write session to identify learners who had the potential of narrating rich in-depth experiences of their orphanhood. Children's drawings can be a way of understanding the views of a child (Dockrell, Lewis & Lindsay, 2000). Through drawing as a data collection technique, children get the opportunity to organise their narratives before they share them with the researcher. The drawings also give form and meaning to the familiar and unfamiliar experiences of children (Driessnack, 2006). Some researchers view drawing as a relaxing exercise that reduces an individual's defensiveness and enhances communication (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Yuen, 2004; Driessnack, 2006). The advantage of using drawings encouraged children to talk more on sensitive issues and stimulates detailed descriptions of specific emotions and experiences (Yuen, 2004; Driessnack, 2006). The strategy of giving the learners the opportunity to draw before verbal interaction empowers the child when the drawings are used to guide the interview. The researcher focuses on the issues that most matter to the child being interviewed and the drawings also structure the interview (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Yuen, 2004; Driessnack, 2006).

Although draw-and-write techniques have several advantages, one needs to be aware of the limitations. Backett-Milburn and McKie (1999) argue that drawing techniques assume that children are able to draw and does not take into consideration that drawing requires knowledge and skills. Moreover, a child may not like to draw or feel that they can draw (Yuen, 2004). In such cases the children should have other ways of expressing themselves. Backett-Milburn and McKie (1999) indicate that the environment of the child might influence the pictures the child draws, for instance peer pressure and the desire to please the teacher. Hence, the drawings may not reflect the state of the child's mind. Drawings, being one way of exploring the child's experience, may be difficult to interpret. The researcher might interpret the message differently from what the child intended to express (Dockrell et al., 2000). To limit the risk of misinterpreting the children's drawings and the environmental influence on what children draw, it is a good idea for the drawer to interpret the drawing and give it meaning (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). In this study the learners were given the opportunity to explain what the drawings meant and to express their own concerns in the absence of environmental

influence to increase credibility. My intention in using the drawings was to identify the learners who were willing and able to narrate their experiences and to probe for in-depth information rather than for interpretation of the learners' experiences that could have required a qualified psychological analysis. In this study, drawings and writing were used as an icebreaker in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). From the drawings and written narrations I purposely chose six learners to interview from each school who were willing to tell their stories.

The educators were identified through a snowballing process. Snowballing is a sampling process whereby the initial information-rich participant interviewed refers the researcher to another participant who also meets the criteria used to select the first participant and the referral process is systematically repeated until the data is saturated (Struwig, 2001; Fraenkel & Norman, 2006). In this study the initial educator identified in each of the two schools was purposely chosen because they were involved in helping the orphaned learners and the educators interviewed subsequently were identified through the snowballing process. The general characteristic of the educators was that they had experience with the orphaned learners. The advantage of a snowballing sampling is that the researcher is able to reach participants who are inaccessible or hard to find (Struwig, 2001). In this study it would have been difficult to identify educators who are involved with orphaned learners without the recommendations of the other educators (Fraenkel & Norman, 2006). A limitation of the snowballing is that the sample may not be representative; however, for the purpose of this study, participants with rich information were the primary focus.

#### **2.4.2.1 Selection of learners at school A**

When I visited School A, I briefed the management team on what my research was about, how I intended to collect my data and the learners that needed to be involved. The reason for giving the criteria of the learners to be interviewed to the educators was to facilitate purposeful selection. The deputy principal instructed the class educators to supply the names of the orphans in their classes. The learners were identified through a feeding

project organised by Roman Catholic Church. The feeding project was a source of convenience and purposeful sampling. Convenience sampling involves choosing participants based on their availability and accessibility (Struwig, 2001). The senior educator then called all the orphaned learners and their educators to the staff room and introduced me to them. After the introduction I told them briefly about my study and asked the orphans to inform their guardians about it and ask for consent<sup>6</sup> to participate in the study.

In the following week seventeen learners who volunteered to participate in the study attended the second meeting (Appendix E). The group consisted of eight boys and nine girls. The session lasted 45 minutes. I attempted to establish rapport with the learners before the interviews by holding a draw-and-write session with them (Appendix F). Establishing rapport with the learners before the interview sessions was necessary to ease any anxiety or nervousness that they might have been experiencing during the interaction process (Coyne, 1998). I was aware that establishing rapport with the learners contributes to trustworthy data (Patton, 2002).

The establishment of an interactive relationship was crucial because the vulnerability of the learners was twofold: they were under the age of 18 and, more importantly, because they were orphans. In the sessions I talked generally about myself, told the learners and the educators about my family, my research, how I became interested in the topic and the purpose of the study. I encouraged the learners to ask me questions. I wanted to reassure the learners that their responses would be confidential and encourage them to give careful and truthful answers (Dockrell et al., 2000). I assured the learners that their contribution might give us a better idea of what it means to be an orphan and draw attention to their needs.

The strategy I used to strengthen rapport was through drawings to illustrate what I was studying, providing more detail than I had in the first meeting (Appendix F) to explain

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<sup>6</sup> The senior educator told the orphaned learners who were willing to participate in the study to get consent from their caregivers.

why I was doing this study, how the learners would be involved and the value of their contribution to this study. I used the drawings to provide a visual image of my narration and give an example of how the orphans could talk to me about themselves through drawing. Cook, Fritz and Mwonya (2003) affirm that children are able to use drawing as an emotional outlet for their feelings and thoughts. The authors give an example from their study of how an orphaned child drew a picture of a baby bird alone in a tree to project the child's loneliness. Likewise, Lewis and Lindsay (2000) point out that the drawing technique provides an alternative means to verbal communication through which the learners project their experiences. I gave the orphaned learners a piece of paper to write their names on that had a number assigned to it. I explained to these learners that I would use pseudonyms in my report to conceal their true identity and that I would only use their real names to identify them when I needed to contact them for the interviews. Then I gave each orphaned learner coloured paper and pencils and told them to tell me something about themselves by drawing pictures. While they were drawing I asked them to write about who is in their drawing and what they are doing. After 45 minutes I collected the drawings.

At this time I was not sure whether the learners would open up in a focus group interview, so I asked them to volunteer to tell me something about themselves. The learners were silent for a while. Eventually one learner, a girl aged 14, volunteered to talk about her experiences. I realised by their prolonged silence that they may have been uncomfortable talking in the presence of other learners. I decided then that it would be best to concentrate on individual interviews with selected learners. From the drawings and the written narrations I purposefully chose learners who revealed actual experiences and seemed to be more willing to talk about these. Table 2.1 lists the detail of the learners from School A whom I purposely chose to participate in this study after the draw and write group session.

**Table 2.1: Background information of orphaned learners (school A)**

(The drawings and narrations of these learners appear in Appendix H.)

<b>LEARNERS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING LEARNERS FOR THE INTERVIEWS</b>
<b>Tebogo</b>	Tebogo is seventeen years old and in Grade 11. He lives with his brother and sister. His mother passed away in 2005 and his father abandoned him when he was nine months old.	In his short story he wrote that he hates his father and used to tell people that he does not have a father. He wrote, "...when I was 9 months my father left me and my mother left me last year and my father he has not come to bury my mother". He continued to write that there are many things he wants to talk about and that he is willing to tell his story to someone. Based on the narration of how Tebogo relates to his father, it seemed to me that Tebogo could be experiencing emotional pain at being orphaned as a result of his mothers' death and his father abandoning them. I decided to include Tebogo in my interviews because he suited the purpose of my study and I wanted to give him a chance to tell his story.
<b>Tshepo</b>	Tshepo is fifteen years old and in Grade 9. He lives with an elder brother and sister. His mother is dead and his father abandoned them before he was born. Tshepo wants to be a doctor.	Tshepo drew a picture of himself and his siblings then rubbed out the drawings of the siblings. I became curious as to why he had changed his mind. Another point of interest was the sentence "The day I won't forget is the day my mother died". He did not elaborate. He then wrote briefly about the affectionate relationship with his mother, then the pain of

<b>LEARNERS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING LEARNERS FOR THE INTERVIEWS</b>
		not knowing his father, followed by bitterness of being abandoned by his father, and lastly of hope that one day he might get to meet his father. I found the written narration intriguing and wanted to explore the experiences of this orphaned learner further.
<b>Lerato</b>	Lerato is fourteen years old and in Grade 8. She lives with her grandmother, brother and sister. Her mother died in 2002 and her father abandoned them when she was young.	The following narration drew my attention: “I am a person who like other people. I don’t like people who hate me for nothing. I do not know my father and that does not make me happy”. The expression of pain at the death of her mother and disappearance of her father captured my interest. I chose her for the interview because I wanted to explore the caring and love-hate relationship she is experiencing as an orphaned learner.
<b>Lindiwe</b>	Lindiwe is fourteen years old in Grade 8. Her mother passed away when she was one month old and her father passed away when she was one year old. She is staying with her grandmother and in the future she wants to be a pilot.	Lindiwe drew a picture of two girls, one wearing a flowered colourful dress and smiling and the other girl wearing a dress with a design of a red ribbon. She wrote about her parents briefly, and then she wrote about how she felt about people with HIV/AIDS. There is an indication of anger directed towards some people, a message of stigmatisation and issues of self-esteem. For example she wrote, “I am a person who like people and care about each other and like other...I do not hate people who have HIV/AIDS”. I had a feeling from the narration that the learner had a

LEARNERS	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	REASONS FOR CHOOSING LEARNERS FOR THE INTERVIEWS
		rich story to tell about her experiences.
<b>Thandi</b>	Thandi is fourteen years old and in Grade 8. Both her mother and father had passed away. She is living with an uncle and aunt. She dreams of one day being a bank manager	Thandi wrote, “I like to play because when I am playing I do not think of my parents”. It seems from this statement that Thandi may be trying to block out some of her emotions. I chose Thandi for the interview because I wanted to further explore if my assumption was right.
<b>Mpumi</b>	Mpumi is fourteen years old and in Grade 8. Both her parents are dead and she stays with her sister.	Mpumi drew herself as a nurse standing next to a hospital building. She writes that she wants to be a nurse and at present she is not happy because they do not have food, so she goes to school hungry. I had a feeling that this learner had a lot to tell me about her situation, what she is experiencing and her choice of career, thus I decided to select her for an individual interview.

#### 2.4.2.2 Selection of learners at school B

When I visited School B, I first met the principal and briefed her on the purpose of my study and how I intended to involve the learners and the educators in the study. The principal gave me the background of the school and then I was introduced to the Head of Department (HOD) Senior Phase, who was also in charge of the orphaned learners. She then introduced me to the other educators. I told the educators about my research and asked them if they would be willing to be interviewed. It was my observation that most of the educators were reluctant to be part of the study. Some of the educators advised me to interview the HOD because she was the educator responsible for caring for the orphans. I assured the educators that since they also interacted with the orphans I would like to hear

their views and experiences. I told them my plan was to first interview the learners, after which I would interview some of the educators.

When I visited School B the second time, the HOD introduced me to the orphans who had volunteered to be part of my study and had consent from their guardians. Sixteen learners were present in the first session. I again used drawings to tell the learners about myself, explain reasons for my research, how they would be involved and the value of their contribution to my research. Then I gave them coloured paper and pencils to draw and/or write something about themselves. After about fifteen minutes I realised that most of the learners were drawing houses. I asked the learners to draw themselves and the people in their lives, and then write a few sentences about what was happening in their lives. The purpose of the session was to give the learners the opportunity for non-verbal communication of their experiences from which I could identify the learners who would be willing to talk about them. I noticed that the learners were not sure of what was expected of them. I then requested that the HOD explain to the learners in their mother tongue what I asked them to do. I told them they could write their short stories in either Zulu or Ndebele. Most of the learners then wrote their stories in Ndebele and my research assistant translated the stories into English (Appendix J).

A week later I had another draw-and-write session with a group of nineteen learners. After the second draw-and-write session in School B, I chose the orphaned learners I wished to interview individually. Table 2.2 lists the participants from School B. Pseudonyms were used to conceal the identity of the learners.

**Table 2.2: Background information of orphaned learners (school B)**

(The drawings and narrations of these learners appear in Appendix I.)

<b>ORPHANED LEARNERS</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING LEARNERS FOR THE INTERVIEWS</b>
<b>Karabo</b>	Karabo is sixteen years old. He lives with his two sisters and a brother. Both his parents have passed away.	Karabo drew a sports car and no other drawings. Then he wrote a short story about how he lived with his grandmother who drank alcohol and brought food late in the night. He did not like the living conditions because he did not have time to do homework. I chose to interview this learner because I wanted to explore the changes in his life since he had moved in with his grandmother.
<b>Thato</b>	Thato is eleven years old and in Grade 4. He is living with his sister and grandmother. Both his parents have passed away. His father died in 2004 and his mother in 2005	Thato drew himself, his sister and grandmother and wrote a short note that when the mother was still alive he did not stay with her. This comment captured my interest. I wanted to find out why he was living with his granny when the mother was still alive and what had changed since his mother passed away
<b>Nomsa</b>	Nomsa is twelve years old. She is in Grade 6 and lives with her aunt, uncle and brother. Her mother died in 2000 and her father in 2001.	The following narration drew my attention: "I feel happy at school because I have friends who love me and care for me. I feel like a educator is like a mother for me or father because they make me feel happy and more good at what I am doing". I wanted to explore her relationships at school and the emotions attached to these relationships.
<b>Lesego</b>	Lesego is twelve years old and in Grade 6. Her mother has passed away. She is staying with her father and her brother.	Lesego draws a picture of herself, her brother and her educator. She then wrote, "I am not happy because my father do not want to buy for me school shoes and my

ORPHANED LEARNERS	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	REASONS FOR CHOOSING LEARNERS FOR THE INTERVIEWS
		granny, she does not want me to play and she treat me like a dog”. I wanted to explore her experiences further by interviewing her.
<b>Lebo</b>	Lebo is ten years old and in Grade 4. He is staying with his mother, grandmother, brother and sister. His father has passed way.	Lebo drew a picture of himself standing at a distance from his brother and sister. He wrote that his brother beats him and his sister is selfish. I choose Lebo because I wanted to explore the experiences of sibling relationships.
<b>Zodwa</b>	Zodwa is ten years old and in Grade 5. Her mother passed away in February 2006. She lives with her grandmother, sister and an aunt. Her father is a truck driver living somewhere else and visits them once a month.	Zodwa seemed to be shivering although she was wearing warm clothes. She has rashes on her face, hands and legs. She looked much smaller than the other children in her grade. Her appearance drew my attention and I decided to hear her story.

Appendix J is an example of a drawing and accompanying memo for a learner not included in the interview.

#### 2.4.2.3 Selection of educators in School A

In School A, the deputy principal introduced me to Educator Mabena (pseudonym), one of the educators involved with the orphaned learners, and I made an appointment to interview her. Educator Mabena was purposefully selected because she had rich information about her experiences with the orphaned learners (Patton, 2002). After interviewing Educator Mabena I requested her to recommend another educator that I could interview. I then identified other educators to be interviewed through a snowballing process. Educator Mabena recommended that I interview Educator Selepe, who referred me to Educator Khumalo, who then recommended that I interview Educator Chabalala.

Table 2.3 provides the background information on the educators at school A and my reason for having chosen them. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of these educators.

Table 2.3: Background information of educators interviewed (School A)

<b>EDUCATOR</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE EDUCATOR</b>
<b>Mabena</b>	Ms Mabena had been teaching in school A since February 2000. The subjects she teaches include Maths, Physics and Biology (Grade 8 to Grade 12).	Ms Mabena is one of four educators the deputy principal of this school recommended that I interview. She was teaching learners across four grades and was in a position to know some of the orphaned learners. She is also on the Uniform Committee that ensures the learners are dressed in the official school uniform.
<b>Selepe</b>	Ms Selepe started teaching at school A in 2001. The subjects she teaches include Business Accounting and Economics (Grades 10–12 and EMS Grades 9–10.)	After interviewing Ms Mabena I asked her about other educators on the Uniform Committee I could interview and she directed me to Ms Selepe. Ms Selepe is teaching three full classes of 75–80 learners per class. She is also a class educator for Grade 10. She is in a position to know and interact with some of the orphaned learners. She told me that after identifying the orphans she refers them to Ms Khumalo for assistance.
<b>Khumalo</b>	Ms Khumalo started teaching at school A in 2005. Her subjects include Sepedi and Business Economics (Sepedi to Grades 8–10 and Business Economics to Grade 11 and 12).s	She is a key informant and one of the educators that the deputy principal and Ms Selepe recommended that I should interview because of her involvement with the orphans. While interviewing Ms Khumalo, she told me that Ms Chabalala is the educator who initiated the lunch programme for children who do not bring lunch to school.

<b>EDUCATOR</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE EDUCATOR</b>
<b>Chabalala</b>	Ms Chabalala has been teaching at School A since 2003. She teaches Science to Grades 8, 11 and 12).	She sourced donations from her church and initiated a lunch programme for orphans and other needy children who do not bring lunch to school. I chose to interview her to explore her experiences with the orphaned learners.

#### 2.4.2.4 Selection of educators in school B

In School B the principal had suggested that I first interview Educator Mtlala, the HOD, who is also responsible for orphaned learners. When I interviewed Educator Mtlala I asked her questions based on her experiences with the orphans and emerging questions that arose from the interviews with the educators in School A. After interviewing her, she recommended that I interview Educator Malope and Educator Mokoena. Educator Mokoena referred me to Educator Dube (Appendix E).

Table 2.4 gives the background of the educators at School B that I interviewed.

**Table 2.4: Background information of educators interviewed (School B)**

<b>EDUCATOR</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE EDUCATOR</b>
<b>Mtlala</b>	Ms Mtlala is an HOD (Senior Phase).	Educator Mtlala is in charge of learners' discipline in the school. She is involved with the orphans referred to her by other educators. I chose to interview her to explore her experiences with the orphans.
<b>Malope</b>	She has been teaching in the school for twenty years. Her subjects include Social Science, Isizulu and Life Orientation, which she teaches to Grades 4, 5 and 6.	Ms Mtlala referred me to two educators who have been attending seminars on inclusive education, namely Ms Malope and Ms Mokoena.

<b>EDUCATOR</b>	<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE EDUCATOR</b>
<b>Mokoena</b>	She is a Foundation Phase educator. She has been teaching Grade 2 for the last five years	Apart from being referred to her by the HOD, I wanted to explore her experiences with younger learners.
<b>Dube</b>	She is the HOD (Foundation Phase). She has eight years experience at the school.	I contacted Ms Dube through the snowballing process. I wanted to explore her experiences of teaching younger children.

### **2.4.3 Data collection methods**

In this research study I explored knowledge about the reality of the needs of orphaned learners using interactive qualitative methods that enabled me to explore the learners' perspectives. I used the *draw-and-write* technique as a method of facilitating interaction with the learners (Driessnack, 2006) and face-to-face semi-structured interviews to collect data.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews started with a set of open-ended questions to guide the interview followed by probing questions for depth and clarity (Morse & Field, 1995). Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to collect data in this research study (Appendix L) because they had the potential to give the participants the opportunity to describe personal information in detail and allow me to explore the meaning the participants attach to their lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). I obtained rich data by asking specific *what*, *how*, and *why* leading questions and had follow-up questions and probes with the aim of eliciting relevant details and in-depth information that described and explained the participants' perspective of the phenomenon (Seidman, 1991; Marshall, 1999; Trochim, 2001; Creswell 2002; Rubin & Rubin 2005). In semi-structured interviews, most participants are able to reveal their intentions, beliefs, values and reasons and how they made sense of their experiences (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2004). Another advantage of face-to-face semi-structured interviews is that they produced data that I could compare to obtain common factors in the experiences of the learners and the educators.

A possible limitation of face-to-face semi-structured interviews is that the participants may strive to provide the answer they presume the researcher wants to hear (Dockrell et al., 2000). To reduce the effect of this limitation, I established a trusting relationship with the learners by building rapport during the *draw-and-write* session before the interviews. I chose to hold the drawing session before the interview because research findings indicate that children tend to speak more freely when given the opportunity to draw first before conversation (Driessnack, 2006). The relationship thus established was a way of gaining confidence and trust so that the learners could tell me the truth.

The nature of data collection was also more in the form of narration of the learners' and educators' experiences, with follow-up questions for clarity and depth, rather than a question-answer interview format. I also reassured the learners that there were no right or wrong answers and that a "*I do not know*" answer was allowed to avoid guess work (Dockrell et al., 2000). Another limitation identified by Morse and Field (1995) is that the presence of the researcher might make the participants unwilling and uncomfortable to share their experiences. In this study the limitation that emerged during the interview with the learners was that one learner was either shy or felt uncomfortable talking about her needs and experiences. I requested her to write another story of her experiences for me (Appendix M).

#### **2.4.3.1 Interviews with learners**

After selecting twelve learners who participated in the draw and write session, I requested the deputy principal and the senior educator in School A and the HOD in School B to assist me in contacting them. Since the paradigm for this study accepts that there are multiple realities, I interviewed different orphaned learners to get different views of the phenomenon, which increased the credibility of the study and provided balance in the perspectives and depth (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The selected learners were boys and girls aged between 10 and 17. The purpose of interviewing learners was to establish what their emerging needs were by listening to their stories. A further motivation for interviewing

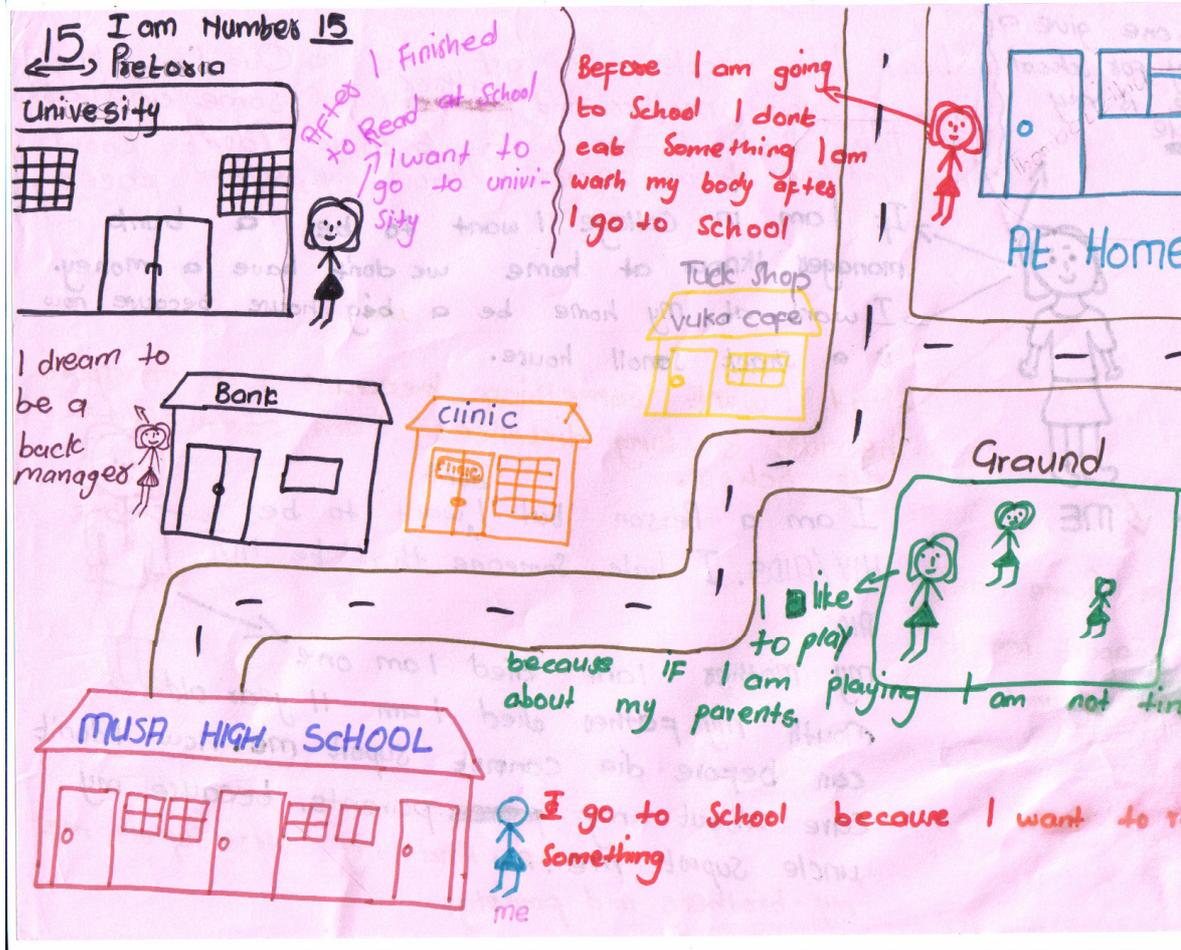
the orphaned learners, as noted earlier, was that young people see the world differently from adults. As such, adults cannot accurately represent children's perspectives (Fielding & Prieto, 2002). Fielding and Prieto further emphasise that verbal interaction with children enables them to reflect on their own understanding of reality and provides an opportunity to express what they think, experience and expect. Eder and Fingerson (2002) affirm that:

*One of the reasons for interviewing youthful respondents is to allow them to give their own interpretation and thoughts rather than rely solely on our adult interpretation of their lives..*

The notion of giving children a voice is in line with the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, in which it is accepted that knowledge is created in the mind, and is concerned with capturing participant's point of view through interaction. Since this study was placed within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, my goal was to elicit different perspectives of the orphaned learners and the educators. To achieve this goal I established a friendly relationship that encouraged learners and educators to talk about their lived experiences. The interviews with the learners were conducted at school after teaching hours.

The interviews with the learners lasted about 45minutes. The interview sessions were conducted in the learner's classrooms at the end of the school day. During the interviews I asked the orphans to tell me more about their drawings and their written text. As the orphaned learners narrated their experiences, I asked them questions for further clarity and depth. I engaged an assistant to break the cultural and language barrier and to act as a translator when conducting the interviews. These strategies were less threatening than asking the orphans direct questions. I took into consideration that children might find it difficult to express their views verbally when the issue being discussed was sensitive but they could express their feelings through other forms such as drawing and written text (Cook et al., 2003). The interviews were audio taped for accuracy and the recording transcribed verbatim. The following drawings are two examples of how I incorporated these into my interviews with the orphans.

Drawing example one



**Learner: Thandi**

**8-2-2006**

**Researcher:** 'I like your pictures very, very much. You draw better than me. Please tell me what is happening in this drawing?'

**Thandi:** 'These are the things that I like (drawing of three girls).'

**Researcher:** 'What are they doing?'

**Thandi:** 'I like playing.'

**Researcher** (While pointing to the smaller drawing of a girl): 'Who is the small one?'

**Thandi:** ‘My friend.’

**Researcher:** ‘Here you wrote that *I like to play because when I am playing I do not think of my parents*. Do you think of your parents all the time?’

**Thandi:** ‘I think about them sometime. When I think about them I feel bad.’

**Researcher:** ‘When did they leave you?’

**Thandi:** ‘When I was very small. I do not know them.’

**Researcher:** ‘From the drawing I can see that you want to be a bank manager. Why do you want to be a bank manager?’

**Thandi:** ‘I want to do something that I want at home. We have a small house. It is a shack we do not have a beautiful house. I want to be a bank manager so that I build a beautiful house.’

**Researcher:** ‘Whom do you stay with?’

**Thandi:** ‘My uncle and my sisters and brother.’

**Researcher:** ‘Who is this in the drawing?’

**Thandi:** ‘Me.’

**Researcher:** ‘What are you doing?’

**Thandi:** ‘I am talking.’

**Researcher:** ‘What are you saying?’

**Thandi:** ‘I do not like people asking me about my parents.’

**Researcher:** ‘Please tell me more.’

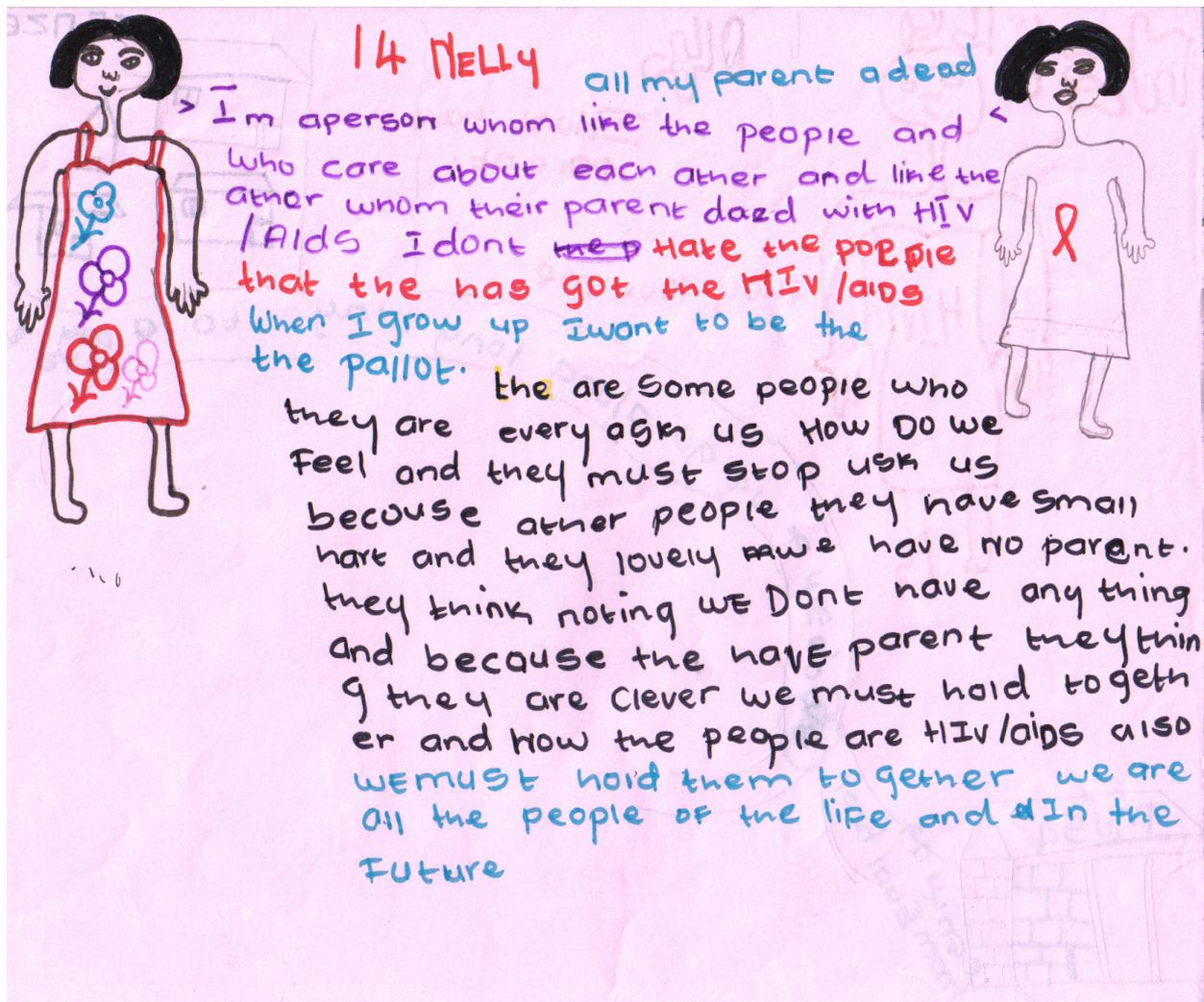
**Thandi:** ‘When somebody ask me about my parents I feel bad.’

Drawing example two

**Individual Interviews- School A**

**Learner: Lindiwe**

8-2-2006



**Researcher:** 'What is happening on this page?'

**Lindiwe:** 'This page, I am a person who cares about people with HIV. I do not like people who when you tell them I am HIV they laugh at you like you are a fool and other people they are not a fool. They did not make her feel sad.'

**Researcher:** 'So you do not like the way they are treating your friend?'

**Lindiwe:** 'Yes, I do not like it.'

**Researcher:** 'Who is this with a ribbon on the dress?'

**Lindiwe:** 'My friend'

**Researcher:** ‘Who is this wearing a flowered dress?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘It is I.’

**Researcher:** ‘Why does your friend look sad?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘She is not happy because other people they laugh at her. When she comes they run away.’

**Researcher:** ‘Do you want to tell me something about your parents?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘I do not know my parents. My mother died when I was one month or one year. I do not know them.’

**Researcher:** ‘They died?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘Yes.’

**Researcher:** ‘Both of them?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘Yes.’

**Researcher:** ‘Whom are you staying with now?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘I am staying with my grandmother.’

**Researcher:** ‘You wrote here that when you grow up you want to be a pilot, why do you want to be a pilot?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘I want to go to many places because now when the school has a trip I do not have money. I do not know it. That is why I want to be a pilot because I cannot afford to go for school trips. Maybe if I am a pilot I will afford that.’

**Researcher:** ‘What else are you not having now that you would wish to have?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘I wish to help other orphans.’

**Researcher:** ‘You wrote on this page that you are a person who likes people and care for other people who their parents died of HIV. Tell me more about it.’

**Lindiwe:** ‘There are some children who parents died of HIV. In town I see but they are not many. I wish that I could know others so that I could help them. Another parent was shot. Another friend her brother goes to initiation when he came back they shout at him and he took poison.’

**Researcher:** ‘Can you explain to me what you wrote here? You said you do not like people asking you things why?’

**Lindiwe:** ‘Sometimes they ask me how do you feel. Many, many times they ask, *How do you feel?* After that they go to a corner and laugh.’

### **2.4.3.2 Interview with the educators**

In the initial interview with educators in School A, I asked Ms Mabena to tell me about herself, then her experiences with the orphans. My questions were open-ended and focused on the perception of orphans' needs. The questions asked in this interview were generated from the gap I had identified in the literature and questions that puzzled and motivated me to do the study (Appendix L). The duration of the interview with Educator Mabena was 45 to 60 minutes. After the interview I transcribed the audiotape and coded the data, then revised the questions I would ask in the following interview based on the themes that were emerging from the interview already dealt with (Appendix O).

Educator Mabena referred me to Educator Selepe. The two other educators in School A were also identified through a referral process. Each time I was referred to an educator, I called them to ask for their consent and made arrangements to interview them at a time and place to their convenience. Some of the educators were interviewed at school while others were interviewed in their homes (Appendix E). Whenever I interviewed an educator, I would immediately transcribe and code the interview and revise the interview questions based on the emerging themes (Appendix M).

In School B the principal suggested that I interview Educator Mtalala, the HOD responsible for orphaned learners. When I interviewed Educator Mtalala I asked her questions based on her experiences with the orphaned learners and verified themes that emerged from the interviews with educators in School A. The educators interviewed in the follow-up interviews, Malope, Mokoena and Dube, were identified through a snowballing process. The data collected were descriptive and presented a personal view of the educators' experiences. A tape recorder was used (with permission from the participants) to increase the accuracy of data recording, while notes were also taken on aspects of the interview that could not be recorded on tape.

### 2.4.3.3 Observation

The third data collection method was observation in the context of interaction between the researcher and the participants. Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) point out that the interaction between the researcher and the participant changes the behaviour of the participant. Observation as context of interaction is a strategy in which the researcher incorporates gestures and body language that add meaning to verbal communication in verified data collected in the interviews (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). Direct observation of non-verbal communication during the interaction between the researcher and the participant enables the researcher to understand the holistic perspective of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2002).

My observation was done during the briefing session that I had with the educators and the orphaned learners, during the draw-and-write session with the learners and the interviews with the orphans and the educators. During the interview observation may be in form of taking note of body language, gestures, facial expression and pauses that could add significant meaning to the verbal expression (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000). When interviewing the orphans and the educators I took note of voice tone as they narrated their story and answered my questions (see Appendix P). The observation was a multiple, ongoing process over the period of the interviews.

During the observation I played the role of an inside observer (emic) as opposed to an outside observer (etic). The role of an insider observer demands that the researcher be part of the group of people or phenomena being studied. In my study, I interacted with the participants during the interviews and concentrated on observing their behaviour as they responded to my questions (Appendix P). My presence initially created a halo effect and anxiety over the behaviour of the orphaned learners and the educators (Patton, 2002). To overcome the unnatural behaviour of the participants during interviews, I reassured the educators that the purpose of the study was not to evaluate or judge their behaviour towards the learners but to gather information on their daily life experiences that would provide insight and understanding of how educators identify and respond to the needs of

the orphaned learners. The more I visited the schools the more relaxed the learners and educators became and they gradually started behaving naturally. Another disadvantage of observation is that the researcher may be biased in reporting what is said during observation. This limitation was addressed by being objective in taking field notes during the session (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000)

## **2.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

The process of data analysis involved scrutinising the data to identify key factors or themes and to establish how these themes are related, as well as to construct an explanation of how orphaned learners perceive their needs and how educators identify and respond to the needs of orphaned learners. In this study, I applied constructivist principles to identify themes from the emerging data and how they are related to generate a substantive theory on how educators manage the needs of orphaned learners. My unit of analysis was the experiences of the orphaned learners and their educators. My research focused on how the educators identified the emerging needs of orphaned learners and how they supported or assisted the learners and why the educators responded the way they did. I compared what an individual educator told me they did to assist the learners and the common practice among the educators from the two schools. The process of analysis was done in two distinct interactive phases namely, open and selective coding (Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2000).



learners with rich stories. I further analysed their drawings and wrote reflective notes in my journal, as well as the questions that I had asked them in the individual interview (see Appendix B). My first set of interviews at School A was with three girls and two boys and at School B with two boys and two girls. Afterwards I listened to the taped interviews and transcribed the recorded interview sessions. The transcribing of oral recording into written text was done word for word because I needed detailed descriptions for an in-depth analysis of the data (Morse & Field, 1995; Strauss & Corbin 1998), as opposed to transcribing pre-selected parts, which might have resulted in omitting important details (Seidman, 1991) During the following two weeks I interviewed three learners, two girls and a boy from School A and three girls and one boy at School B and then transcribed the recordings.

After transcribing the second set of interviews from School A, I started open coding after reading through the transcript several times. In open coding, I established what was occurring by doing microscopic analysis. I coded the transcript by analysing the text word by word, phrase by phrase and sentence by sentence. I wrote a code after every sentence and in between the sentences. The first set of codes was descriptive codes from the text, which included *in vivo* codes (terms used by the participants in the field) to preserve the voice of the participant (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When assigning a code to text I determined the contextual meaning of the transcribed words, phrases and sentences (see Appendix M). After coding I read through the coded transcript to identify the concepts that share common characteristics or meaning, and then I clustered the concepts into categories by highlighting sections of the transcripts in different colours (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). After colour coding the transcript I cut out the codes that were related and pasted them onto sheets of paper, then I identified the common characteristics and named the categories.

I further explored the properties<sup>7</sup> and dimensions<sup>8</sup> of each category. As Strauss and Corbin explain, properties and dimensions verify and refine the concepts within

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<sup>7</sup> Properties are characteristics of the category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> Dimensions are variations of the properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

categories, thus increasing knowledge of the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this study my supervisor assisted me in checking the clarity and consistency of the categories that I had identified by coding the data. I took note of the contradictions and inconsistencies and recorded my concerns as memos. Writing memos in the open coding process served as a reminder of the type of questions to ask in subsequent interviews based on the gaps identified in the emerging categories (Strauss, 1987). I also recorded the hunches, interpretations and ideas that emerged while analysing the data (see Appendix V reminder memo). In later memos, I clarified the categories and noted the differences between categories (Morse & Field, 1995). I later used the information recorded in these memos for writing up my report.

I made multiple visits to the two schools to collect data, to discover answers to questions that arose from the data analysis and to saturate the identified categories. Glaser and Strauss (1999:62) describe saturation, as “a stage in the data collection process when conducting further interviews does not produce new data”. In this study the emerging new categories were compared with the already existing categories, a process termed constant comparative analysis.<sup>9</sup>

In analysing the data I engaged in both deductive and inductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning was applied in analysing the emerging codes to determine subsequent data to be collected and the participants to be involved in the data collection; while inductive reasoning was applied during the constant comparison process that led to theory generation (Glaser, 1978). Full diversity and details of the experiences of the orphaned learners and the educators and patterns in the data were achieved through a process of constant comparative analysis. Patterns in the data emerged through constant comparison of similarities and differences in the data (Tesch, 1990; Merriam, 1998).

During the constant comparison analysis I refined the identified categories by replacing the initial descriptive codes with conceptual code names to make the categories abstract. I

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<sup>9</sup> Glaser and Strauss (1999) describe constant comparative analysis as a process whereby the researcher moves back and forth from data collection to data analysis, comparing similarities and differences in the new categories and the already identified categories in terms of their properties and dimensions

wrote theoretical memos that clarified the meaning of the new categories (Morse & Field, 1995; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I created three files for the categories:

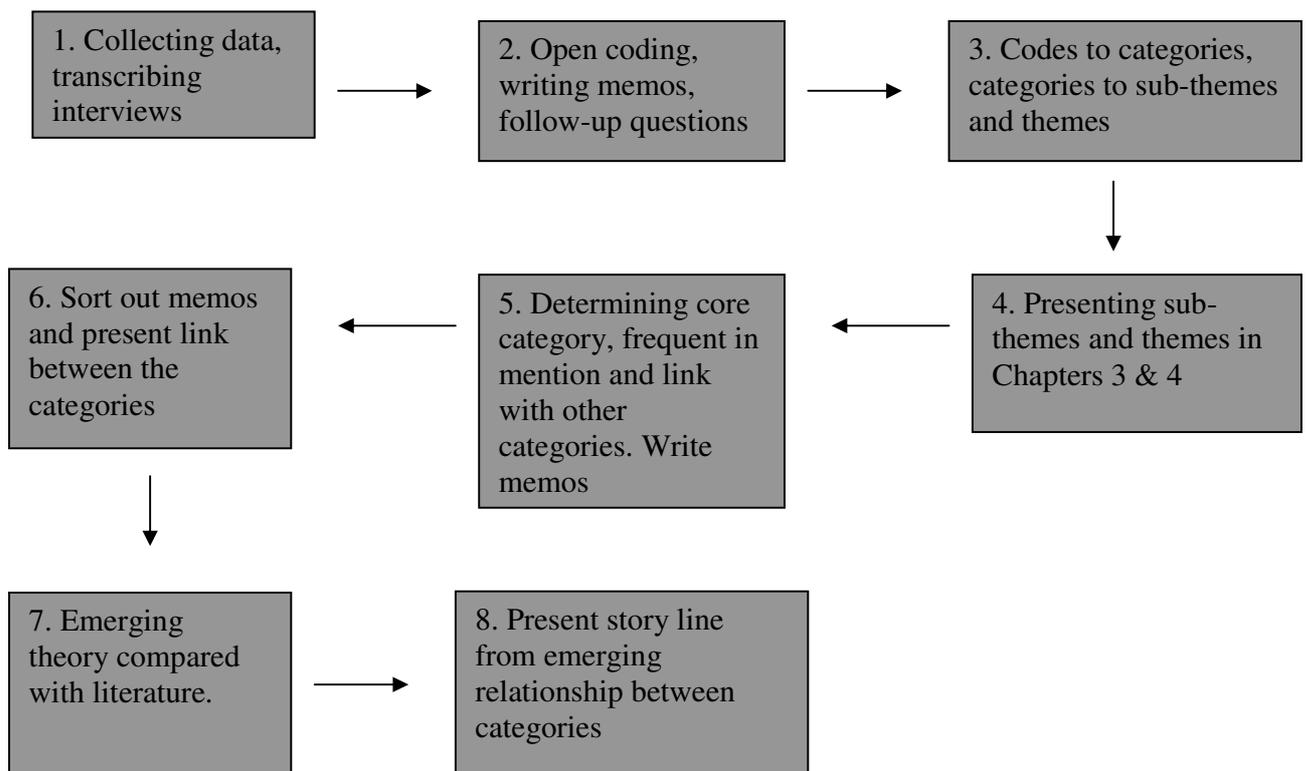
- The first file contained the categories that related to learners' needs.
- The second file consisted of categories on how educators identified the needs of orphaned learner.
- The third file was on how educators responded to the needs of the orphaned learners.

I continued to analyse the emerging categories, comparing them with the categories that had been defined to establish the relationship between and within the categories, to provide a complete explanation of what was occurring (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In analysing the categories I looked for what the educators said and did with regard to managing the needs of orphaned learners, based on the circumstances in which they are working. I compared the experiences of the educators with those of the orphaned learners and ranked the needs of the orphans according to how they appeared to the educators, taking note of the needs that were attended to and those that were not. I then examined the coded data again to check why the educators considered some needs more important than others. I also compared how different educators responded to similar needs and the action they take in attending to those needs. In cases where there were similarities in the way the educators identified and responded to the learners needs, I explored the properties and the dimensions of the categories (see Appendix Q). In other cases where the experiences were different, I conducted follow-up interviews to find out the circumstances that made the experiences different, factors that influenced the decision taken, the action implemented and the consequences of the action taken. I summarised the contents of the categories and established the main categories and presented my findings as categories, themes and sub-themes, as recorded in Chapters 3 and 4.

In the second phase of the analysis I read through the transcribed interviews again, noting the frequency with which the emerging categories were mentioned to determine the core category sub-themes identified and the category. Strauss describes the core category as

the category that other categories relate to and one that has the most variation in the pattern of behaviour. It is the category with most properties and dimensions and therefore takes a long time to saturate. After identifying the category with the highest frequency of mention, I read through the transcripts to find how the other emerging categories relate to the core category. I then wrote memos on the link between the categories and the core category and re-sorted the memos to establish a story line on how the educators respond to the needs of orphaned learners. I presented my analysis in the form of a narrative, by arranging the categories in the themes to produce a story line that led towards building a theoretical conclusion. I reviewed literature after the theory was generated to establish how my theory fitted into, or extended, the already existing theories.

**Figure 2.3: Summary of the process**



The advantage of grounded research theory is that the theory generated is relevant and applicable to the context of the phenomenon. However, the process of generating the

theory presents several challenges to the researcher. One of the challenges in grounded theory is analysing the data. Henwood and Pigeon (1992) point out that approaching research without a theory creates a problem in making sense of the collected data. In this study my approach to making sense of the data was to systematically code the text, which was done line by line to identify the emerging categories. I then compared similarities and differences within and between the categories to refine the identified categories and to establish the meaning of the data. Another challenge in generating grounded theory is that the process requires the researcher to collect extensive data in order to do constant comparative analysis. Collecting extensive data to saturate the categories is a time-consuming process. It is also not easy to determine when the categories are saturated (Creswell, 2002) and if the categories are not saturated there is a risk of producing theory that lacks conceptual depth. I did follow-up interviews till there was no new information in the data collected.

In addition to the challenges mentioned, there are researchers who have criticised the process of generating grounded theory, claiming that the presentation of codes and categories in the theory-building process fails to present the participants' holistic experience of the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In this study, I included excerpts from the interviews with orphaned learners, the learners' pictures and the educators' narrations. The excerpts provide rich narratives that could enable the readers to enter into the world of participant realities and share insights of their lived experiences. Another criticism is that grounded theory views the participant as an expert, who uses a set of objective procedures to analyse the data to generate theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The process of theory generation in this study was guided by constructivist epistemology. Working from a constructivist epistemological stance the process of generating theory was a joint effort between each participant and the researcher. The participants provided the data from which the theory would be generated. My role was to facilitate the process by asking questions that would elicit an explanation of life experiences from the participants. In the coding process I used *in vivo* codes (codes generated from actual wording used by the participants) and my own codes in the initial coding phase. The initial descriptive codes were further analysed and renamed as

conceptual codes that made up the categories used in theory building. I also checked the credibility of my analysis and interpretation with the participants. In this study, theory was generated through a joint interactive process of constructing and negotiating reality between the participants and me.

## **2.6 QUALITY OF THE STUDY**

The issue of credibility and trustworthiness was addressed by crystallising data from the interviews, drawings and my observations. I collected interview data from four educators and six learners from each of the two schools and checked the consistency of the data collected from the educators and the learners and the data collected among the learners and among the educators. I verified my interpretation of the learners' drawings by asking the learners to explain what was happening in them.

### **2.6.1 Credibility and trustworthiness**

Trochim (2001) describes credibility as a process of establishing whether the results of a research effort are believable or true from the perspective of the participants. One of the strategies of enhancing credibility is member checking.<sup>10</sup> Member checking can be done by giving the participant transcripts and drafts of findings to get their reaction, which could be their agreement or disagreement of how the researcher portrayed them (Seale, 2000; Patton, 2002). In this study, during the data analysis I gave the participants the interview transcripts and the emerging themes to verify my accuracy and interpretation. The participants in this study recognised the experiences that I had described and confirmed them as their own through the process of member checking<sup>11</sup> (Appendix S). The advantage of member checking is that participants are given the opportunity to verify whether the researcher has represented their perspectives and interpretation of meaning

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<sup>10</sup> Member checking is the process whereby the researcher involves the participants or key informers in the study to check for accuracy of research findings and data analysis in order to rule out the possibility of misinterpretation and to identify researcher bias (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Radnor, 2001; Maxwell, 2005).

<sup>11</sup>

correctly (Patton, 2002). The participants are able to reflect on their views and alert the researcher to withdraw the opinions that the researcher should not publish (Patton, 2002). The disadvantage of member checking is that it is time consuming although it does enhance the credibility of the study.

Peer review is also a way of contributing to the credibility of a study. Criticism from peers builds up credibility of the study especially when the possibility of researcher bias is detected (Seale, 2000). In this study, I kept a record of raw data, my theoretical notes and interpretation, which I gave to my supervisor to study in-depth so as to point out biases, flaws and other problems in the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I have also presented detailed description of how data was collected and an explanation of the procedures used in data analysis to give a vivid picture of what was going on (Radnor, 2001). I chose orphaned learners and their educators because they were people with first-hand information on the needs of the orphaned learners. I interviewed a total of twelve orphaned learners and eight educators from the two schools. The different learners and educators provided diverse perspectives of the phenomenon presented.

To limit the possibility of bias in my analysis and enhancing credibility, when analysing the data I identified categories that related to the main category and further explored the explanation of these categories. I also looked for alternative explanations to the emerging categories (Seale, 2000; Patton, 2002) by including questions in the follow-up interviews that could confirm or disconfirm the rival explanation of research findings. Follow-up interviews were also used to verify, affirm, elaborate and modify the information collected and observation field notes to corroborate and verify interview data from educators and learners. To ensure rigor in the analysis I explored the significance of the negative cases and explained why the categories do not relate to the core category (Patton, 2002). I also checked and reported the discrepancy evidence from the data collected and searched for alternative explanations. Failure to find evidence that supports the alternative explanation meant the core category identified best fitted the phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

The multiple data collection methods were used to reduce the errors of using one method (Patton, 2002). The precaution I took to reduce my bias in recoding data was to use audiotape to record the interview. The reactivity threat was limited by a prolonged period of data collection, in which I conducted multiple interviews to compare the perspectives of the learners and the educators and to saturate the emerging themes. During data analysis, I used *in vivo* codes to bring out the voice of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I verified the meaning of the code name with the participants in follow-up interviews and confirmed accuracy of my interpretation through the process of member checking.

Trustworthiness is the extent to which the findings of the researcher can be trusted (Patton, 2002). Keeping a record and having an audit trail of the research process are ways in which a researcher can enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings (Patton, 2002). In this study the appendices provides a trail of evidence of the research process and the decisions taken.

### **2.6.2 Transferability**

Trochim (2001) defines transferability as the degree to which the results of a research can be generalised or transferred to another context or setting. In qualitative research the transferability of findings is determined by the reader, based on the comparisons of the context of the study with that of their own knowledge (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004). Transferability of the findings of the study is made possible by the researcher providing a rich description of the context of the study (Seale, 2000). In this study I provided an in-depth description of the physical and social setting of the two schools and the community that these schools served through my observations and the background information about the schools provided by the educators. I also included excerpts of interviews, drawings and narrated stories from the participants. The purpose of providing detailed information on the context of the study is to enable the readers to decide whether the findings of the study relate to their own school situation. The study represented the theoretical perspectives of the learners and educators from two schools at a specific moment in time;

therefore the internal generalisability within the group was studied. In addition the findings of this study could provide insights that could lead to a better understanding of the experiences of the learners and the educators, with possible explanations of how and why the educators respond to the orphaned learners in certain ways.

### **2.6.3 Dependability**

Veale (2000) defines dependability as how one can determine whether the findings of a study can be repeated with the same participants under the same circumstances. To determine dependability one has to provide an audit trail in terms of providing documentation of data, methods, decision made during the research process and verbatim accounts of the participants' perspectives (Trochim, 2001). In this study verbatim interview transcripts and in vivo codes were used during the analysis (Appendix R). Verbatim accounts of the participants' responses limit selective effects of the perception and expose the raw data to the readers (Seale, 2000). To ensure the appropriateness of the inquiry process, I kept memos and reflective notes on the decisions I took and the rationale for the decisions at every stage of the research process. I kept a reflective journal (Appendix B) to record my reflections and assumptions on the general research process. Detailed records of how I chose my participants, the themes that I based my follow up interviews on (Appendix O), how I analysed the data, verified findings and drew my conclusions were included in the memos. My reflective journal and the memos provided an audit trail that my supervisor and other researchers could refer to when checking the dependability of the study. Reflective journals and memos were also useful to me in checking on my own bias.

### **2.6.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is the degree to which the results of the study could be confirmed or corroborated by participants (Seale, 2000; Trochim, 2001). To enhance confirmability, an audit trail that provides data collection and data analysis procedures enables the researcher to check and recheck the data throughout the study to identify potential bias,

distortion of research findings and alternative explanation (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Trochim, 2001). In this study I have provided details on the selection of the participants, data collection and analysis to enhance the confirmability of the findings.

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

In Chapter 2, I described the interpretivist/constructivist epistemology underpinning this research study. It was assumed for this study that the knowledge of the needs of orphaned learners and how educators experience and respond to the needs of the orphans could be established by exploring the lived experiences of the orphaned learners and their educators. Qualitative data collection and data analysis methods that enabled me to explore the multiple perspectives of the participants and co-construct knowledge about the phenomenon were discussed. A comprehensive description of grounded research theory analysis procedures was provided. Also highlighted were the strengths and weaknesses of grounded research theory and how I attended to the weaknesses identified and the strategies that I employed to ensure quality in the study.

In Chapter 3, I present the results of my interviews with the orphaned learners.

## CHAPTER 3

# WHAT ARE THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE NEEDS AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF ORPHANED LEARNERS?

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present and illustrate the results of data collected and the themes that emerged from interviewing the orphaned learner. I report the results of the interviews by telling the story of three of the twelve orphaned learners that I interviewed. I chose these stories as they represent the three different life worlds in which the orphaned learners in this study live. These stories are that of

- an orphaned learner who lives with her aunt and the uncle
- an orphaned learner who lives with her grandmother
- an orphaned learner who lives in a child-headed family

#### Story 1

*Nomsa is twelve years old. She is in Grade 6. Her mother died in 2000 and her father died in 2001. After the death of her parents, Nomsa moved to her grandmother's house. She said, "we were staying nice with my grandmother". They depend on the Child Support Grant<sup>12</sup> that the grandmother receives from the government. The grandmother died in 2002. Nomsa then went to live with her aunt and uncle. Although her aunt and uncle buy food and clothes and give her pocket money she is not receiving grants from the government. Nomsa says that "I am getting good education, and there are things that I do not understand in class but I am afraid to ask the educator". She likes school because she has friends with whom she plays during break time.*

*When she has a problem, she tells her aunt. Nomsa said "she does not feel comfortable sharing her problems with educators". She wants to be a social*

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<sup>12</sup> The Child Support Grant is monthly cash transfers of R180 aimed at supporting poor children younger than 14 years whose caregivers' total income do not exceed R1100 per month (Case, Hosegood & Lund, 2005). In the Budget Speech 2007 the Minister of Finance announced an increment in the Child Support Grant from R180 to R200 per month (*Pretoria News*).

*worker when she grows up so that she can help other orphans get grants and a good education (Appendix H).*

## Story 2

*Lerato is fourteen years old and in Grade 8. She and her brother and sister are living with their grandmother. Lerato's mother passed away in 2002. Lerato does not know her father because her father abandoned them when she was still young. Nobody has told her about her father or her father's relatives. Lerato's mother was a soldier. Lerato says that when her mother was still alive life was good. Her mother came home every weekend with a big plastic bag full of things. She gave them everything they needed and wanted.*

*When her mother died, Lerato went to live with her aunt and uncle while her other siblings stayed with their grandmother. One day one of her cousins broke the television set and accused her of doing it. Lerato's aunt told her uncle and she was beaten for breaking the television set. Lerato felt that she was being ill treated and decided to go and stay with her grandmother. A year after moving to live with her grandmother her three-year-old brother died after a long illness.*

*Lerato's grandmother is a domestic worker. Sometimes there is no money to buy food and Lerato goes to school without breakfast. On such days she relies on the bread that the school occasionally gives to orphaned learners. Lerato's family has an evening meal regularly. She does not get along with her peers and she feels that her classmates hate her for no reason. Lerato does not like people who scold her, like one of her classmates. She says that her sister and brother also hate her and they fight a lot at home. Despite the sibling fights, Lerato says that her grandmother loves and cares for her and she loves her grandmother in return.*

*Lerato's sister is in college. She hopes that when her sister gets a job their life could be better. Lerato wants to go to college in future and become a policewoman so that she can help people in her community. She believes that there is a lot of crime in the country and she can make a difference. She wants to be a social worker to help orphans because she feels that relatives mistreat children who do not have parents (Appendix H).*

### Story 3

*Mpumi is fourteen years old. She is in Grade 8. She is the youngest of three sisters. The eldest sister lives with a relative. The other sister is sixteen years old and she lives with Mpumi in their mother's house. The house is small. The floor of the house is not cemented; the roof leaks when it rains and it is always cold because the windows are broken. Mpumi's mother died when she was young. Her father had a shop. She says that although her father had an income he never helped them. Their mother provided for their needs. Two weeks after her mother's death a stranger came into their shop and killed Mpumi's father. Mpumi was devastated.*

*Life has changed a lot for Mpumi since the death of her parents. She misses her parents. There are times when there is no food at home. They rely on the food they get from friends, the soup kitchen and donations from the hospital. Mpumi's aunt occasionally gives them clothes donated for the poor. Mpumi is epileptic. She gets frequent epileptic attacks and often misses school after an attack. Mpumi gets her medication from a nearby clinic. She believes that the medication from the clinic makes her fat and is not as effective as the medication from the hospital. She feels that it is unfair that she is sick and sees herself as not being beautiful like her peers. She wants to go to the hospital to get better medication.*

*Mpumi's health condition makes her feel that her family does not like her. She says that other children do not want to play with her because she will infect them with epilepsy. According to Mpumi, her classmates do not want to sit next to her in class, share stationary or do group work with her. When she tells the educator how the other learners are responding towards her, the educator moves her to another desk. One time her educator wrote a letter for her to take to a nurse who had promised her sister that she could help them get admission in a special school for children with epilepsy. When the sister went to look for the nurse she could not find her.*

*Mpumi feels insecure at home. The sister she lives with dropped out of school and always comes home with boyfriends. Mpumi is upset with her sister because there is no privacy in their house. Her sister's boyfriends have raped her twice. She fears for her safety and is concerned that there is no adult to provide protection, guidance and support. Her eldest sister tried intervening and the two sisters ended up fighting.*

*In spite of their present living conditions, Mpumi is hopeful about the future. She wants to be a nurse to help other people. She believes that her mother died in the hospital because nobody helped her when she was admitted in the hospital. Mpumi narrated the following “They did not help her, she was sick for two weeks. When she died my big sister came here and told my father. My father took me there and I saw my mother in a box” (Appendix H).*

In the following section I present significant themes that arose from the data collected during the interviews with the orphans (Appendix U – for example of coding learner’s interview). Although I interviewed six learners from each school, the significant emerging themes are presented collectively. Four main themes and 15 sub-themes emerged from the data. Table 3.1 enlists the themes and sub-themes developed from the collected data.

Table 3.1: Emerging themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1 (3.2): A world in the absence of parents	Sub-theme 1 (3.2.1): Parental longing Sub-theme 2 (3.2.2): Grieving the loss of parents Sub-theme 3 (3.2.3): Being deprived of love and care
Theme 2 (3.3): Relationship with others	Sub-theme1 (3.3.1): Relationship with relatives Sub-theme 2 (3.3.2): Relationship with educators Sub-theme 3 (3.3.3): Relationship with siblings Sub-theme 4 (3.3.4): child headed families Sub-theme 5 (3.3.5): Relationship with peers Sub-theme 6(3.3.6): Relationship with other orphans
Theme 3 (3.4): Conceptions of identities as orphans	Sub-theme 1 (3.4.1) Self-image Sub-theme 2 (3.4.2) Wanting to be/career and future expectations
Theme 4 (3.5): Financial and material needs	Sub-theme 1 (3.5.1) Nutritional needs Sub-theme 2 (3.5.2) School requirements Sub-theme 3 (3.5.3) Housing needs Sub-theme 4 (3.5.4) Medical care

I include verbatim quotations and written text of the individual orphaned learners to illustrate and support the themes.

## 3.2 THEME 1: A WORLD IN THE ABSENCE OF PARENTS

This theme describes the experiences of orphans in relation to their emotional needs in the absence of their parent/s. The theme includes how the orphaned learners feel and cope with the emotional longing for their parents. The learners' experiences include longing for the parents who have passed away and the parents who have abandoned them and are no longer responsible for their well being.

### 3.2.1 Sub-theme : Parental longing

During the interviews, most of the orphaned learners expressed an **emotional longing** for the parents who have passed away. Some learners felt frustrated because they could not remember their parents, while others who could remember their parents expressed concern that the memory of their parents seemed to be fading and it made them feel sad. The responses of the learners were as follows:

*“I do not know my mother she died when I was young” (Thandi.1.18).*

*“I do not know my parents, my mother died when I was one month” (Lindiwe.1.19).*

*“My life is not good because some days I remember her; nowadays I do not remember her and it makes me cry “(Thato.1.11).*

In some cases the father of the orphaned learners abandoned them when they were infants. When the abandoned orphans talked about missing their mothers who had passed away they also expressed feelings **of longing regarding their absent fathers**. Four learners wanted to know where their fathers were, hoping that they could one day see them. One learner was anxious to know whether his father was alive or dead. The expression of longing for their fathers might also possibly suggest loss of identity and the

lack of a bonding relationship with the father and the father's family. The following quotations indicate the views of the learners:

*"I do not know my father, nobody is telling me. I do not know his face and I do not now his relatives" (Lerato.1.85).*

*"I feel pain when I think of my father, I do not know if he is alive or dead but sometimes I ask myself a question where is my father?" (Tshepo.1.33).*

**Parental bonding** seems to be an important factor missing in the lives of some of the orphaned learners interviewed. One of the learners who seems to be longing for her parent talked of growing up not knowing her parents. The meanings attached to the concept *know* could denote many things. *Know* could indicate having a photographic image of the parents, or a sense of shared experiences with the parents. A prominent experience that appeared to be common among the orphaned learners was **associating the longing for their parents with the needs** they were being deprived of, such as food, clothes and paying for school excursions, among others. Some of the orphaned learners believed that their parents could have provided for those needs if they have been alive or if they had not abandoned them. Some emotions associated with the absence of their parents were feelings of alienation, anger, frustration, helplessness and emotional pain. These emotions are evident in the following quotations:

*"Maybe my father is a rich man, I do not know. He has a lot of money and enjoying life with another family and I am struggling here. Maybe it could be better if I knew him" (Tshepo.1.42).*

*"... Really I do not miss him. He has never bought me anything not even a shirt" (Tebogo.1.23).*

*"... I felt good because my mother was still alive and everyday she bought me something" (Thato.1.4).*

*"When you stand up they think that you cannot afford anything because you do not have a mother and a father and they think that they are going to bring everything because they have a mother and a father" (Lindiwe.1.39).*

Another orphaned learner expressed her feelings of anger towards her parents through the following:

*“My mother died when I was one month and my father when I was eleven years. Before my father died he never supported me. Now I don’t care about my parents because my uncle, sister and brother support me” (Thandi).*

From the above quotes, it appeared that the orphaned learners need emotional filling of the gap created by the death of the parents. The learners were missing their parents and they responded in different ways to this loss. For example, one learner reflected on how the mother provided for their needs while two learners expressed the opinion that they did not care about their fathers who had passed away because they did not provide for their needs when they were alive.

The notion of the orphaned learners’ emotional longing for their parents is consistent with the Sengendo and Nambi (1997) study, which revealed that many orphans were angered by their parents’ death. In their study, orphans living with relatives were likely to be more angered than those living with grandparents. The orphans living with the surviving parent were least angered. The anger of the orphans was exacerbated when they were experiencing problems. In addition to the work done by Sengendo and Nambi (1997), SCOPE-OVC/Zambia (2003) reported that what bothered the children most were that they missed their deceased parents/guardians. Makame et al., (2000) and Thompson, Kaslow, Price, Williams and Kingree (1998) confirm that more orphans in their studies tended to have internalised problems. It seems that the orphans who were likely to internalise their problems were those who did not have caring adults to confide in and those who were deprived of material resources (Makame et al., 2000). In this study, the expression of anger could have been a way in which the orphaned learners expressed their problems and their frustration with the inability to fulfil some of their needs.

### 3.2.2 Sub-theme: Grieving the loss of parents

Some of the orphaned learners talked about the loving relationship they had had with their mothers and how they grieved when their mothers died. They could **remember** details about the day their parents passed away such as the date and year, the circumstances and how they cried when they were told about their parents' death. The learners expressed their emotional state as follows:

*“When my mother died I cried a lot, I loved my mother because she loved all her children” (Lerato.1.96).*

*“The day I will not forget is 11-04-2005 because this is the day my mother passed away. When I heard that my mother died I cried and asked myself a question why did God take my mother because my mother is the person close to me” (Tshepo.1.25).*

*“It was the day they were going to bury my grandmother, my grandfather told me that my mother passed away she passed away at midnight” (Thato.1.10).*

*“My mother passed away this year (2006) in February. She was very sick. I felt very bad and cried all the time” (Tshepo.1.5 & 6).*

*“Two weeks after my mother’s burial a stranger came and killed my father at the shop. That day I became sick. When I hear bad news my heart beat faster then I get epileptic attack” (Mpumi.2.17 & 19).*

One of the orphaned learners did not want to talk about her parents, giving the reason that the memories of her parents made her feel bad. This learner’s feelings suggest that she may still be grieving and possibly has not come to terms with the death of her parents. During the drawing and writing session she drew herself and her friend and wrote that she likes playing with her friend because she does not want to think about her parents (Appendix H). Playing could also be a means of fulfilling the need to belong and of escaping from the reality of a painful experience. Willis (2002) points out that playing is a means by which children get to communicate and express themselves; therefore caregivers should encourage grieving children to play. Another orphaned learner wrote the following account of his father’s death:

***My father passed away – This is what happened.***

*My father had two girlfriends, my mother and another woman. So the other woman was very jealous because my father loved my mother the most. My father was driving; his girlfriend sat on the front seat and two other men at the back. It was nice, they were talking then one of the guys sitting at the back started to say bad things about my father. When he tried looking back at him, he shot my father on the head. The other guy drove the car and that is how my father died. He had a wound on his head. (Lebo)*

The possibility of continued grief and trauma is evident in the responses of the orphaned learners. It is possible that they could be dealing with their loss alone, with limited or no help in the grieving process. Some of the learners emotionally narrated what happened and how they grieved when their parent(s) died, while other learners were likely to internalise their feelings and block painful memories by not talking about what happened. Veal, Trocaire, Ndibeshye and Nyirimihigo (2001) reveal that many orphans in their study experienced little support in dealing with grief and the loss of their parents. The SCOPE-OVC/Zambia (2002) study indicates that children dealt with their sadness by spending their time playing with friends. The two studies, among others, support the emerging themes from this study to suggest that **some of the orphaned learners may lack support during the grieving period** and may internalise their emotions.

**3.2.3 Sub-theme: Being deprived of love and care**

Although some of the orphaned learners lived with relatives, there were **limited narrations of loving relationships and emotional support from relatives**. Although some of the learners noted that relatives bought school uniforms and food, most of the orphans did not talk of experiences of affection and caring relationships. Lerato had the following to say as she compares the relationship she had with her mother with what she was experiencing with the relatives.

*They shout too much and I do not like people shouting. My mother when I did a wrong thing, she corrected me and not shouted at me. She did not say, “Why did you do this”. She calls me and tells me what to do. Then I say “ok mum” but my relatives shout at me too much (Lerato.1.80).*

The orphaned learner’s comparison of her experiences with her mother and the experiences with the relatives suggests the nature of attachment within a relationship (Bowlby, 1988) that the learner expects from a caregiver figure. The learner’s narration may also suggest the need for a more tolerant and supportive relationship.

### **3.3 THEME 2: RELATIONSHIP WITH *OTHERS***

In this theme, *others* are the people that orphaned learners associate with. The theme is about the lived experiences of the orphans’ social interaction. In the theme of relationship with others I present findings on how the orphaned learners relate to their relatives, educators, siblings, peers and other orphans. Some of the learners expressed the opinion that *other* people hated them and treated them unfairly. Foster, Makufa, Drew, Mashumba and Kambeu (1997) report that the majority of the orphans in their study stated that they were being treated differently from others. The orphans narrated how people in the community laughed at them and gave them nicknames. In the current study some of the orphans had similar experiences. For example, one learner voiced that she did not like to receive things from other people because of the accompanying stigma. Several orphaned learners perceived themselves as *me* against *others* and felt like outsiders. The following expressions articulated their feelings:

*“People hate me for nothing, when I ask them why do you hate me they do not answer” (Lerato.1.13).*

*“Sometimes they ask me – how do you feel? Many, many times they ask – how do you feel? After that they go to a corner and laugh” (Lindiwe.1.32).*

*“I do not like people giving me things, I want my sister to go to the shop and buy for me what I need because when their children see me wearing the clothes they say – my mother gave her my clothes” (Mpumi.2.9 & 10).*

Although these views of the orphaned learners suggest heightened sensitivity, the narrations of the orphans also allude to other people's **lack of sensitivity** in their behaviour towards orphans.

### 3.3.1 Sub-theme: Relationship with relatives

This sub-theme describes the experiences of the orphaned learners with the relatives who play the role of caregivers and those who provide assistance for the caregivers. Orphaned learners' experiences and opinions of their relationship with their relatives were **diverse, although mostly negative**. There were cases where the orphaned learner recounted being mistreated by relatives and not being given the support they needed. For one learner being ill treated by a relative was in the form of being denied time to play like other children and receiving endless chores. She felt that her grandmother did not understand her needs. Another learner's experience of ill treatment was being falsely accused of breaking a television set and subsequently being beaten for it. In yet another case a learner had to live with his sister because the grandmother drank alcohol and came home late, interfering with his homework. These learners expressed their opinions about their relatives as follows:

*"That one, she (stepmother) hates me and that is why I do not go there because I used to think that she can kill me" (Tebogo.1.28).*

*"She (grandmother) treats me like a dog" (Lesego.1.18).*

*"One day my cousin broke the television then my aunt said it was me then her husband beat me" (Lindiwe.1.42).*

*"My grandmother when she gives me money, my uncle says – you play with money" (Lindiwe.1.54).*

It is likely that some of the orphans were not receiving what they expected from their relatives.

Some of the experiences of the orphaned learners give the impression that orphans are concerned about fair treatment, and value quality time with their friends and education. The learners narrated:

*“They treat us like others. They help all of us like a teacher” (Lindiwe.1.47 & 1.48).*

*“Teachers are doing great. They teach us and respect us” (Tebogo1.1.34 & 1.1.35).*

*“These are my friends. I go with them to school. When I finish school I want to do BCom (Bachelor of Commerce)” (Tebogo.1.1 & 1.2).*

*“These are my teachers. I like my teachers because they teach me what I do not know (Lesogo.1.3).*

*“I like my school because it is where I get my education. My teachers are good, but there is my friend who is naughty when the teacher tells him something he does not listen. When the teacher writes something on the blackboard he just plays” (Thato.3.1.15 & 6).*

Not all learners experienced neglect and ill treatment from relatives. There were some narrations of experiences of **supportive relatives and friends**. There were instances where relatives and friends intervened and assisted orphans in providing for their needs. One learner reported how her sister’s friends interceded when they did not have food and clothes and gave them food parcels and clothes. The learners voiced the following experiences:

*“They asked her what was her problem. She told them the story then they went to the hospital and told the doctor who then gave my sister food parcel. My aunt she takes clothes of white people from the kitchens and give it to me ”(Mpumi.1.10 & 11).*

*“My aunt sometimes she gives me R250 to buy food and sometimes she buys for me clothes” (Lindiwe.1.4).*

*“When I have problems I tell my aunt” (Nomsa.1.10).*

*“I was given this uniform by my aunt and uncle” (Lesego.1.17).*

Previous studies (Foord, Jallow, Paine & Sarr, 2004; Horizon Project, 2005) also report **multiple realities of experiences** of the children in their studies with regard to support from **extended families**. Some of the orphans in the studies were helped by extended

families while others received no support or were ill treated by their extended family members. In my study, although most of the learners reported that some of their relatives provided for their material needs, there were a few incidences of relatives supporting the learners emotionally. One learner wrote the following:

#### **About my home**

*I am proud of my grandmother because she tries to do everything for me but she cannot afford to buy me things. I wish that my grandmother could have many things. I love her and she loves me. We are staying in a small room, and I am fine with that. I will buy a big thing for my grandmother. I treat her like my mother. Sometimes I think that she is my mother. I do not care what people say about me. I will finish school and thank my grandmother. I wish God would bless my family. (Lindiwe)*

This description of the loving and caring relationship the orphaned learner experienced with her grandmother suggests that fulfilment of her emotional needs was paramount, compared to her deprived material needs. The quotations from other orphaned learners appear to suggest that some orphaned learners may react positively towards relatives who provide for their material needs and appreciated those who love and care for them. Generally, as mentioned earlier, there was a notable lack of evidence of relatives supporting the emotional needs of the orphaned learners. Foster (1995), in an earlier study, reports that there were complaints of orphans being ill treated by relatives and the examples given were exploitation or being beaten. The orphans reported that they were neglected, had health problems, lacked food and school fees (Foster, 1995). According to Foster (1995) one of the reasons likely to be the cause of discrimination could be economic deprivation forcing the caregiver to provide for their own biological children first before providing for orphans.

#### **3.3.2 Sub-theme: Relationship with educators**

The orphaned learners interviewed generally experienced a **positive relationship with their educators**. Their comments suggested that the relationship they had with their educators was not discriminative but supportive and respectful. The learners talked about

how their educators treated them like other learners and respected them. The quotations below present how the learners viewed their educators:

*“They treat us like others and help us as a educator” (Lindiwe.1.48).*

*“They are doing great, they teach and respect us” (Tebogo.1.34).*

*“Educators are ok”(Lerato.1.62).*

*“My educators are alright” (Karabo.1.10).*

*“These are my educators. I like my educators because they teach me what I do not know” (Lesego.1.3.).*

Pomeroy (1999), in her study on excluded students’ perception of their school experiences, also reported on the different experiences of the relationship between students and educators. Some of the students in the study described their relationship as positive while others were neutral or even antagonistic (Pomeroy, 1999). In this study it seems that the orphaned learners expected their educators to treat them like other learners. The expectation and the desire to be treated like others might possibly mean that the orphaned learners do not want to be discriminated against and stigmatised; but at the same time the comments suggest that the learners might feel reluctant to take handouts from educators.

### **3.3.3 Sub-theme: Relationship with siblings**

Some of the orphaned learners interviewed experienced a harmonious, loving and **caring relationship with their siblings**. They talked about supporting or planning to provide for their younger brothers and sisters. The kind of support that the orphaned learners talked about was paying tuition fees for younger siblings and providing food and clothing. The siblings supported each other in doing household chores, doing homework, socialising and sharing food.

*“We stay nice, we do not bother each other. We stay like brothers I respect him and he respect me. We do not fight with my sister like others. We help each other” (Tshepo.1.44).*

*“If I get money I want to help my younger brother to complete his studies” (Tebogo.1.5).*

*“I like my brother because he gives me everything” (Lesego.1.1).*

Other learners had different experiences. The learners recounted the **hostile relationships** they were experiencing with their siblings. The learners said:

*“My brother is always shouting at me and my sister hits me too much (Lindiwe.1.25). She does not love me” (Lindiwe.1.72).*

*“My brother beats me up and my sister she is very selfish, she does not want to give me anything when I ask her” (Lebo.1.13).*

From the different experiences, one cannot generalise how the orphaned learners related to other people. Every situation was different and the possibility exists that contextual factors could influence their relationships. Hostile relationships between siblings could be a result of lashing out in frustration borne out of lack of other channels to deal with emotions or possibly a lack of adult supervision and guidance.

### **3.3.4 Sub-theme: Child-headed families.**

There were two orphaned learners who were living on their own, the eldest sibling assuming the role of the parent. The narratives in these families differed. The first child-headed family consisted of two brothers and one sister. The narrations of the orphaned learner suggested that the siblings got along well, doing chores together and supporting each other emotionally. The main problem was that there were days when they did not have food to eat. In the second child-headed family, two sisters lived by themselves. One of the orphaned learners from a child-headed family mentioned that they lacked medical care, food provision, adult supervision and care. She was traumatised by the fact that her sister was having sexual relationship with boys with nobody to intervene. She felt that her

privacy was violated and she did not have an adult mentor to talk to about the problem. She felt alone and vulnerable and described the situation as follows:

*“I do not like boys. My sister do snack things with boys. They come and kiss in this room. They do not go to the bathroom or say – “Mpumi go out”. There is nobody who can help me. When my older sister tried to tell her not to do it they fought” (Mpumi.2.23, 24 & 25).*

It is clear from the above situation that the two sisters could be in need of adult supervision and monitoring. The fact that they are fending for themselves in the absence of the care and supervision of an adult is likely to expose them to risky sexual behaviour. Adato et al., (2005) report similar findings in their study. Informants interviewed narrated that some of the older orphans in child-headed households bring boyfriends to their homes due to the absence of parental figures providing guidance and supervision. It seems from this study that the orphaned learners were more at ease when they had a loving and caring relationship with their siblings than when the siblings were always fighting. The learners who often quarrelled and fought with their siblings appeared to be anxious and emotionally stressed. The shouting and fighting may be an emotional outlet or a way of coping with unfulfilled emotional needs.

### **3.3.5 Sub-theme: Relationship with peers**

The orphaned learners had **contrasting experiences** regarding their relationship with their peers. Half of the orphaned learners interviewed had a **positive and supportive relationship** with their peers and described their relationship with their peers as loving and caring. They narrated how they shared food with their peers and acknowledged being accepted by their peers. The learners expressed their positive experiences as follows:

*“Here at school I have three friends, we walk with them to school and they visit me at home” (Tshepo.1.57).*

*“My friends, when they come back from the trips they tell me about the trip and I wish that I went with them” (Tebogo.1.40).*

*“I have good friends, they come with break and they call me to come and eat with them” (Karabo.1.8).*

*“I have good friends, we play together” (Nomsa.1.9).*

*“I have good friends, they do not tell me – you, your mother passed back off. They help me with my homework” (Lesego.1.6).*

*“They do not treat me like I do not have a father and a mother” (Tshepo.1.54).*

The other half experienced being rejected and discriminated against by their peers. The explanation as to why this happened varied. There were learners who believed they were being singled out because they did not have money and could not afford to pay for school trips or buy snacks during break time. Others explained that they were being rejected because they were stigmatised as orphans. One learner talked about her friend being rejected by her peers because she was HIV positive; yet another orphaned learner narrated that her peers were rejecting her because she is epileptic. In other cases the orphans narrated that their peers responded to them in a hostile and verbally intimidating way. Although the orphaned learners gave different reasons for their peers rejecting and discriminating against them, they all felt socially isolated from others. The following quotations indicate the views of the learners:

*“... When you stand up when you are an orphan, they have a topic about you. They arrow you. My friend is HIV. She is not happy because other people they laugh at her. When she comes, they run away” (Lindiwe.1.17 & 36).*

*“Where I lived, my friends told me – do not be my friend again because your mother passed away” (Lesego.1.7).*

*“Children at home and in school say that, I am going to infect them with epilepsy. When we are working in a group, they do not want me to touch their things and they do not want to touch me. If I touch their things they want to fight me” (Mpumi.2.4, 5 & 6).*

The themes that emerged from the relationship between orphaned learners and their peers give the impression that the orphaned learners were concerned about their need for acceptance, support, sharing and socialising. Foord et al. (2004) reports that sometimes peers mock and laugh at orphans them because they do not have nice dresses to wear on

festive days. In the current study the orphaned learners experiencing rejection by their peers felt stigmatised and discriminated against by people with whom they longed to associate. Veal et al. (2001) report that orphans identified school as a place where they could make friends, socialise and play with other children. On the whole, it seems that half of the orphans in the current study had negative experiences of school, whereas the others had positive peer experiences at school.

### **3.3.6 Sub-theme: Orphaned learners' relationship with other orphans**

Some of the orphaned learners interviewed were able to identify other orphans and socialise with them. Haggard (2005) points out that bereaved children tend to find support from being in the company of other children who have experienced loss. The learners shared feelings of sympathy and empathy with other orphans and they were **willing to help and care for them**. It is likely that some of the orphaned learners were aware of how other orphans are being ostracised, stigmatised and discriminated against by their peers. The following extracts express the feelings of orphaned learners towards other orphans:

*“There are some children whose parents died of HIV, I wish that I could know others so that I help them” (Lindiwe.1.27).*

*“It is not good not to have parents because those who do not have parents, when they go to their relatives, their cousins says – ish”(Lerato.1.75).*

*“I want to be a social worker so that I can help other orphans have grants and good education” (Nomsa.1.2).*

*“I play with other orphans” (Lesego.1.21).*

## **3.4 THEME 3: CONCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY AS ORPHANS**

This theme illustrates how the orphaned learners see themselves. The theme also describes some of their hopes and aspirations in terms of what they want to become in future. During the *draw and write* sessions some of the learners revealed what they liked

doing, such as playing with friends and associating with other orphans. The orphaned learners mentioned things they disliked; for instance, being deprived of money to buy snacks during break time, being mistreated by relatives and talking about their parents. The orphaned learners described their characters and talked about their future careers and ambitions. The careers included being a social worker, a nurse, a doctor, a policewoman, a soldier and a pilot.

### 3.4.1 Sub-theme: Self-image

The sub-theme self-image describes how the orphaned learners see and feel about themselves. The majority of the orphaned learners in this study had a positive self-image. It is evident from the following excerpt that some of the learners seemed to have accepted their *orphaned* situation and talked about moving on with life.

*“If I stress myself that my mother passed away, I will not be able to move on. I just want to forget about it because life goes on” (Tshepo.1.29).*

One of the learners talked on behalf of her friend who was HIV positive and expressed her opinion about people who stigmatise and discriminate against this friend. Another learner expressed that she felt beautiful despite what others say or how they treated her. The learners said the following about themselves:

*“I am a person who cares about people with HIV” (Lindiwe.1.11).*

*“This is I. I like myself. I do not say, why did God made me like this” (Lesego.1.5).*

In a *draw and write* session one of the orphaned learners described herself as follows:

*I am a person who likes other people. I do not like people who hate me for nothing. I am always happy and not selfish. I do not tell people that they are careless. I wish to finish school and help my grandmother because if it were not for my grandmother where would I be now? I loved my parents so much when they died I cried a lot (Lerato).*

One orphaned learner saw herself as being different from others and wanted to be like them. The learner is epileptic and has frequent epileptic incidents. The learner narrated that her peers reject her because of her health condition. She feels that it is not fair that she is sick and perceives herself as not being beautiful. It seems that she sees herself the way other people see and treat her. The following quote reflects the perception of this learner:

*“I see the other learners they are beautiful. I do not like myself. I do not want to be sick everyday. I have epilepsy and it is not right for me. I want to be beautiful” (Mpumi.1.16 & 29).*

#### **3.4.2 Sub-theme: Wanting to be/career aspirations and future expectations**

Most of the orphans I interviewed in School A had a career in mind or knew what they wanted to become in future. The careers that the learners talked about were those that involved helping other people, such as a social worker, a bank manager, a policewoman, a nurse and a pilot. The reason for choosing the careers was likely to be twofold. The orphaned learners seemed to aspire to help other people, orphans in particular. The other possible reason for the careers the orphans chose was to fulfil the needs that were not currently being fulfilled. For example, one learner wanted to be a pilot so that she could go to different places because she could not afford to pay for school excursions and longed to go to the places her peers visited. Another learner explained that she wanted to be a bank manager, so that she could have money to build a big house for her granny because they were living in a small house. Mpumi wanted to be a nurse because she believed that her mother died as a result of negligence when she was admitted to hospital. Mpumi’s other reason for interest in a nursing career is that she is epileptic and needs proper medical attention, which she believes that she is not getting from the clinic. Yet another orphaned learner wanted to be a soldier, to fight for people in vulnerable situations. This career choice seemed motivated by the violent death of his father.

*“I want to be a social worker so that I can help other orphans have grants and good education” (Nomsa.1.2).*

*“In my dreams, I want to be a social worker to help those who are affected”  
(Lerato.1.66).*

*“When I finish school, I want to be a nurse to help sick people” (Mpumi.1.2).  
“In my dream I want to be a doctor. The reason why I want to be a doctor is to help  
people who are suffering from different illness” (Tshepo.1.19.).*

*“I want to be a pilot so that I can go to many places because now when the school has a  
trip I do not have money” (Lindiwe.1.21).*

*“I want to be a bank manager” (Thandi.1.8).*

*“I want to be a soldier, to help people like if there are some people troubling others. I  
fight with them” (Lebo.1.11 & 12).*

In their research, Sengendo and Nambi (1997) found that non-orphans were more optimistic about the future when compared to orphans. A similar finding was reported in the study of orphans and vulnerable children in a psychological survey cited in the SCOPE-OVC/Zambia (2003), where the authors found that half of their respondents did not feel hopeful about the future. A similar finding was reported in a study done by Walker (2002) on child-headed households. Children living by themselves were less optimistic about their future than those living with parents or guardians.

Regarding the future of the orphans, Foord and others (2004) found that education featured strongly when the orphans talked about the future. Some orphans were optimistic about the future; they talked about improving their present life by completing their education and getting jobs. Others were pessimistic because they were uncertain of completing their schooling. Although this study does not include the views of the non-orphans, the orphaned learners interviewed appeared to be very positive about their future: they dream of being in professions where they can help other people, particularly other orphans.

### **3.5 THEME 4: FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL NEEDS**

The orphaned learners experienced the need for financial support in different ways. The prominent themes that emerged from the interviews were the need to provide for their

physical needs, such as nutrition, clothing, school requirements, housing and medical care. One learner wrote the following paragraph as *bad things* in her life:

***My Bad Things***

*One day I come back home and there is nothing to eat. Another day I do not have shoes to go to school. At school, if you do not have shoes they tell you to go back home. At home they tell me there is no money to buy shoes. I do not like to tell people about my parents because if I talk about my parents I feel bad and I want to cry. I want a beautiful house and good food to eat every morning and at night because I do not eat anything in the morning before going to school. When I finish school, I want to go to Technical College. After college I want to be somebody and buy furniture and give my uncle money and say thank you for everything you did for me. (Thandi)*

The above paragraph indicates the orphaned learner's various financial needs. She calls these needs *bad things* because they are the things she needs yet is deprived of due to lack of money. On the other hand, she appreciates the assistance that she is getting from her relatives and hopes to give them a token of her appreciation in future.

**3.5.1 Sub-theme: Nutritional needs**

In this sub-theme I identified three different kinds of experience regarding the nutritional needs of the orphaned learners. The first group of orphans talked about having no food to eat at home and no support from relatives. These learners came to school without breakfast, missed lunch and sometimes the evening meal as well. Three learners shared the experience of feeling frustrated, helpless and left out during break time because they do not have money to buy snacks or bring food from home to eat during break time. One learner reported that his friends do share what they have for break time with him while another learner said that her uncle gives her money for break.

The second group of orphans are those living with relatives who struggled to provide for their food and occasionally received support from other relatives in terms of financial assistance. The third group of orphans relied on the Government Feeding Scheme<sup>13</sup> and

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<sup>13</sup> The Primary School Feeding Scheme was introduced in 1994. The aim of the feeding programme was to contribute to the improvement of educational quality by enhancing learning capacity, school

food parcels from other organisations. One learner described how a group of friends talked with her sister then arranged to get them food parcels from a soup kitchen programme. The assistance the learners received varied according to the school. In School A the orphaned learners were given bread on Mondays and Wednesdays. The bread is a donation from a feeding scheme sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church. In School B the learners were given lunch as part of the Government Feeding Scheme, which provides the school with food throughout the year. Some of the orphaned learners expressed their experiences as follows:

*“I am suffering because sometimes there is no food at home. When we come to school we do not have anything to eat. When it is lunchtime your heart grows bigger you say – what am I going to eat at home. When there is no food I pack my prep book, drink water, relax for fifteen minutes then go back to school. Sometimes my friends here in school have money like R1-00 during break. I just go to the toilet, come back sit in the class and watch them eating” (Tshepo.1.11, 49 &50).*

*“In school they sometime give bread to the people who do not have food” (Lerato.1.92).  
“There are some people who come and give us food like a packet of beans and a packet of flour” (Mpumi.1.17).*

*“I have good friends, they come with break and they call me to come and eat with them” (Karabo.1.8).*

*“My uncle and my aunt buy me clothes and give me money for break” (Nomsa.1.8).*

Some of the learners appeared to be more deprived in terms of their nutritional requirements than others. In School A the learners were given bread occasionally; some of them talked about being without food the whole day. In School B, on the other hand, the learners missed breakfast and, sometimes, evening meals, but they did eat lunch at school. This result is in agreement with the study of Giese et al. (2003) that reported children staying away from school because of hunger. Makame et al. (2002) and Foord et al. (2004), in their comparative studies of orphans and non-orphans, reveal that more orphans than non-orphans lack food at home. Similarly, more orphans mentioned being

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attendance and punctuality among primary school learners and to contribute to general health development by alleviating short-term hunger (RDP White Paper, 1994).

hungry at school (Foster, 1997; Chatterji, Dougherty, Ventimiglia, Mulenga, Mukaneza, Murray et al., 2005).

### **3.5.2 Sub-theme: School requirements**

Some of the orphaned learners receive a child support grant and use part of it to pay for school fees. The child support grant was introduced into South Africa in 1998 following recommendations of the Lund Committee for Child and Family Support (Case, Hosegood & Lund, 2003). The grant is a monthly amount paid to the mother, father or primary caregiver of children between the ages 7 and 14 in poor households (Department of Social Development, 2003). The child support grant for 2007 is R200 per month (Department of Social Development). The caregivers who qualify should be individuals earning not more than R1100 per month in rural areas and caregivers in urban areas living in a flat or house earning less than R800 a month. The purpose of the grant is to assist children living in poverty (Hall & Monson, 2006).

Other learners reported that relatives pay their school fees and buy their uniforms. There were other financial requirements that were not covered by money received from grants or relatives. Two learners reported feeling left out and discriminated against because they were unable to pay for school field trips. The participating learners voiced their opinion about their deprived needs as follows:

*“Maybe, lets say, you are to go to Joburg with the school and they pay before and they talk about you (mimicking) – you don’t pay, you don’t pay. They say umm shame where will she get the money” (Lindiwe.1.40 & 42).*

*“I do not go for trips, I just stay at home” (Tebogo.1.38).*

*“When my friends come back from the trip, they tell me about the trip and I wish I went with them” (Tebogo.1.40).*

### **3.5.3 Sub-theme: Housing needs**

Some learners expressed their opinion about where they lived. The issues mentioned were that their houses were small, temporary structures far away from school. One of the orphaned learners regarded her home as not being beautiful and longed to build a bigger house in the future. Some of the orphaned learners had to wake up early in the morning and walk long distances to school. One learner who was living with her uncle and aunt talked positively about her home and appreciated it. She described her home as follows:

*“I like my home because it is clean. I like my home because if I did not have my home where would I stay” (Lesego.1.4).*

### **3.5.4 Sub-theme: Medical care**

One of the learners is epileptic and experiences frequent epileptic incidents. She receives medication from a clinic through the assistance of her sister’s friend. The learner wants to go to the hospital because she believes that she can get better medicine from the hospital. In her own words she explained:

*“This medicine I do not want to drink it because it makes me fat and does not help me. It stops and come back again. Now I want to go to the hospital but I do not have money to go to the hospital” (Mpumi.1. 20 & 22).*

Another learner said that she often has flu and stomach problems. Her mother used to take her to the hospital but since her mother passed away there is no one to take her there. She believes that she is always sick because she does not have enough clothes to wear to keep her warm.

This theme covers the material and financial well being of the orphaned learners. From the interviews it seems that the level of material and financial deprivation varies. Some of the orphaned learners seem to be more deprived than others. On the whole orphans seem

to be receiving some sort of material assistance yet seem in need of emotional and social support.

### **3.6 SUMMARY**

In Chapter 3 I presented the empirical data from the interviews I had with the orphaned learners. The diverse findings of the experiences of the orphaned learners demonstrate the multiple realities of orphanhood and its consequences. The learners revealed emotional longing for their parents' absence, as well as coping strategies. It was also evident that some of the orphans were still grieving and traumatised by the death of their parents, yet it appears that emotional support for such orphans is lacking. Some of the orphans narrated positive experiences with their relatives and peers while others experienced discrimination and stigma. Relationships with educators were generally positive. The learners expected the educators to treat them like other learners and with respect.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the themes that emerged from the findings of the interviews conducted with the educators from both the schools that participated in this research study.

## CHAPTER 4

# HOW EDUCATORS IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF ORPHANED LEARNERS: EMERGING THEMES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present and illustrate the themes that emerged from interviewing four educators from School A and four educators from School B. The purpose of interviewing the educators was to explore how they identify and respond to the orphaned learners' needs. The same iterative process of data collection and analysis described in the second chapter was used. In the initial open coding of the data collected in the interviews with the educators, I identified 144 codes (see Appendix T). I then compared and contrasted the codes, and finally grouped the codes sharing common characteristics into categories. A total of 15 categories were identified. Two main themes and five sub-themes emerged from integrating and summarising the categories. Table 4.1 is a list of themes, sub-themes and condensed categories developed from the data collected in these interviews. Verbatim interview excerpts supporting the themes, sub-themes and categories are presented in the grey boxes.

**Table 4.1: Emerging themes, sub-themes and categories**

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	CATEGORIES
<p><b>Theme 1:</b> Identifying orphaned learners and their needs</p>	<p><b>Sub-theme 1.1:</b> Educators' perception of orphaned learners</p> <p><b>Sub-theme 1.2:</b> Identifying the orphaned learners and their needs</p>	<p><b>Category 1.1.1:</b> Orphaned learners' appearance and behaviour</p> <p><b>Category 1.1.2:</b> Orphans and non-orphans</p> <p><b>Category 1.2.1:</b> Behaviour of the orphaned learner</p> <p><b>Category 1.2.2:</b> Appearance and financial status of the orphans</p> <p><b>Category 1.2.3:</b> Educator-orphaned learner relationship</p> <p><b>Category 1.2.4:</b> Routine administrative work</p>
<p><b>Theme 2:</b> Responding to the needs of orphaned learners</p>	<p><b>Sub-theme 2.1:</b> Educators' perception of their roles</p> <p><b>Sub-theme 2.2:</b> Fulfilling the needs of orphaned learners.</p> <p><b>Sub-theme 2.3:</b> External response to assisting orphaned learners</p>	<p><b>Category 2.1.1:</b> Responsibilities of providing care to the orphaned learners</p> <p><b>Category 2.1.2:</b> Educator-educator relationship</p> <p><b>Category 2.1.3:</b> Motivation to help orphaned learners</p> <p><b>Category 2.2.1:</b> Addressing physical needs</p> <p><b>Category 2.2.2:</b> Addressing emotional and social needs, and learning support.</p> <p><b>Category 2.2.3:</b> Management involvement in responding to the needs of orphans</p> <p><b>Category 2.3.1:</b> Community response to the needs of orphans</p> <p><b>Category 2.3.2:</b> Government response to the needs of orphans</p>

## 4.2 THEMES

### **Theme 1: Identifying orphaned learners and their needs**

*This theme reports on how educators in School A and School B perceive and identify orphaned learners. The theme also demonstrates how educators ascertain the needs of the orphaned learners in their schools. The characteristics and behaviour of the learners that draw the attention of the educators are reported.*

#### **Sub-theme 1.1: Educators' perception of orphaned learners**

During the interviews with the educators it became apparent that the common conception of an orphan was drawn from the appearance of the learner, how the learner behaved in class and the learner's interaction with other learners. Educator assumptions of the orphaned learners were linked to how the educators recognised the orphans and identified their needs.

##### **Category 1.1.1: Orphan appearance and behaviour**

This category includes different versions of reality of how educators construct orphanhood and how the educators identify orphaned learners. Most of the educators interviewed construe orphaned learners as learners who are deprived of basic needs such as food and clothes. In addition to the material needs mentioned, some educators depict orphans as learners who struggle academically and who are often unhappy. Three educators articulated the following:

*We have a lot of problems with the orphaned learners. These learners – sometimes there are things that they need but they do not get like enough food, sometimes you see them by their clothes, their uniform is not right (Malope 8 & 9).*

*The orphaned learners are withdrawn. Especially during winter if you look at them you see that they are wearing only a few clothes that cannot keep them warm (Mabena 5-6).*

*The appearance, you can see that the child is not happy, he is not performing well in class, does not have enough learning materials (Mokoena 6-8).*

While it appeared common for most of the educators in both schools to associate orphanhood with poverty, two educators, namely Mabena and Khumalo, were concerned that the perception of orphans as being destitute could be flawed. The two educators explained that some orphans have relatives who take care of their physical needs such that they do not appear destitute. The two educators reported that there are some non-orphaned learners from poor families who are deprived of material needs or neglected by their parents such that they appear impecunious. The concern was that there is a possibility that poor non-orphaned learners could be mistaken for being orphans. The educators expressed the following views:

*Most of them you cannot identify them even if they come here you cannot identify them. They are very shy. Some do better at home – maybe they have relatives who support them. They come to school in school uniform, only a few are struggling. We have some learners who have parents but they are neglected, if you look at them you think that they are orphans (Mabena 7-10).*

*Some of them you can identify by looking – others you cannot. You will not notice that they do not have parents (Khumalo 26).*

The perceptions of the educators above imply that not all orphans appear destitute. Therefore, the image of orphans as being children deprived of material needs that reflect on their appearance could be deluding.

### **Category 1.1.2: Orphans and non-orphans**

This category describes the opinion of the educators with regard to the orphaned learners in relation to non-orphans. Some of the educators interviewed remarked that orphans are learners who other learners often tease, isolate and stigmatise. Educator Khumalo gave an account of orphans as **being isolated** by other learners, while Educator Chabalala reported observing orphans isolating themselves from the other learners and forming a group of their own. According to Educator Mabena the orphaned learners appear reluctant to reveal themselves, possibly for fear of being labelled by other learners.

*Other non-orphans will make them feel that they are orphans. They isolate them. They say, “I do not want to go with this one”. I have been observing them. You will not become their friend until you group yourself with other orphans (Khumalo 84 & 85).*

*We have those who go home together they feel like they are birds of the same feather they will stick together. They feel like this is the person who is like me. On the day when they do not get food, they know that if we stick together they will all not have food, unlike, those who are with the others they become burdens to them (Chabalala 51).*

*Sometimes the granny do not know what to do. They go and buy no name shoes. When they come to school wearing the shoes the other learners tease them (Mtalala 101).*

*There are programmes sent by the government telling us to go to class to look for orphans. So we go to class and say “Can we have orphaned learners come to see me after this period”. Some will be shy and not come. So I ask: “Where is this one? I know he is an orphan.” The others will say: “Mam, she did not stand, and we do not know what the problem is.” I think that they are shy or the class is laughing at them (Mabena 30 & 31).*

Other educators had different views on the relationships between the orphans and other learners. Educator Mtalala described orphaned learners as shy and clumsy learners, who do not interact with other learners. She confirmed that other learners tease orphans. According to Educator Khumalo, orphans and non-orphans **do not interact socially**. In contrast, Educators Mabena, Malope and Chabalala indicated that orphans do get along with other learners. Educator Malope expressed that the orphaned learners do socialise with other learners through play and tell each other their problems. These educators stated:

*So far we have not had anything reported that the orphans are segregated. They mix with them. They are not isolated. We have not received any report unless they are shy to report ( Mabena 36 & 37).*

*They are friends sometimes you find them playing together one will tell the other: “I am not happy at home” (Malope 21).*

*In our school we have not have a case where the other learners pick on them. I think that they feel that these people are different from us. Maybe these ones have and we do not have (Chabalala 53 & 54).*

The difference in opinion regarding the relationship between the orphans and their peers also emerged during the interviews with the orphans. Six learners reported that they got along well with their peers, sharing food and playing together. They described their relationship as positive and supportive. Conversely, six other learners narrated their experiences of being rejected and stigmatised by non-orphaned learners.

In addition to relationship with peers, Educators Chabalala and Mokoena see orphans as typically poor learners in school. In their quantitative study, Schierhout, Kinghorn, Govender, Mungani and Morely (2004) report similar findings where 80.6 percent of the educators who participated in the study were of the opinion that orphanhood affects school performance. In this study there were educators who believed that all the learners in their school were generally underachievers and not necessarily only the orphans. The educators voiced the following views:

*From 36 orphans there is only one in Grade 6 who excels academically. His background is terrible. I got it from the class educator. The others do not do well. It affects them (Chabalala 57-58).*

*...The appearance, you can see that the child is not happy; he is not performing well in class. Does not have enough learning materials (Mokoena 6-8).*

*...they are not identified as underachieving because our learners are underachieving generally. We have a problem with all of them and not only the orphaned learners. So they are just like other learners (Mabena 44 & 45).*

It seems that some educators believe that orphanhood has a negative effect on the academic performance of the learners owing to the orphaned learners' emotional state and a lack of material resources that support learning, while other educators did not connect learner underachievement with orphanhood.

### ***Sub-theme 1.2: Identifying orphaned learners and their needs***

This sub-theme illustrates how the educators identify orphaned learners and the needs of the orphans. The strategies for identifying the orphans and recognising their needs are closely linked and overlap. Most educators in the two schools identify the orphans and

their needs by their appearance and by their behaviour when they open up to the educators or when recording background information for administrative purposes.

### **Category 1.2.1: Behaviour of the orphaned learners**

The majority of the educators interviewed from both schools indicated that they identify orphans and their needs by analysing the learner's behaviour. Educator Mtalala explained that orphaned learners are learners who often **react violently** towards fellow learners and educators; while Educator Chabalala described these learners' behaviour as often being disruptive in class and that they dodged coming to school after the lunch break. Educator Malope on the other hand explained the **absenteeism** of some of the learners as being caused by hunger and lack of concentration in class. The following are some of their responses:

*Some become violent. Maybe you find that the friends are teasing them when they are playing. They will take the teasing seriously. It seems there is anger inside them so, when they start teasing she or he will react violently and automatically somebody will have some blood moving out of the body. When you call the boy and ask him: "Why do you fight?" – they say that they are defending themselves (Mtalala 36 & 37).*

*When I arrived in the school what I noticed was that during break a lot of the kids were not eating and after break others were playing truancy. When you try to find out why they were not at school after break that is when I discovered that most of them were hungry. They felt that coming to school after break and they have not eaten was useless because they could not concentrate (Chabalala.3-6).*

*I had a certain girl in my class. I observed the girl during break. The girl was not playing at all or even having a drink. I approach the girl and asked what is wrong? Are you having a headache? She said no I have a problem. Then I told her let us go to my office. In my office the girl explained that her mother passed away (Mtalala 1 & 2).*

*In class they would not concentrate. Sometimes you see a learner is tired you can see that the learner is not getting the right food (Malope 12 & 13).*

The quotations give the impression that the orphaned learners' behaviour seems to be a challenging reality for the majority of educators who were interviewed. Educator Mtalala

believed that the orphans react violently and are disruptive<sup>14</sup> in class due to their emotional state and their deprived needs. She described the orphaned learners' behaviour as ranging from withdrawal to reacting violently when teased by other learners. Willis (2002) identifies withdrawal and violent behaviour as common signs of mourning. This therefore implies that some of the orphans in the study could still be mourning the death of their parent(s). Dowdney (2000) points out that one in five bereaved children is likely to have emotional and behavioural symptoms manifested in forms of anxiety, depression, anger, outbursts and regression. De Witt and Lessing (2005) concur, reporting that educators in their study indicated that factors influencing the psychological behaviour of orphans in their schools involved depression, sadness and stigmatisation. The following quotations exemplify the experiences and views of the educators in the current study with regard to the behaviour of the orphaned learners:

*“Some of the learners are a little bit quiet. Others become violent. Maybe you find that their friends are teasing them when they are playing but they will take the teasing seriously. It seems there is anger inside them so when they start teasing she or he will react violently and automatically somebody will have some blood moving out of the body. When you call the boy and ask him: “Why do you fight?” They will tell you something like maybe “I miss my mummy” or “I miss my dad” or maybe “I am staying with my granny and my granny can not buy me one, two, three maybe here in school I see other children are having one, two three and I do not have because I don’t have parents” (Mtalala.36-39).*

*You find that when a child is disruptive in class the educator throws them out. So when I walk around I write their names and then tell them to come to my office in the afternoon. When they come I ask them: “Why are you outside during this period?” They say: “No, this was doing this to me, so when I tried to revenge myself the educator saw us.” When you ask them “Why are you doing this?” You will capture that this one the parents are separated or the parent has abandoned them and they are living with the granny (Mtalala 57-60).*

The excerpts suggest that some educators believe that orphans act in response to frustration from their unfulfilled needs by either withdrawing from others or responding violently when aggravated. Some of the educators believe that the orphaned learners' negative behaviour is likely to be caused by conditions at home. For example, Educator

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<sup>14</sup> Libbey (2004) describes disruptive behaviour in class as learners who disturbs the class, do not follow instructions and annoy the educator.

Mtalala mentioned that some of the grandparents caring for the orphans might be exhausted from trying to provide for the orphaned learners. Mtalala narrates:

*The granny also gets tired in supporting the kids. That grant that was suppose to take care of the granny, the granny is now sharing it with the girl children. You see, it becomes a headache to the granny. The granny will start saying go and look for your mummy or go and look for your dad so the child comes to school with that when somebody provokes him he will react (Mtlala 60 –63).*

Another reported concern of Educator Chabalala was the **behaviour of the orphans outside the school premises**. Educators Chabalala and Selepe, both on the staff at School A, believed that orphans engage in criminal activities, such as prostitution and breaking into houses to steal, when they were not engaged in school activities. The educators interviewed by Giese et al. (2003), reported cases of children dropping out of school and either begging on the street or getting involved in crime to meet their needs. The following insert expresses the views of the educators concerning the behaviour of orphaned learners:

*Another thing that we talked about in the staff room is that these girls they get exploited. They are lacking a lot of things like no money or food and they are not like their friends. Most of them get into affairs with older men, not because they want, but it is some form of prostitution. They get money for their needs. I think their status pushes them to do a lot of bad things (Chabalala 96-98).*

*Now that it is winter this one does not have any warm clothes – especially when it comes to boys – boys they tend to turn to drugs or they can do burglar, maybe they break houses and take some appliances and sell to buy food or drugs. You ask: “Why did this boy do this?” At the end of the day you find out that this boy did not have food. They do not have anything to eat or clothes to wear. That is why maybe they steal things and sell them (Selepe.1.6-8).*

These quotations illustrate educator assumptions about the behaviour of the orphaned learners off the school premises. The two educators from School A who were quoted believed that orphaned learners get involved in criminal activities to survive because there is nobody accountable to provide for their needs. On the other hand, Educator Dube commented that, in terms of general behaviour, orphaned learners are just like other learners. They do not have distinctive behavioural problems. She stated:

*They are not delinquent. They are just like any other learner. Their silliness is like other ordinary learners (Dube 46).*

In the previous study done by Makame and Grantham-McGregory (2002), it was noted that there was no significant difference between orphans and non-orphans in terms of behaviour and complaints about homework not being completed. In contrast, Educators Dube and Malope, both from the Foundation Phase, reported that one of the problems with orphaned learners is that they lack parental care and assistance in doing homework. They identified orphaned learners when they did not do their homework or when they struggled with homework. The educators made the following remarks:

*We have many orphaned learners especially this year. They cope very well in the classroom, except the time you give them homework. They start to struggle. That is when, if you do not know the background of the learner, you start asking the learner: “Why is this not done?” That is when they start to tell you all the details and you as the educator take the position of a parent to the learner (Dube 2-7).*

*Usually the learners do talk. They would tell you that I do not have parents. Sometimes when you give them activity to do at home with a parent, they would come to you and tell you that I do not have a mother or a father. I am staying with my brother. So I would say this person you are staying with, take him as your parent. They can help you with the schoolwork (Malope 15-17).*

The excerpts further indicate that although some orphaned learners may have relatives who provide for their material needs, there seems to be a gap in terms of parental involvement in supporting the orphans’ learning experience. The learners may not regard the adult figures in their lives as parents hence the hesitation in approaching them to assist them with their homework.

### **Category 1.2.2: Appearance and financial state of the orphans**

Two educators, Educators Khumalo and Chabalala, reported that some of the orphaned learners divulge their status when they are asked to pay for school activities, buy and wear full school uniforms or when they are hungry.

*I like checking uniform the learners with uniform; I was also the choir conductor. I told them “you have to wear this and this”. They would come and tell you “I do not have this and this”. Then I tell them “you go and tell your parents to buy them”. The learners would come and tell me pathetic stories like “there is no one to buy for me, I am staying alone I do not have parents”. The others, the parents just disappeared. Others their parents passed away. Then I started identifying learners who are orphans (**Khumalo 3 & 4**).*

*...And from there you see a lot of absenteeism a lot of dodging and maybe you also expect them to wear uniform and all that. If they do not have and you do not know the background may you ask them you find that they are rebellious; so after you talk to them and you find out that they cannot afford uniform (**Chabalala 16 & 17**).*

Educators Dube and Mokoena revealed that orphans feel inferior when they are unable to meet the financial obligations expected of them, such as contributing to funeral expenses, paying school funds or wearing home clothes to school on special occasions. The following excerpt presents the experiences of some of the educators:

*One other thing about these learners is that they feel inferior – especially when it comes to condolence money. If the family loses the one who they love we usually take condolences (**Dube 22**).*

*They come to school regularly, but the ones who absent themselves are the orphans and the others whom their parents are unemployed when it is time for fund raising or mothers and fathers day. They absent themselves from school because the learners are supposed to wear home clothes. They are aware that they do not have smart clothes so they absent themselves from school (**Mokoena 3 & 4**).*

The excerpt implies that the orphaned learners seem to be absent from school as a result of financial and material deprivation. In this study, the educators reported that non-orphaned learners from poor families also avoid exposing their vulnerability by missing school during the period that they are expected to make financial contributions to funeral expenses or come to school wearing home clothes. The responses of the educators regarding these learners’ material and financial deprivation imply that orphans and non-orphans are regarded as vulnerable children and may behave in similar ways. Foster (1995) also reports that educators identify orphaned learners by lack of school fees, poor clothes and lack of food.

In the current study, Educators Mabena and Khumalo disclosed that there are orphans who stay with relatives who provide for their material needs, while there are others who stay with relatives who are not able to provide for their needs such as food and clothes or to pay for their school funds. Educator Khumalo articulated that some orphans are more vulnerable than others and need more support, while other orphaned learners who have relatives taking care of them are better off than the children from poor families. Urassa, Boerma, Ng'weshemi, Isingo, Schapink and Kumogola (1997) report from their study that there were no major disadvantages of orphans compared with non-orphans in terms of material needs because the extended family system appears to be able to provide for their needs. However, there were no details of the type of care provided. Educator Khumalo elaborated:

*They differ in their needs. You cannot generalise. There are others who are orphans but they have guardians taking care of them. They will not eat with those who are eating. The ones who are eating are those in real need. They do not eat because they are orphans. They eat because they do not have anything. Their parents are not working. Some have guardians but they need to be given love of a parent. But the orphaned learners at their age you know when you want to report something. When you come home there is nobody to report to. Some of the orphans are afraid to tell their guardians that they need this and that. Maybe there are trips but they do not talk. We tell them that if you have a problem come to us we are here for you (Khumalo.73, 77, 79 & 82).*

This excerpt suggests that some orphaned learners may have guardians who provide for their material needs but they may be deprived of love and somebody they can talk to freely. The above extract further proposes that educators might be the adult figures that the orphans can talk to. Similar evidence of emotional deprivation emerged from the interviews with the orphaned learners. The orphaned learners talk of relatives who could buy uniforms and food for them but there were no narrations of experiences of affection, or an emotional and loving relationship. Some orphans narrated negative experiences of abuse and emotional neglect. Wilson, Meintjes, Croke and Chamberlain (2002) indicate that the identification of vulnerable children can be facilitated by the awareness of warning signs of vulnerability. Giese et al. (2003) report some of the warning signs

mentioned by educators in their study as signs of hunger,<sup>15</sup> physical exhaustion, a change in behaviour, a change in appearance,<sup>16</sup> a drop in academic performance, tardiness and absenteeism, and by their homework.

When I asked the educators to prioritise what they think the needs of the orphans were, material and financial needs, such as nutritious food, school uniforms and payment for school excursions were given priority, followed by emotional needs, such as love, care and guidance. Similarly, De Witt and Lessing (2005) report from their quantitative study using questionnaires administered to 120 educators from different schools that lack of food and clothing were identified as the most prominent needs, while important psychological needs were a desire for acceptance, dealing with stress, security and managing fear. The following are some of the responses indicating how the educators prioritised the needs of the orphaned learners in this study:

*First need is food. You cannot study on an empty stomach. When you study you need food. They would come and tell me that we do not have food (Khumalo 71).*

*The list is very long. Number one is education. Some of them do not have money to pay school fees and others buy school uniform. Number two; they need healthy life style for them to have healthy food and every meal. They must have proper meals and other basic things. The other thing they must have is a foster parent, maybe someone who does not have children to take care of them. A person who have love for children, if it is possible (Selepe 27).*

*I would prefer that somebody give them food and pay school funds for them. I wish our government could pay school fund for them, buy them clothes and food and take them out for excursions or pay for school trips so that they feel like other learners, if they cannot adopt them, because every child needs love and family, they need somebody to call: "Mom." If they cannot do that, let them provide those needs (Mabena 50-53).*

These educators seem to place material needs before the social and psychological needs that were mentioned after material needs. Although the educators were able to rank the needs of the orphans, the experiences of the orphaned learners seem to indicate that the needs were intertwined. For example, when the learners talked about emotional longing

<sup>15</sup> Giese et al. (2003) report signs of hunger to include vomiting water, shivering, collapsing in class, lack of concentration, sleeping in class, begging for food and not playing with other children.

<sup>16</sup> Dirty, not wearing school uniform, or wearing too small or torn uniform (Giese et al. 2003).

for their parents, they related the feeling to their deprived material needs. The orphans generally talked of lack of food, clothing, money to pay for school activities, adult supervision, love and care. Foster et al. (1995) point out that those psychological needs is less obvious than material needs and may go unnoticed by the orphans themselves. In addition, the difference between the needs inferred from the experiences of the orphans and the needs identified by the educators was that the educators predominantly talked about material needs, while paying little attention to the emotional and social needs that appeared prominent in the interviews with the orphans. A possible explanation for the way in which the educators identify the needs of the learners could be that material needs may be deduced from the appearance while the social and psychological needs are not as visible.

#### Category 1.2.3: Educator-learner relationship

This category describes experiences of interaction between the educators and the orphaned learners. In this study some of the orphans reportedly open up and reveal that they are orphans to the educators they trust. They also tell the educators what they need and their experiences at home

Educator Khumalo, from School A, encouraged the orphans to open up. She was of the opinion that the orphaned learners should not be afraid of identifying themselves. She elaborated:

*I have managed to get them all. I insisted that they identify themselves. I told them not to be afraid because some of the educators are also orphans. You know they like money. When you tell them that there is money and that they will go for trips they will come out. They came out until I got 33 of them in school (**Khumalo 25**).*

In some cases the orphans opened up to educators who seem to show concern, caring and understanding for their problems. The learners also built up a relationship of confidence and trust with the educators who talked to them. Educator Mtalala and other educators narrated the following:

*Yes they open up. It is difficult for kids to open up. There are those who can open up to me and there are those who cannot open up to me. They feel it is safe if they talk to the educators in the Foundation Phase. So I let them talk to their educators and I tell their educator to give me the report when the learners open up. Then we call the guardian to bring the necessary documents. Others repeatedly come to the office saying I am having a headache or stomach ache just like that. So if I give you a pill today then tomorrow you come again I will ask you have you eaten? That is when I find some of them because you find that they had nothing to eat. That is why they react like that. I normally say if you see the learner who is clumsy or a little bit funny you just call the learner and if you see the learner cannot open up bring the learner to me. When they are with me although, I am strict they are at ease when they talk to me they can open up (Mtlala 26–27 & 44–48).*

*There were cases of learners fainting in the morning assembly. When you talk to them alone they tell you that they have not eaten since yesterday lunchtime (Chabalala. 1.5).*

*Sometimes they would tell you that at home the food is not right, they would tell you that my mother cooks for us porridge and cabbage or potatoes so the learner does not get a balanced diet (Malope 14).*

*Sometimes they come here crying very early in the morning, crying in tears. When you ask them: “What is the problem?” They say that I am hungry. Then you ask: “Why are you hungry?” They would say that today I said I wanted porridge and they said: “There is no mealie meal at home” (Dube 39 & 40).*

The interviews with the orphaned learners revealed that some of the learners confide in their educator if the educator promises to keep the information the learners were willing to share confidential. Pomeroy (1999) also reports from her study that students responded positively to educators who took the initiative in establishing friendship, played a pastoral role and showed care and concern. In the current study, Educator Chabalala reported that the orphaned learners start opening up and seeing the educators as a confidante when there is communication between the educators and the learners. According to Giese et al. (2003) some students do not open up because they are scared and ashamed of exposing their material deprivation. The educators in this study described the situations as follows:

*...Then I asked her: “Where are your relatives? Don’t you have relatives?” She said “The relatives were ill treating us very bad. They will beat you when you want to study. They will close your book and tell you to go and wash the dishes and you don’t study”. The other educators are still beating learners in other schools. She told me that the educators would beat her for not doing her homework when she tried to explain, it was difficult for her to explain the situation at home. She was afraid that her guardians would be called at school and then she would be beaten again (Khumalo 32-34).*

*Yes, they open up and tell us so many things what is happening at home. We call the grandfather or grandmother and we sit down and talk to them ( Dube 26 & 27).*

*Once you start talking to them helping them and all that, they change and they see you as a mother figure because now they have a person they can talk to. When they have problems they open up because they know there is somebody who cares and understands (Chabalala 32-35).*

Two educators in this study, Dube and Mokoena, reported that orphaned learners talk about their emotional needs on occasions like Mothers Day or Fathers Day. Haggard (2005) reports that bereaved children find it difficult to participate in activities such as making valentine cards or holiday gifts and need a friend or a relative to represent the parent on such occasions. During the interview with the orphaned learners some of them expressed emotional longing for their parents who had passed away on specific days. It seems that the celebration of occasions like Mothers Day or Fathers Day could bring back the memory of the parents. The educators explained their experiences with the orphaned learners during such occasions as follows:

*We start from the school before we celebrate the occasion, such as Mother's Day. Some learners in previous years used to cry when we talk about our mothers. The orphaned learners start crying. When you go to the learners and make enquiry they will tell you "I do not have a mother so when you talk about mothers I feel pain because I do not have parents". That is when you learn that they are orphans (Dube 18-21).*

*Most of the time I realise it when it is Mothers' or Fathers' Day they would say: "Oh!" Maybe we are making cards in the classroom they would say "I do not have a father. What should I write?" I tell them write your uncle's name because he is a father's figure at home (Mokoena 14 &15).*

These two examples illustrate that some of the orphaned learners occasionally reveal their emotional needs to their educators. Educator Chabalala indicated that some orphaned learners tell their educators about their emotional and material needs indirectly by saying what their younger siblings miss at home and how they feel about it. At other times the non-orphans tell the educator the needs of the orphaned learners. Educator Chabalala narrated the following:

*Like the learner that I told you about – the one who never came back from break – it is the other kids who told me about it. They will say that, that learner does not come to school after break because of hunger. They will tell you in a joking manner. They say “She is hungry she cannot come”. and that is how you get to know the learner’s problem (Chabalala 46 & 47).*

From the extract, it seems that orphaned learners might not know how to approach the educators for help. Similarly, educators also may be uncertain of how to establish a positive relationship with orphaned learners. For example, one of the educators acknowledged that the orphans do have emotional needs but unless they *opened up* and talked about their problems the educators might not be aware of these needs, which may then remain unfulfilled. One problem of depending on the learners to disclose their emotional needs is that some orphaned learners find it difficult to open up and talk about their experiences. This was evident in one of the interviews with the orphaned learners when one responded that she did not want to talk about her parents because it made her feel bad. A likely explanation for her response could be that she is internalising her emotional needs, such that without communication the educators might not be able to identify the needs and provide assistance.

Educators Dube and Mokoena, both from School B, mentioned that they encourage the learners to *open up* by asking them to write about their problems at home and in school, then to put the letters in a post box in the classroom or on the educator’s table. The learners use the post box facility as an opportunity to express themselves. The educators then read the written text and talk to the learner during break. The two educators explained:

*I always tell them that if you are not happy today, tell me in the morning. Sometimes I put a box here and I tell them to write what they do not like in the classroom or at home. They use to write the papers and put them in the box. Then I read them before we start the lessons. Then during break time I call the learner, we sit down and we talk to each other (Dube 47-49).*

*I ask them orally but before I ask them, most of the time, I allow them to bring letters to me. I tell them to write for me letters. I allow them to bring the letters they write about whatever they did not like. Something that happened to them and they put the letters on the table. I tell them just write and I will not read it to anyone (Mokoena 9 &10).*

The quotations indicate that the two educators used writing as an outlet for the learners to express themselves and communicate what they are feeling in a less intimidating way. The educators acknowledged that some of the orphaned learners could not talk about their problems, so they give them alternative means of communication. There is also the confidentiality of the information that the learners disclose to the educators in writing. The educators had to reassure the orphaned learners that their letters would be confidential. It is notable that this finding is consistent with Giese et al. (2003), who report that educators provided the children with opportunities to express themselves by writing essays<sup>17</sup> on their personal experiences, a suggestion box,<sup>18</sup> and communication with the caregivers through a communication book.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Category 1.2.4: Routine administrative work**

Educator Selepe said that she identifies the orphans through a routine process of compiling the learners' background at the beginning of the year and at the end of the term when their report forms are not collected. Giese et al. (2003) also report that educators lack formal mechanisms for identifying vulnerable children, apart from class educators identifying them when collecting background information at the beginning of the year. Similarly, Educator Mabena identified orphaned learners when the Department of Education asked for this information. Educator Mabena and Educator Selepe narrated the following:

*There are programmes sent by the government telling us to go to class and look for orphans. So we go to class and say "Can we have orphaned learners come to see me after this period?" Some will be shy to come ... (Mabena 31).*

*When you are a class educator there are some forms that you have to fill in asking the children: "Do you have both parents or do you one parent or are you an orphan?" They*

<sup>17</sup> The children write about their experiences especially those who find it difficult to express themselves verbally.

<sup>18</sup> The children post their concerns and can choose to remain anonymous.

<sup>19</sup> The educator communicates with the caregiver by writing notes in the book and the caregiver responds and gives his/her inputs.

*will come to you and say: “I do not have parents. Since I do not have parents I have nothing to eat or clothes to wear” (Selepe 47).*

*...Whenever you call meetings for those who do not have parents, no one comes to represent them or collect their report forms. We got report forms from 2004 December 2005 June and 2005 December. They are still here at school (Selepe 36).*

## **Theme 2: Responding to the needs of orphaned learners**

This theme reports on how educators perceive their role in terms of responsibilities towards the orphaned learners and how educators respond to their needs.

### **Sub-theme 2.1: Educators’ perception of their roles**

This sub-theme describes the different ways in which the educators conceptualise their roles. It appeared that the educators described their responsibilities in terms of how they constructed their roles. In this theme I discuss the responsibilities of the educators, how the educators relate to each other and what motivates the educators to respond in different ways.

#### **Category 2.1.1: Responsibility of providing care to the orphaned learners**

This category presents the views and lived experiences of the educators in terms of providing care for the orphaned learners. One of the educators interviewed at School B felt that educators should provide orphaned learners with **emotional support**, as indicated in the following statement:

*“I believe that all educators, in all schools, should provide emotional support to the orphaned learners. It can be better, because they spend most of their time with us. They are mostly with us so we should do that” (Mabena 54).*

Another educator in School B narrated how she responded to the needs of a sexually abused learner by facilitating assistance from different role players, such as a medical

practitioner, social worker, counsellor and policewoman. Although she did not perform the multiple roles of providing medical assistance, legal action and counselling directly, she went beyond her responsibilities at school to communicate with other people outside the school who could help the learner. She narrated her experience as follows:

*Unfortunately the cousin raped the girl. So I called the girl and sat down with her and asked her whether she has been taken to the doctor – did the doctor do check up or blood test and so on? I wanted to see if she was helped or not. The guardian took the girl to the doctor and only asked for painkillers. The doctor did not check the girl. I phoned the doctor and the doctor told me to take the learner to the hospital. I asked the principal for permission to take the learner to the doctor. The doctor examined the girl and she was safe. We remained with the part that the girl must be counselled, go through therapy because when she is quiet the things comes back to haunt her. So I approached the hospital, they said that they need a docket number. So I had to go and look for a relative to go with the girl to the police station. The girl talked to one of the CPU to get the docket number. Thereafter is when the girl got attention of Social Welfare. They were able to counsel the girl. Now I think that she is doing form two somewhere. It seems that she is coping (Mtalala 31-35).*

It is likely that the rape incident narrated by the educator and lack of proper procedure thereafter may be due to the absence of parental care. Perhaps, what needs to be considered is whether educators have the skills and the time to support learners in such situations and whether it is a reasonable expectation.

Educator Selepe responded to the needs of orphaned learners differently, depending on the role she was playing at a particular place and time. **As a school educator**, Selepe perceives her responsibilities as monitoring the learners, and checking their attendance and their school uniform. Her concern with the orphaned learners seems to be based on how they adhere to the school rules. She said the following:

*There are two or three orphaned learners in my class. They do not give me any problems. They come to school regularly and they have school uniform. If you ask them, they will say, “My sister is taking care of me.” I think she has everything. The one I do not know much about is Sithole because he is a repeater. I monitor them. I do not talk to them very much (Selepe 20 & 21).*

As a **community member**, Educator Selepe assisted other orphans by making donations through community interventions programmes. She elaborated:

*There were some orphans who use to pass by our home on their way to school. When they came back from school they would eat in our home. At church we send clothes to the orphans. There is this organisation called SVP (St Vincent Paul) there are times when they send food parcels. We have 5kg paper bag in which we put food inside. Then we give it in during the church service. There are times when we send clothes that we no longer wear. They do not want clothes that are worn out or torn; they want clothes that are in good condition. Then we send them to children in the orphanage. Sometimes they sell those clothes to get money to buy other things for the children (Selepe 18-20).*

When I asked her what she did when she encountered a needy orphan, she responded as follows:

*As a class educator I have to report this to those who help the orphans. Like Ms Chabalala. She does it by giving them money to buy bread and soup during break but that is done only on Mondays and Wednesdays (Selepe 16).*

The extracts above suggest that the educator perceives her responsibility as facilitating learning and responding to the needs of the learners by referring them to other educators for assistance. The emerging dominant theme of the educators' role perception of teaching and learning is consistent with the findings of Giese et al. (2003), who report that many educators in their study conceptualise their role as teaching and not as providing assistance to vulnerable children. A possible explanation of why some educators seem to downplay care as part of the role of the educator could be that educators do not have the knowledge, skills, resources and time to provide the care needed by the orphaned learners. Other reasons could be lack of motivation to assist the learners.

Six educators, namely Khumalo and Chabalala from School A, and Dube, Mokoena, Malope and Mtalala from School B, talked about performing **multiple roles of teaching and caregiving** in terms of providing for material needs, such as uniform and psychosocial needs, through guidance. This finding is in agreement with that of Schierhout and others (2004) who report that educators perceived their role as providing

food, counselling and advice, shelter, money, school fees and encouraging the learners to attend school. The study did not elaborate on how the educators provided such assistance, what motivated the educators or the relationship that supported the caring response. In the present study, Educator Dube commented that getting to know the background of the learners is part of her responsibilities and once she recognises the learners' problems she attends to them in the hope of putting these learners on a par with the others. Furthermore, Educator Mokoena emphasised that teaching and counselling are intertwined, such that both roles are played interchangeably. The two educators commented:

*I am an educator, I am a parent, I am a caregiver and a guidance educator at the same time. When you see that the child is lacking and you know the background of the child you make some means; even the school uniform we make means, so that the learner can be like other learners (Dube 28 & 29).*

*Most of the time I do counsel them. I do not always teach. Sometimes I guide them (Mokoena 17).*

It is evident from the findings of this study that the educators interviewed in School A and School B were unaware of the seven roles of an educator as stipulated by the Department of Education (1996). The seven roles of the educator include performing the teaching and learning role, management responsibilities, and the community and pastoral role. The findings of this study indicate that some of the educators have prioritised these roles, such that they concentrate more on the teaching and learning (transfer of content) and management roles and pay less attention to the community, citizenship and pastoral roles.<sup>20</sup> According to Educator Chabalala, providing care is not part of an educator's responsibilities and educators who help orphaned learners do so of their own free will. Such understanding implies lack of knowledge of the policy and possibly lack of understanding of the policy intention.

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<sup>20</sup> The community, citizenship and pastoral role stipulates that educators will practice a critical commitment to an ethical attitude towards developing a sense of responsibility towards others. Within the school the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of the learner and fellow educators. The educator will also develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organizations based on a critical understanding of community and environment developmental issues (Department of Education, 1996:A-47)

### Category 2.1.2: Educator-educator relationship

I noted from the educators' responses that their role perception was likely to influence how the educators related to each other. For instance, in School A two educators, Chabalala and Khumalo, were identified by others as *educators who are responsible for the orphaned learners* and all the other educators referred the orphaned learners to them for assistance. Educator Khumalo seemed to be overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for a large number of orphaned learners. She felt that the multiple roles were demanding and she felt overburdened with responsibility. The two educators described their roles as follows:

*You know, I am teaching at the same time I am dealing with the orphans at the same time I am a policewoman, I am a social worker I am a counsellor – there are many things that are around me; that is why I am involving other educators to take part in this (Khumalo 49).*

*As educators we have to be social workers, parents and everything (Chabalala 68).*

Educator Khumalo also appeared to be frustrated and expressed that it was unfair for the other educators to do nothing but to continually refer the orphaned learners to them, instead of helping the learners themselves. She expressed her frustration in this way:

*When it comes to the problem of orphaned learners, they push the orphans to me. “Go to Educator Khumalo she will help you”. The other day I said “Why can’t you help? Why do you always send the learners to me? Are you taking advantage of me because I do not have children?” I am supporting other family members of mine. It does not mean that I am only support these learners at school. I do not want to be forced to do things. I do it from my heart (Khumalo 36-38)*

*This is what is happening now to Educator Chabalala. In winter she brings soup and bread and in summer polony and bread. The educators they will tell you we want orphan food. We also want. They will eat with them instead of buying food for the orphaned learners. They want to share the food that was donated. I tell them that you share the food, you tell yourself that this food is not their money we should share it while you are working. It does not mean that I am funny. You are the people who are supposed to bring something for the orphans because they eat at school and in the evening there is nothing to eat (Khumalo 62 & 63.)*

The above extracts indicate the frustration and irritation Educator Khumalo feels concerning the other educators for being irresponsible and taking advantage of her empathy and commitment to helping the orphaned learners. In addition, she reported that some of the other educators ate the food donated for the orphans, instead of buying food for the orphans. The educator seemed emotionally drained as a result of her responsibilities of care in a situation where there is limited support and resources. Wilson and others (2002) also report strained relationships between the educators with regard to supporting orphans. In their study one of the factors that impeded identification, support and monitoring of children experiencing orphanhood within the school was the victimisation of educators who put extra effort into providing care for the orphans.

The picture that seems to be emerging from these educator's responses as to their role perception proposes multiple understandings of their responsibilities towards orphaned learners. In another study, Wilson et al. (2002) report that many educators responded to the needs of the children in their own personal capacity, according to their own commitment and ideology. In other schools the responsibility of care is assigned to the guidance and counselling educator, house tutors or social workers (Chittenden, 1999; Bennell, Hyde & Swainson, 2002).

The difference in perceptions of the role of educators in helping the orphaned learners appears to be causing tension and conflict in School A. Educator Khumalo felt that the other educators were not only taking advantage of her but were also being sarcastic about her. Wilson et al. (2002) report a similar incident. In their study they identified one of the factors that impede identification, support and monitoring of children experiencing orphanhood within the school as the victimisation of educators who put extra effort into providing care for the orphans. In the current study, Educator Khumalo expected the other educators to also care for the orphans and not just refer them to her for help. She expressed her aggravation as follows:

*The other time I was angry, when they said I am Mother Teresa. I ask myself why am I Mother Teresa? They said we are not being sarcastic. I asked them: “How can you send a learner to me and tell the learner ‘Go to Mother Teresa’? Do you think that it is fair? Can’t you help the learner? When the learners come to you and tell you their problems you refer the learner to me.” It is not fair (Khumalo.55 - 57).*

In the current study, the second educator *who helps orphaned learners*, Educator Chabalala, thought that caring for the orphans was not the responsibility or part of the educator’s role. She claimed that educators helped the orphans of their own free will. She did not take offence when the other educators sent the orphaned learners to her because she was of the opinion that the school system did not endorse care for orphaned learners as part of the educators’ responsibility. Furthermore, Educator Chabalala indicated that not all educators have the same personality. She argued that some educators were more compassionate in giving care to the orphans than others, owing to individual differences. Educator Chabalala narrated the following:

*... I think others are just accepting it as part of what is happening in the community. They know that this is happening but they do not do anything. Some refer them to us when they see a learner with problems they would come to us and say Ms Chabalala there is this learner or Ms Khumalo there is this learner. I do not think that they do not want to be involved they just feel that it is not their problem. This thing is not really part of what we should be doing – it is what you feel. This feeling not everybody has it, so you cannot condemn those who do not help.*

The differential response to the needs of the orphaned learners also emerged in School B. Educator Dube expressed concern that not all educators helped the orphaned learners. She explained that some educators are empathetic, while others do not care. According to her observation the other educators are not concerned about the cause of the learners’ disruptive behaviour; instead they assume that the orphaned learners are in need of discipline. Educator Dube believes that in order to understand the behaviour of the orphaned learners the educators must talk to the learners and understand the learners’ background. The following are the views of Educator Dube:

*No, not all educators help. Some educators they think that the learner is just not listening to the instruction of the school. Like if the learner is not wearing shoes they do not even care about going after the child and ask some questions – why is this happening all the time and why you do not change from this to this? The way I am my self, I use to go after the child and look for the information until I find it. I also consult the previous educator. Yes some do not care (**Dube 32-36**).*

The idea of *educators who help orphans* also emerged prominently in School B. Three of the four educators interviewed (Dube, Malope and Mokoena) talk of one particular educator, Mtalala, who assists the orphans and their guardians in applying for grants. The three educators mentioned that the other educators send the orphaned learners who are in need of financial support to Educator Mtalala. Educator Malope and Dube described educator Mtalala as follows:

*Recently we have a educator who we refer them to because she knows where to get the funds and apply for grants. The learners, all of them they were told and their parents that, if I have this problem maybe the child is an orphan there is a particular educator I can go to. Even if the parents come they ask who is the educator that I can talk to about this problem (**Malope 25 & 27**).*

*There is only one educator who writes letters for the learners to take to the social workers (**Dube 62**).*

When I interviewed Educator Mtalala, she confirmed that she assists orphans in applying for grants and also communicating with the trust funds on behalf of orphaned learners by writing letters and sending the required documentations to facilitate payment. Apart from the Social Welfare Grant and Child Support Trust funds, Educator Mtalala also communicates with the coordinators of community development projects to assist learners who are not benefiting from grants and trust funds. She narrated her responsibilities as follows:

*Some of the orphans, their parents have just vanished. Others their parents are dead and there is no follow up as their guardians are illiterate on how to do the follow up. For those who have a positive attitude, they do come to school and ask for assistance. I normally write letters to Social Work Department. I tell the guardians that they must bring death certificate of the parent. We photo copy them and send to the Department. After three to four months they come and tell me that they are getting their grants.*

... I started helping other children in school, by communicating with Alexander Forbes until today. There are some children whose parents did not have this trust maybe they did not have stable jobs so we could not trace how to help these learners. I had a group of project coordinators from Kwamhlanga. They wanted details of the learners and said that I can refer some of the learners to them for follow up. Then I contacted them at (MCDC) - Community Development Center. Then I talked to the lady who was conducting the project. We came to school and made a list of learners who were having problems...MCDC people brought food parcels for those types of learners. I sign for the food parcels and give them to the learner concerned and they went home with them parcels. At least it covered them until we open school then we continue with the feeding scheme (**Mtalala 8-12 & 18-19**).

From the extracts of the experiences of educators in both schools; it appears that educators assume different identities from their role perception and the action they take in responding to the needs of the orphaned learners. The findings of this study are consistent with Giese et al (2003), who noted that different educators and different schools respond in different ways towards the needs of orphaned learners. Some educators in their study supported the vulnerable children, while others fail to respond – despite the presence of warning signs.

In the current study the notion of *educator(s) who help orphans* was common in both schools. In both schools there seem to be power – inequality as some educators took up most of the pastoral role while others did not. The responsibility for caring for the orphans was either voluntary – as in School A – or an educator was appointed to help the orphaned learners – as in School B. From the educators’ responses in School B, it is likely that assigning the responsibility of caring for the orphaned learners to a particular educator extends the responsibilities of that educator and gives the educator authority in responding to the needs of the orphans. However, it seems that empowering one educator to care for the orphans has a negative effect on some of the other educators. For instance, Educator Malope felt disempowered and expressed a change in attitude towards helping the orphans after Educator Mtalala was assigned special responsibility for caring for them. Educator Malope expressed her views as follows:

*I used to help, but presently it is not part of what I am doing. I do not feel that I am doing enough because I am not able to help that much, since they have a relevant person doing that (Malope 28 & 42).*

In School A, it looks as if Educator Selepe and Educator Mabena felt that it was not their responsibility to care for the orphans. Seemingly, a general feeling exists in both schools that the educators given the responsibility of helping the orphans or those who volunteer to help orphans assume a position different from other educators. According to Educator Khumalo most of the educators in her school appeared to be reluctant to assist the orphans.

Apart from the different role perceptions, some educators experience conflict in performing their perceived roles. Educator Chabalala, for instance, explained that there are times when helping the orphaned learners clashed with her teaching role. She would leave her lessons before the end of the period to prepare sandwiches for the learners; while Educator Dube expressed that she managed her time in such a way that she attended to some of the needs of the orphans and talked with caregivers in the afternoon after teaching hours.

*I had to come quickly just before lunch and prepare the soup and bread for the learners on the day they have soup and bread. I had to leave class before time and leave them with work. I knew that it was not right but now the lady who works as a general worker helps me (Chabalala 69 & 70).*

*We usually call them in the afternoon at half past one. It does not interfere with our teaching (Dube 28).*

It appears from the extracts that some teachers have strategies of time management that make it possible for them to provide multiple roles besides teaching.

### **Category 2.1.3: Motivation to help orphaned learners**

It seems that due to multiplicity of role, some of the educators seem to overstretch their capacity in responding to the needs of the orphans. During the interviews with the

educators, I realised that educators who were involved in helping orphans were self-motivated. Educator Dube was motivated to help the orphans by her background experiences and her religious beliefs. She narrated that when she reflected on her deprived background she was able to relate her experiences to those of the orphaned learners. Educator Khumalo seemed to have a positive attitude towards helping orphaned learners because she learned from her mother to be empathetic and altruistic towards those who are less fortunate. Her compassion for helping the orphaned learners seemed to be deeply rooted in her family values. The values that the educator talked about were trust, confidentiality, respect, and dignity, among others. According to Fonagy (2003) an infant internalises its mother's empathetic expression, and as an adult, develops secondary representation of the experience when faced with similar circumstances. Cooper's (2004) and Pomeroy's (1999) research findings reveal that educators who were empathetic to the learners were emotionally close and were able to discover factors that threatened or enhanced the learners' ability to learn and develop.

Educator Chabalala highlighted the fact that not all educators have the compassion or humane response towards orphaned learners. She understands why other educators do not help orphans and she is not discouraged by their attitude. The act of helping orphans gives her satisfaction: when the orphans are happy she also feels happy.

Educator Mokoena was motivated to help the orphaned learners by reflecting on her experiences of growing up in a single-parent family. The following excerpt from the interviews echoes the experiences of the educators:

*I am from a poor background. When I use to go to school the educators would buy for me the things that I did not have like school uniform and books. I am also a Christian and I like to help people when I can. That is why I ask the learners about their problems (Dube 65-67).*

*Every year I would buy uniform for one learner. It became my job; I do not feel pain, I do not ask for contribution from the others. I was buying from my pocket without any problem. I think I got it from my mother. When she was still alive she used to help the learners. In fact, she was not an educator; she was just cooking for the learners who did not have something to eat during break time (Khumalo 11).*

*Once you help these kids and you see their faces it makes you feel happy. Just to see them happy fulfils you. Even during lunch when you look at them, when they eat, it makes you feel happy (Chabalala10 & 33-34).*

*I use to sympathize with them. I put myself in their shoes and tell them that I myself at home I was raised by my mother. So do not be ashamed, compare your self with me (Mokoena 20).*

It is seems from the extracts that not all educators were able to provide care for the orphaned learners. For some of the educators, it was likely that their altruistic response to fulfilling the orphans' needs was influenced by their background and experiences. For others, like Educator Dube, motivation was based on religious beliefs. Foster (2002) reports that compassion is the key underlying factor to an individual act of kindness and care towards others. Cooper (2004) points out that although it would seem that empathy contributes toward quality learning, in her study factors such as class size, time, curriculum, policy and management were identified as constraints on educator ability to be empathetic.

## **Sub-theme 2.2: Fulfilling the needs of the orphaned learners**

This sub-theme entails the kind of assistance and support participating educators give to orphaned learners. They responded to the needs of the orphaned learners by making a material contribution, communicating with other external agencies and government departments and providing guidance to the learners.

### **Category 2.2.1: Addressing the physical needs of orphans**

All the educators interviewed in School A and School B identified *food* as one of the crucial needs of the orphaned learners. The educators responded to these nutritional needs by bringing leftover food from home, giving the learners money to buy food and seeking food donations from institutions and business enterprises. This response is consistent with the research done by Schierhout et al (2004). The researchers point out that educators reported providing food for needy children, buying food for them, bringing food from home or giving them money to buy food.

Learners in School B received food from the Government Feeding Scheme (RDP White Paper 1994). Educator Mtalala reported that some of the orphaned learners relied on the food from this Feeding Scheme, meaning that during the weekends and school holidays they would go without food. Educator Mtalala said that they sometimes took leftover food from the Government Feeding Scheme and redistributed this food among the orphaned learners so that they could eat over the weekend and during school holidays. School A does not receive food from the Government Feeding Scheme. Some of the educators, like Educators Khumalo and Chabalala, responded to the nutritional needs of the learners by bringing food from their homes. Educator Chabalala got food donations from the Roman Catholic Church. Twice a week this church provides sandwiches for the orphans. These educators narrated the following:

*When they move away from the school they feel abandoned. Who is going to take care of us? We have to take leftover of raw food that they cook normally here at school then divide it among them. When the school is closing for a longer period they cannot cater for them. In a family where there are five or six and they have to cook everyday the food we give is easily consumed (Mtalala 1.83).*

*I am Catholic. I also belong to the Catholic Women League and we specialize in helping people. I brought the matter to the league. I told them that I am in this school. What I have noticed first I thought that it was one or two kids but as you are helping others a lot of other children approach you then I realize that I can not do it on my own. The ladies said: "Identify how many kids you have got we will see what we can do" (Chabalala 10).*

Although educators regarded providing food as a high priority need, Educators Khumalo (from School A) and Mokoena (from School B) reported that learners were sometimes reluctant to take food donated from the church and from the Government Feeding Scheme because other learners laughed at them. Educator Khumalo indicated that she is aware of other learners ridiculing the orphaned learners and poor non-orphaned learners who eat donated food. Educator Chabalala also reported observing that orphans isolate themselves from other learners and other learners stigmatise orphans because they do not bring lunch from home. According to Educator Khumalo, donated food was associated with poverty. Orphans and other learners were reluctant to take the food owing to the stigma attached to receiving it. Educator Mokoena also narrated that other learners regarded taking food from the Government Feeding Scheme as disgraceful. She said that

she eats from the Feeding Scheme to change the negative attitude towards this scheme and emphasises that the food is healthy.

*Like the students who are eating at school, the non-orphans do not want to mix themselves with those who are eating. They take them as if they are poor. (Khumalo 87).*

*Most of the time I encourage them that if you do not have food do not take the other learners food box just go and dish out because I also eat from the Feeding Scheme. I am eating the feeding scheme food so you can also go. They used to laugh at them most of the time and I tell them that even myself I have money but I eat from the feeding scheme because it is healthy. (Mokoena 26 & 27).*

From the experiences related by Educator Khumalo and Educator Mokoena, it is likely that providing food at school may present another form of stigma to the orphaned learners. The above narrations suggest the possibility that orphaned learners receiving food from the Government Feeding Scheme feel less worthy than others. It would seem that taking donated food lowers the learner's self-dignity. For instance, Educator Chabalala reported that orphaned learners find comfort in the company of other orphans with similar deprived needs. She explained that the orphans stick together because they have similar experiences. From the interviews with the orphans, some reported that they were able to identify and socialise with other orphans with whom they share with similar experiences. Educator Mtalala stated that she encouraged the non-orphans to respect the orphaned learners by sharing food in a dignified manner. The educators expressed the following:

*We have those who go home together - they feel like they are birds of the same feather they will stick together. They feel that this is the person who is like me. On the day when they do not get food they know that if we stick together they will all not have food unlike those who are with the others, they become burden to them when they do not bring food from home. The learners who eat have friends among themselves. (Chabalala 52 & 53)*

*I tell them you come with bread from home and you do not feel like eating it, they should not throw it but put it on the table then I will find somebody to eat it. Normally when I find food on the table, I collect it and give to others to eat. Some of the learners are from rich families and you cannot tell them do not do this and this. They are spoiled. Some come with four slices of bread eat one and throw the rest away and the others who do not have will take the bread from the bin. It is not nice. So it is best if they put it on the table (Mtalala 104-105).*

The experiences narrated by the educators suggest the need to promote relationships among the learners that are supportive and empathetic to the needs of the learners. The stigma emerging from taking donated food is likely to be as a result of a lack of understanding of the experiences of the orphaned learners and other needy learners by their peers. Two educators (Mabena and Selepe) were of the opinion that if they had more money they would buy the orphans food (so they could eat everyday).

When I asked the educators what else they would do for orphans, Educator Malope suggested that educators should *adopt* the orphans (informally) and provide for their financial needs. Malope narrated:

*We should introduce the form of adopting a child in the school, if we can identify them, but now we do not know who is getting the grant and why are the others not getting the grants. I was thinking of introducing this to the school, if there are learners who are unable to get this grant. Each and every educator should adopt the child that they can help. You find that if they are trips in the school they cannot go because they do not have money. We could help that learner (Malope 43 & 44).*

Educator Mokoena describe that she assisted the orphaned learners in her class by providing their stationery and school uniform.

*What I usually do is I adopt them but I do not tell them. I buy for them pens, pencils, rulers, Pritt glue and other learning materials. I buy and give them rather than staying helpless. Sometimes I provide also uniform if I have because my son is now in secondary. If I get similar uniform to our school, shoes and shirts I give it to them (Mokoena 49 & 50).*

Educator Mabena felt strongly that creating awareness of the needs of the orphaned learners should be part of the curriculum – specifically an area in Life Orientation. The aim of incorporating orphan awareness is to reduce the stigma experienced by some of the orphaned learners. She narrated:

*In Life Orientation period much can be done. They should talk about it more - not when I go to look for them in the class and say: “You - what are you laughing at?” The Life Orientation educator should do that. It should be one of our themes in Life Orientation to say educators must talk about this in class with the learners.*

Apart from providing food donations and stationery, Educators Khumalo, Chabalala and Mabena have formed a Uniform Committee to check the uniform of the learners. The educators in the committee identify learners who are in need of a uniform. Occasionally the educators buy a uniform for the orphaned learners or bring items of school uniform from their homes and other clothes that these children can wear over the weekend. The educators narrated:

*...Then I started donating from my pocket because there are other learners and I said that I do not have a child why don't I buy clothes at least school uniform for these learners (**Khumalo 10**).*

*I still help with clothes if I have. My mom, she helps me if she has clothes that she does not use. I have relatives who help; I help other kids with clothes that they can use at home (**Chabalala 14**).*

In School B, Educators Mtlala and Dube are responsible for the lost property. They assisted the learners who cannot afford to buy school uniform by cleaning uniforms from lost property and giving them to the learners. Educators explained the following:

*Some of them they do not have school uniform. Other learners leave their school uniform here in school. Many times you ask them “Whose jersey is this? Whose trouser is this? Whose socks are these?” So when nobody claims them I take the clothes wash and give the orphans who do not have uniforms. Sometimes I do not have boys and the orphans are boys I do not have boys also my children are at tertiary levels and I cannot buy shoes for the learners. So I ask other educators, even the principal she has boys so she brings trousers shirts socks and so on and we give to the learners (**Dube 53-56**).*

Some of the educators were able to identify a learner's need for school uniform from their appearance. Educator Mabena mentioned that the reason for giving the orphaned learners uniform was to make them look like other learners.

Educators Khumalo, Chabalala and Mtalala said that at times they gave the orphaned learners money to pay for donations at school. Educator Chabalala indicated that learners needed money to pay for school activities, like educational trips. When the learners confide in her she finds a way of raising money to pay for them. The following are narrations of how educators respond to the financial needs of the orphans:

*Some times they do not have that money to pop up or, as an educator, if you know that this learner is having a problem every time when they pop up that amount you assist them so that they cannot feel inferior (**Dube 23**).*

*Most kids do miss educational tours. Only those who can come to you and ask: “There is this educational tour and I cannot pay for it”. You try but sometimes I do not have money like I said most of the educators do not think that it is their duty but if I go to the staff room and tell them that there is this child who cannot pay for the trip I collect donation from the other educator. They contribute what they have and at the end of the day you get the money. It is just that they cannot come out and help but if you ask they will (**Chabalala 40-42**).*

Educator Chabalala quoted experience suggests that although some educators provide for the financial needs of the orphaned learners, other educators need somebody to guide them in responding to their financial obligations. Educator Chabalala feels that educators should provide financial assistance to the orphaned learners although it is not part of the official responsibilities of educators.

Apart from financial assistance, Educators Khumalo, Mtalala and Chabalala mentioned how they act on behalf of the orphans in applying for government grants and liaising with social workers (whose job description includes assisting orphans to access child support grants), communicating with the Orphans’ Trust Funds and applying for financial assistance from donor agencies. Educator Khumalo indicated that most of the caregivers are illiterate. Therefore, educators write letters on their behalf and assist them in accessing the Trust Funds and getting Child Support Grants. These educators also communicate with the social workers in cases of abuse and applying for grants.

### **Category 2.2.2: Addressing emotional, social needs and learning support**

The majority of educator responses suggest that they identified and responded to the emotional needs of the learners, depending on what the learners disclosed to them. Some of the educators, like Mabena and Selepe, believed that the learners who did not confide in them did not have emotional needs and that the caregivers were providing for their needs.

Educator Mtalala explained how she provided emotional support to orphans by **talking to their guardians and advising them** on how to assist the orphans in the grieving process and when they talk about missing their parents. Educator Mtlala recalled one such incidence as follows:

*One time there was a parent who came and said this child does not sleep at night. When we go to sleep the child sleep for maybe two hours then the child wake up and say: "I want to see my mummy." Then I told the granny we are blacks, we blacks take the children to the graveside and we tell them here is your mummy and your mummy is peaceful with God. Then the child will learn that, okay, my mummy is dead. You find that when they bury, then relocate, they must take the child to the burial site. Then when they came back they will say: "Mam the child is now ok." I told them that when the children start behaving like that they must take them back to the burial site, maybe it is loneliness and they get confused. "Why is my mummy not coming back?" Because some guardian do not tell the learner that your mum or dad has passed away and is not coming back. They just say: "No, she is sleeping." So the child will say: "Why is that guy not wake up and come back to me?" We find that the image of the parent is still in the mind of the child; so it is troubling the child and the child keep on asking himself. Then he starts reacting (Mtalala 49-52).*

From the extract, Educator Mtalala did not counsel the orphan directly but did it indirectly by advising the caregiver on how to handle the learner's grief and other emotional needs. Educator Mtalala's narration implies that some orphans may be going through the process of grieving alone because the caregivers do not know how to relate to or support a grieving child.

When some of the orphaned learners were feeling lonely, Educators Dube and Mokoena reported providing emotional support to the learners by encouraging them to look upon their caregivers as parent substitutes.

*We know that we have these learners in school so we usually tell them before if you do not have parents who can be my parent at home or at school, we tell them of the importance of a parent and if you do not have a parent we also give them support they must not feel lonely. People around them are supportive, especially their grandmothers (Dube 14 & 15).*

*Maybe during events like Father's day and one learner says: "I do not have a father, what should I write?" Then I creating a topic and I tell them even if you do not have a father, your elder brother can be a father figure. Maybe if you are having an uncle, your uncle can also buy food. You should not be ashamed to take him as a father (Mokoena 18 & 19).*

Educator Mokoena was of the opinion that the orphaned learners do not have emotional problems because the grandparents provide emotional care. In contrast, Educators Dube and Mtalala believed that some orphaned learners were not receiving emotional support from their grandmothers and that the educators were providing more emotional support and creating a caring and loving family atmosphere at school. The following quotations indicate the views of some of the educators:

*They do not have emotional problems because granny brings them up and they see her as a mother figure. Presently they are seven and eight years old. Most of them their parents died when they were still young ( Mokoena 54-56).*

*...Grandmothers they stay with the orphans but they do not get full love like we give them here (Dube 24).*

*The way you handle them is the way they feel loved and closer to you because the school looks like a family to them, a close family to them. When they move away from the school they feel abandoned (Mtalala 72).*

Recognition of the psychosocial needs of the orphaned learners remains a predicament for the educators. The lack of identification of these needs in learners became more evident when Educator Mabena reported that orphans are more emotional in the early stages of their orphanhood and develop resilience with time. She considered orphans who cry a lot as weak and those who do not express their emotions as commendable. She encourages orphaned learners not to disclose themselves physically and emotionally but try to be like other learners. She expressed that:

*There is only one that I know who is very sensitive about it. I think that reason is that it is not too long that they have been orphaned. She is still feeling it just as raw as it is. The others most of them were orphaned at an early stage, when they were still not aware of what life is. They had to develop it that we do not have parents and granny is taking care of us and I am doing better with granny. In fact all of them are not exposing it. They are trying to keep it inside. They try hard to be like other learners, in fact that is what we emphasis to them (**Mabena 11-15**).*

This extract suggests that this educator's understanding of the grieving process is that the length of time that has elapsed since the death of the parent relates to the present emotional state of the orphan and this, according to Educator Mabena, tends to determine how the orphans in this study responded to grief. It may appear from the interviews with the orphans that learners who have been orphans for a long time seems to internalise their emotions or hide their vulnerability as a coping strategy. Conversely, another explanation could be that newly orphaned learners are still in the initial stages of grieving and hence emotionally expressive. For instance, the orphans interviewed seemed to be still emotional, despite the time lapse since the death of their parents. The orphaned learners could remember the details about the day their parents passed away and how they grieved. Others avoided talking about their parents because the memory was painful.

Sengendo and Nambi (1997) report that school educators lack the knowledge of identifying psychological and social problems and fail to respond to them. In the current study, Educator Chabalala confirmed that educators were often unaware of learners' emotional needs because they do not open up to talk about their emotions. Educator Dube elaborated on this saying that she was able to intervene in the problems that the orphaned learners were experiencing when the learners confided in and shared their experiences.

*...they open up and tell us so many things like what is happening at home. Then we call the grandfather or grandmother and we sit down and talk to them (**Dube 26 & 27**).*

With regard to academic work, Educators Dube, Malope and Mokoena reported that they do help the orphaned learners with their homework because they do not have an adult guardian to help them. Educator Malope's approach to helping orphaned learners who do not have somebody to assist with homework was to get somebody from the learner's

neighbourhood to assist the learner in doing the homework. Haggard (2005) describes this approach as having a homework buddy to provide the necessary support. Another strategy applied by Educator Mokoena was motivating the orphans to do their homework on their own. The educators narrated that:

*When you give them homework the learners would remain with you in the afternoon and ask you questions like - I need your help here and there what should I do when I arrive at home” That is when you start helping the learner. We do not give him or her the answers we try to simplify the work so that he or she may not find it difficult to do the work. (Dube 8 & 9).*

*I try to help the learner. For instance I give them homework. If a learners comes to me that there is no one to help them with the home work, I sit down with the learner or try to find out in the neighbourhood if there is anyone who is willing to help the learner with the homework (Malope 31 & 32).*

*They do the homework. They are hard workers because I encourage them to do the homework. I am not harsh; I tell them that you pay school fees with your granny’s money so you must work hard (Mokoena 35 & 36).*

Assisting the learners with homework is normally considered the responsibility of the parents or caregivers. According to the educators, in the absence of the parents it appears some of the educators fill the gap of parental absence by taking up the task of supporting the orphaned learners in doing homework.

### **Category 2.2.3: School management involvement in responding to the needs of orphans**

This category describes the educators’ opinions on the involvement and support of school management in responding to the needs of the orphaned learners. The school management includes the school principal, deputy principal, school management team (SMT) and school governing body (SGB). From the responses of the educators it seems that school management in the two schools was not directly involved in providing for the needs of the orphaned learners. Sometimes they however supported the efforts that some of the educators made in responding to their needs. For example, Educator Chabalala

commented that the school management encouraged and supported her efforts in assisting the orphans. She narrated:

*If you go to the principal and tell her that you have something like they do it in such a way that they not block your efforts they encourage you to go ahead . Like when I was telling you that I had to come before break to prepare the lunch for the learners. I was never hassled about it. They understood that I had to do it. When the general worker came in I asked the principal to include in her job description that she should help with this and she did it (Chabalala 21-26 & 83-85).*

Educator Mtalala also reported moral support from the principal of her school. In contrast, Educator Khumalo experienced a conflict of interest in playing the role of a caregiver. She was passionate about seeking donations for the orphaned learners to help in providing food and clothes, while the school management was more interested in donations to improve the school structure. This educator narrated:

*When I was telling my principal that I got donations from the university for the orphans and she said that you must also take donations for the school. I said ok, I would do it. I asked my sister to get donation for paving the school. She asked for computers and paving but the university wanted to know the school first, before they help the school. But this is not the job I want to do. (Khumalo 66 & 67).*

It appears that school management is also uncertain of how to provide guidance to educators in regard to supporting the orphaned learners, so they seem to encourage what the educators decide what to do.

### **Sub-theme 2.3: Sources of external support in assisting orphaned learners**

The third theme *External support* encompasses the type of assistance the orphaned learners received from outside the school context. Besides the support provided by the educators, other sources of assistance mentioned were the community within which the schools are situated, government intervention and donations from the business sector.

### Category 2.3.1: Community response to the needs of orphans

Both School A and B are situated in poor communities. According to the educators interviewed the majority of learners come from poor families. The learners are at times mistaken for orphans due to their impoverished physical appearance. The educators were divided on community involvement in assisting the orphaned learners. Five educators (Khumalo, Chabalala, Mabena, Dube, and Malope) believed that their community members were not helping the orphaned learners. Educator Dube reported that the community members come to school for help but they do not help the orphans. Educator Mabena was of the opinion that the community wants to help, but because of lack of income they cannot assist as much as they would wish to. Educator Mtalala, unlike the other educators, was aware of the community involvement in assisting orphans: she mentioned that some community organisations buy school uniforms and send food parcels to orphans. The following are the perceptions of the educator regarding how their community responds to the needs of orphans:

*I cannot see that they are helping. We are starting a school garden, maybe they will be involved. The garden is also going to help them (Dube 58-60).*

*I cannot say much about the community I think they do accept them in a sense that when I talk to that learner she said that they do receive something from the neighbours. They do feel that they are people. People in our community are poor. You give the orphans today then tomorrow you look at your children and say no it would be enough for mine and somebody else kids (Mabena 38-40).*

*I do not know about other community members because I have not communicated with them (Malope 39).*

*I think they feel that they can help but they do not know how they can do it. I do not think that the community is helping. I was asking the learner who is staying alone with her sister. She was telling me that the neighbours used to give them food but they got tired. They will give you and then when you go to them it is as if you went for food. They will then give you rotten food (Khumalo 94-96).*

*...I think that it is from an organisation because they even come with old clothes to give to these learners. They will come to school and ask how many kids need clothes. They buy*

*school uniform and other clothes that they feel comfortable to wear at home like jeans. They are different organisations within the community (Mtalala 79-80).*

*...I am not aware. What I know is that they seek help when they are supposed to go to the clinic. We adopt a nurse at the clinic. The parents can go there for help (Mokoena 39 & 40).*

Foster et al. (1997) also report contrasting views about community involvement in their study. Many community members were actively involved in helping the orphans despite their impoverished economic status, while other community members felt that they could not help the orphan households because of their own poverty.

From these educators' perception of the level of community involvement in helping the orphans, it seems that generally there is limited communication between the school and the community and a weak educator-community relationship. Most of the educators were unaware of community involvement in supporting the orphans. According to Educator Mabena, it appears that the community itself is economically impoverished, such that it is hard to tell whether they are unable or unwilling to help the orphaned learners. The fact that community members sometimes come to school for help may suggest that some of the parents in the community are unable to provide for their own needs.

Apart from community support, Educator Khumalo narrated how she had been trying to get food and clothing donations from businesses and other institutions. One of the learning institutions she approached donated clothes to the orphans and money to pay the school. She is still pursuing the businesses to contribute towards feeding the orphans, providing clothes and/or monetary donations that could be used to provide for the material needs for the orphans. She describes her efforts:

*... So I started looking for donations for the orphans. I got very few donations. I went to the social workers, I invited the police, I went to the businessman. But I did not get help. I cannot meet all their needs. I am applying for donations because the orphaned learners do not know where to go (Khumalo 10).*

Educator Mabena blamed the caregivers, the community and the government for not caring for the orphans and envisaged that institutionalising the orphans could be a solution to the existing problems. She narrates:

*I blame the government and the community at large. Since their parents are not there the government must take over, and the community especially, where they can put the orphans. Maybe they can have one place for them so that the government can send the food to one place (Mabena 42).*

The comment of Educator Mabena and the views of other educators suggest that the educators expect the members of the community to assist them in providing care to the orphaned learners.

### **Category 2.3 2: Government response to the needs of orphans**

Most of the educators mentioned the Child Support Grant and Government Feeding Scheme as government efforts for helping orphaned learners. Educator Malope reported that in School B some of the orphaned learners get a Child Support Grant and food through the Government Feeding Scheme. According to Educator Chabalala, the majority of learners in School A do not get the Child Support Grants because they are older than 14 years. Some of the orphans in School A appeared to be more deprived of their nutritional needs, when compared with learners in School B, because there is no government feeding scheme that could provide at least one meal during school days. One of the educators remarked that:

*This new government is a little bit better - they are getting grants and most of the parents they are told that the grant money they have to use on the learners. So for the school uniform it is better (Malope 10).*

The government assistance the educators talk about was mostly material support. Yet the Norms and Standards Policy expects educators to provide pastoral care that includes social and emotional needs. It is evident from this study that there is a lack of strategies for fulfilling the social and emotional needs of the learners. Educators Mabena, Chabalala

and Selepe had other expectations from government. Educator Chabalala and Mabena were of the opinion that the government should provide finance for educational activities, food and clothes. In addition, government should make a means of meeting the social and psychological needs of the learners available. Educator Selepe suggested that the government should extend the Child Support Grant to children older than 14 years, so that learners in high school could benefit from receiving these grants. The educators expressed the following suggestions:

*I wish our government could pay school fund for them, buy them clothes, food and take them out for excursions or pay for school trips - so that they feel like other learners. if they cannot adopt them, because every child needs love and family, they need somebody to call mom if they cannot do that let them provide those needs (Mabena 1.57 & 58).*

*The government should make provision for an orphanage, sporting and entertainment facilities to make the learners happy (Chabalala 1.54).*

*They should come to school and see the situation. Maybe they can extend the age for receiving social grant. (Selepe 26).*

Educators Mabena and Chabalala were concerned about lack of social services that could provide psychosocial support to the orphaned learners. Educator Khumalo mentioned that some of the problems of the orphans require professional assistance. These highlighted concerns leave one with the impression that attempts to involve social workers in the two schools have been fruitless. There was a general feeling of lack of commitment from the Social Welfare Department in assigning social workers to visit the school and assist in providing psychosocial support. The educators talked of a lot of paperwork that the Social Welfare Department expected from them every year, yet the social workers failed to respond to the cases that the educators reported. These educators expressed their frustrations as follows:

*...the Department they will say: "Go to class and write names of those learners". We always send the list and they do not do anything. And that is so painful and even the learners, I believe, that they are tired. They say that, they always call us. They write our names and they do not do anything. So, I will no longer go. It is painful on our side because you do this and that and they are not doing anything (Mabena 68).*

*I have been in this school for three years and I have not seen any social worker. When I came here the first year and discovered this I was so mad. It bothers you. I told the principal that we need a social worker. When I got the number of the learners - I realize it is not a problem of one or two learners - the principal contacted the social worker. They gave us the forms to fill in the list of the learners and their background. That was the last time we saw the person. We tried phoning. They would promise to come and if they come they give you papers to fill. Then that is the last time you see them. So we stopped. The social workers are there but maybe they have other things to look at because at school they do not bother (**Chabalala 1.55 & 56**).*

Giese et al. (2003) found that some educators were frustrated owing to the non delivery of assistance from social workers when they referred the children to them. Many educators were not aware of the services of social workers and how to contact them. In another study educators reported that they had high expectations of the social workers to get involved in supporting the orphans (Schierhout et al., 2004). Over 60 percent of the educator respondents in the study reported that they had access to the social workers. However, in this study it was acknowledged that the effectiveness of involving the social workers in terms of feedback of the referrals was not explored. In this current study, during one of the interviews Educator Khumalo gave an example of a case that needed the assistance of a social worker. The educator talked of trying to get help outside the school when an orphaned learner disclosed that she had been repeatedly raped. She contacted social workers and the police but no assistance was given to the affected learner. She narrated the following:

*Sometimes you invite the social workers but they do not come. The other learner, the parent died and she was raped and raped again and she is a sick student because she has epilepsy, so this learner will come tell me the story. I called her sister and the case was taken to the police but the police still did not take action. They just opened a docket, then nothing else happened. So, it is difficult (**Khumalo 46 & 47**).*

It is evident from the extracts that some of the educators interviewed associate social workers with paperwork and no service delivery with regard to the orphans. Educators Khumalo, Chabalala and Mtalala were of the opinion that they were playing the role of a social worker. It seems that the absence of social workers forces the educators to perform multiple roles outside their professional training. What needs to be researched is the

relationship between the social workers and the educators and the availability and capacity of the social workers to handle cases referred from schools.

### 4.3 SUMMARY

*In Chapter 4, I presented results from the interviews with the educators from School A and School B. The main themes that emerged from these interviews on how educators identified and responded to the needs of the orphaned learners are described. Most of the educators seemed to perceive orphans as learners who are generally impoverished, have emotional problems and are, at times, socially isolated. The educators derived their understanding of the needs of the orphaned learners from their appearance, behaviour and the information these learners disclosed to the educators from time to time. All these educators appeared to prioritise the need for food, clothes and school funds above other needs. The social and emotional needs, although mentioned by certain educators, were given less attention.*

These results suggest that educators understand and distinguish their roles in different ways. There were educators who identified orphaned learners and provided for their needs or they sought assistance for these learners from other sources; while there were other educators who responded to the needs of the learners by sending them for help to other educators who showed a willingness to help these children. The differential role conception seemed to strain the relationship between the educators on the staff at the two schools. The results of this study suggest that some educators felt empowered to fulfil this pastoral role, while others felt disempowered. There were incidences where some educators reported experiencing tension, frustration and intimidation between the two types of educator identity that emerged from this study. Furthermore, it appears that the educators who help orphaned learners are likely to be self-motivated by their background and lived experiences relevant to the circumstances of the orphans.

In Chapter 5, I present the emerging core category themes resulting from this research study.

## CHAPTER 5

### EMERGING CORE CATEGORY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present the core category that emerged from the data and discuss how it relates to the other categories. A core category is the “central phenomenon around which all the categories are related” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:116). The core category is distinguished from other categories by being central and related to other categories, appears frequently, is logical and consistent and is able to explain the main points mentioned in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Coding and categorising the data as described in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, identified the core category. The categories that emerged from the data coding were sorted into sub-themes, from which I could distil and then present the key findings of this study. In working through the transcripts I decided to add some form of enumeration that would help in establishing the frequency with which specific categories appeared in the data. I was of the opinion that this exercise would provide an indication of the categories that the educators were most concerned about and which, therefore, should feature prominently in developing the theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Moreover, the process of identifying the prominent categories helped me to structure this chapter. A summary of this exercise is presented in Table 5.1. (It should be noted that the number given in the frequency column reflects the number of that that specific category was mentioned by respondents and does not express a percentage of the total number of categories.)

**Table 5.1: Category frequency**

	Category	Frequency
1	Educator-orphaned learner relationship	79
2	Learner behaviour	61
3	Material needs	47
4	Orphan-non-orphan relationship	43
5	Emotional needs	37
6	Educator fulfilling needs	37
7	Community response	33
8	Government response	30
9	Constrains	29
10	Educator-educator relationship	19
11	Responsibility	19
12	Social needs	10
13	Management response	10
14	Orphan appearance	10
15	Motivation	7

Table 5.1 shows that the category of *the relationship between the educators and the orphaned learners* had the highest incidence. In the context of this study, this category of the relationship between educators and orphaned learners was described by some of the educators as being a positive and fruitful interaction, which was based on empathy, confidentiality, trust and friendship. For example, educators who helped orphaned learners described their relationship with the orphans as one that involved inquiring about their needs, encouraging orphans to *open up* and providing love and care. These educators were also willing to share their own life experiences with the orphaned learners. Sharing experiences appears to be part of the process of building trust by being personally involved in the relationship. The element of a trust relationship, as noted in this study, is in agreement with Ahn's (2005) findings, which highlight that when an

educator shows empathy for children's negative emotions – such as anger, loneliness and sadness – it contributes towards positive educator-child relationships.

## 5.2 Relationship between sub-themes and the emerging core category

In the following section the categories, sub-themes and themes of this study are reviewed. In the process I wrote memos to cover the link the sub-themes formed with regard to the relationship between the educators and the orphaned learners to determine how these sub-themes related to the emerging core category. I also chose to write memos<sup>21</sup> on the relationship between the categories as presented in this study. I found writing memos to record my observations to be a more flexible work method than that of using a paradigm model,<sup>22</sup> as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The following section is a presentation of the relationships between the categories that emerged through the process of constant comparative analysis. The categories that emerged were various perceptions the educators had of orphaned learners; identifying orphans and their needs, and role perception.

### 5.2.1 Educators' perceptions of orphaned learners and their needs

It was apparent from the interviews that some educators perceived orphaned learners as *problem learners* and their disruptive behaviour was seen as being caused by a lack of material needs. This perception suggests that some educators may overlook the root cause of the disruptive behaviour of these learners. Rather, it is likely that some educators may have based their perceptions on the fact that the orphaned learners did not wear school uniform and did not have lunch. Other educators perceived the behaviour of the orphaned learners as violent, troublesome or withdrawn. This perception would most likely be due to inadequate communication and understanding by the educators of the orphaned

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<sup>21</sup> Memos are notes that a researcher writes on the categories and themes in the process of constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this chapter the memos written were on the analysis of the connection between the emerging themes.

<sup>22</sup> The paradigm model is a systematic conceptual analytical strategy for organising and exploring the relationship between categories in terms of causal condition, intervening conditions, action, interaction and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

learners' emotional and social needs. As an example, one educator assumed that an orphaned learner who was not wearing school uniform was ignoring school rules, while there was a possibility that the learner did not have a school uniform.

The educators' misconceptions of the behaviour of the orphaned learner are not unique to this study. Previous studies have demonstrated that educators and other adults fail to understand the psychological distress orphans experience and respond to their behaviour by either punishing them or ignoring them (Foster, 2002; Giese et al., 2003; UNAIDS, 2002). Such responses endeavour to control the behaviour of the learner externally which may not be effective in cases where the learner's behaviour might have been motivated by internal psychological problems (Glasser, 1985). Ryan and Deci (2000) point out that human beings can be active or passive, constructive or indolent, depending on biological factors and social environmental influences. The two researchers addressed the effect of social contextual factors on behaviour and state that social contextual factors could either undermine or enhance an individual's intrinsic motivation, self-regulation and well being, making the individual proactive and engaged or alienated and passive. I find this argument relevant to the emerging themes of relationships in this study. For instance, one of the social factors that seem to affect the orphaned learners is the relationship with others. Some of the orphans were withdrawn while others felt alienated by their peers.

*When you stand up when you are an orphan they have a topic about you – they  
arrow you. My friend is HIV. She is not happy because other people they laugh  
at her. When she comes they run away (Lindiwe.1.17 & 36).*

A possible explanation of the orphans withdrawing from others could be a way of coping with the traumatic experience of the death of a parent (Cohen & Mannarino, 2004).

There were also narrations of positive experiences of orphans having a close relationship with their peers. From the interviews with the orphans it seems that human relationships are an influencing factor on the well being of these children. Wubbolding (2005:44) asserts, "Human relationship alleviates pain and can even lessen posttraumatic stress." UNAIDS (2002) concurs with Wubbolding in calling attention to human relationships,

pointing out that one of the activities designed to address the psychosocial needs of the orphans is the emphasis on communicating with the orphan to help improve the child's self-esteem. Glasser (1965) identifies the need for self-worth as one the basic human needs. The importance of communication in building a positive relationship between the orphaned learners and the educators was evident in this study. The orphaned learners seemed to be more willing to talk to the educators who initiated an interactive relationship with them.

Apart from the different perceptions that some educators have of orphaned learners, there were also misconceptions of the relationship between the orphans and other learners. The educators' perception of the relationship between the orphaned learners and the non-orphans appeared to be linked to the relationship between the educators and the orphaned learners. Some educators reported that the orphans got along well with non-orphans for example:

*So far we have not had anything reported that the orphans are segregated. They mix with them. They are not isolated. We have not received any report unless they are shy to report (Mabena 36 & 37).*

Another educator indicated that other learners discriminated against the orphaned learners.

*Those who have parents, the learners when you are from a poor family they will joke about it they will laugh at you, they will do funny things. You become a joke. They are afraid to come out. They isolate them. They say, "I do not want to go with this one". I have been observing them. You will not become their friendship until you group your self with other orphans. Like the students who are eating at school, the non-orphans do not want to mix themselves with those who are eating. They take them as if they are poor (Khumalo 27,28 & 87).*

It appears that both perceptions depended on the type of relationship that existed between the educator and the orphaned learners. Jarvis (1995) points out that teaching-learning is not just a transaction, because it involves human interaction and relationships are formed between the educator and the learners. The relationship formed is out of care and concern

for others. Jarvis (1995) further distinguishes the relationship formed as *I-Thou* and *I-Group*; where an *I-Thou* relationship is between the educator and the learner and an *I-Group* relationship is between the educator and the class as a whole. It was evident from the study that the deductions made by some of the educators on the relationship between orphans and non-orphans were informed by the narrations of the orphans to the educators through interaction and involvement in the relationship – this fits in with the *I-Thou* relationship described by Jarvis (1995). Similarly, Pomeroy's (1999) interview with excluded students – on their relationship with educators – reveals that educators who knew the students, talked and explained things and listened to them, were able to assume the students' perspective. Richter (2004) in support for the positive involvement of the educator-learner relationship suggests that an adult who is in close contact with children can be trained to identify children's emotional needs and give support.

*In the same line of argument, Gillespie (2002) highlights the factors that contribute to student-educator connection namely, mutual knowing, trusting, respecting and communication. The process of knowing involves sharing personal information, recognising the student's life outside the school and getting to know one another beyond the role of educator or student. Pomeroy's (1999) study on educator-learner relationship with students who experienced difficulties in school revealed that students responded positively to the educators who make efforts to establish a relationship with them, who take on a pastoral role and demonstrate care and concern. The students from this study tended to trust and be at ease with the educators when they knew the educator better. Two types of student-educator relationship emerged from this study, namely educators in connected relationships and educators in non-connected relationships.*

*In the current study, Educators Mtalala, Khumalo and Mokoena believed in sharing their life experiences with the orphans to make them understand that they were not alone. In the Gillespie (2002) study, the educators who knew these students were able to recognise and respond to their learning needs. The knowledge of the student's learning needs enabled the educator to provide appropriate support and prevented the educators from forming and working from an assumption of the student's needs. On the other hand, educators who were not competent to identify their true needs, kept a distant between themselves and the learners and did not have a connection with or know the learners. This study has highlighted the connection between knowing the student and the student-educator relationship.*

Other qualities identified in the Gillespie (2002) study were *compassion* and *commitment*. These students regarded the educators as physically available and connected. It would

appear that compassion and competence should be interwoven in the response to the needs of the learners. In this study one would assume that the educators who refer the orphans to other educators for help act out of a lack of compassion and competence, while the helping educators' act of compassion, although they lack the competence to handle all the needs of the orphans, is seen through their efforts in building relationships with the learners and trying to fulfil some of their needs, even if only in a rudimentary way. In the current study it seems that some educators are emotionally and physically ready and able to be available to the learners – despite their instructional workload at school.

It would seem that the closely involved relationship that some educators had with the orphans in this study was dependent on the educators' observation of the physical appearance of the learners. When some educators identified orphaned learners by direct observation they seemed to engage with the learners in a close friendly relationship, where the learner felt at liberty to open up and talk about their experiences. The educators who used such strategies tended to identify needs that went beyond the appearance of the orphans, while other educators who relied solely on the learner's appearance, presumed that once the learner wore a school uniform they would be like other learners and would need no further assistance. For instance, one of the educators reported that at times she bought school uniforms for the orphaned learners so that they could be like other learners. Although wearing a uniform could superficially portray a sense of belonging, the emotional satisfaction and social acceptance that, according to Glasser (1965), is part of belonging, remains unfulfilled. Thus, the perception that the educator has of the orphaned learners as well as their relationship affected the way in which the educator identified the orphaned learners.

*They would come and tell you “I do not have this and this”. Then I tell them “you go and tell your parents to buy them”. The learners would come and tell me pathetic stories like “there is no one to buy for me I am staying alone I do not have parents”. The others, the parents just disappeared, others their parents passed away. Then I started identifying learners who are orphans (Khumalo 3 & 4).*

### **5.2.2 Educators' strategies for identifying orphans**

Educators' identification of orphaned learners from their behaviour or appearance does not seem to be accurate. Getting learners to open up and tell their experiences is likely to be a more accurate and humane strategy for identifying not just the orphans and their needs, but also a way of developing a close relationship with the orphans. However, it is a challenging task to get the orphans to open up because some of the orphans might still be grieving the death of their parents, while others simply did not trust their educators and so were reluctant to disclose their needs. Literature identifies withdrawal and detachment as signs of grief (Willis, 2002; Cohen & Mannarino, 2004).

Educators' understanding of the behaviour of the orphans as described in this study was related to detecting signs of their being deprived of material needs. Identifying orphans by appearance tended to be most frequently mentioned by these educators. A few of the educators also commented that certain of the non-orphaned learners from financially poor families also appeared impoverished and could be mistaken for orphans, while certain orphaned learners, who did not appear impoverished, were not identified as orphans. This conception of orphanhood could be due to orphanhood often being associated with poverty. Other studies have reported similar findings. Giese et al. (2003) report that some children could not open up and tell the educators about their situation at home because they are scared and ashamed of exposing their material deprivation, while other orphans open up to a sympathetic ear. Schierhout et al. (2004) also report that although the educators felt that they played a role in providing material support for learners that were in need, some learners were reluctant to approach the educators for help. Adato et al (2005) note that while some orphans talk about their problems and needs, others isolate themselves, refuse to talk and they cry. These findings indicate a broken relationship between the educator and the orphaned learners, as a result of grief and the gap created by the death of the parents.

The interviews with both the educators and the orphaned learners revealed that the process of building relationships was based on trust. The educators assured the orphaned

learners of confidentiality when they disclosed their experiences to them. Pomeroy's (1999) study on the educator-student relationship revealed that students responded more positively to educators who took the initiative to establish friendly relationships with the students than educators who made them feel undervalued. In the current study, it would appear that getting orphaned learner to open up – by initiating an involvement in the relationship – encourages the learners to disclose their experiences to the educators.

Likewise, Loots and Mnguni (2007) report that children in their study were able to communicate openly with educators who made the children feel loved and respected. Strategies such as memory-box<sup>23</sup> making have been used to assist children in displaying their emotions and at the same time developing the educators' counselling skills (Loots & Mnguni, 2007). It seems that the lack of a close relationship or other strategies that encourage the learner to disclose their experiences may result in learner withdrawal. For example, one of the educators who identified orphaned learners through routine administrative tasks gave the impression that her role perception is pedagogical. The educator appeared to have limited involvement with the learners and seemed not to know much about the orphans. Although it is likely, as indicated by this study, that appearance and behaviour could be pointers to cases that need attention, it seems that there was need to further investigate the kind of support needed by interacting directly with the orphaned learners.

### **5.2.3 Educators identifying needs of orphans in order to provide support**

Findings from this study indicate that most of the educators tend to identify and prioritise orphans' material needs more than their emotional and social needs. One possible reason could be that educators were unaware of emotional and social needs, as these were not as easily observable through appearance or behaviour. This finding suggests that educators lack the knowledge and skills to identify these needs and rely on learner appearance to

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<sup>23</sup> A memory box is any container with a collection of special and valuable belongings of oneself or one's loved ones kept for remembrance of how one celebrated life (Hallam & Vine 1996; Catlin, 2005)

determine the learner's needs. Additionally, these educators could be identifying needs that they think they are able to fulfil without being emotionally involved, such as material needs. Foster et al (1997), found that psychological problems are less obvious than material ones and may even remain unnoticed by the children themselves. There is a possibility that orphans could also be in a state of grief and denial thus avoiding revealing their emotional needs.

Although there is a possibility of deducing needs by observing a person, the skills needed to analyse the behaviour need special expertise, which many educators may not have. One educator (who helps orphaned learners) narrated that orphans needed to be given love. This educator further explained that when the orphaned learners are given love they feel comfortable telling the educator their problems. In this study, as mentioned earlier, a lack of communication with the orphaned learner resulted in misleading assumptions of how the educators deduce the needs of the orphans. One educator was of the opinion that learners do not have emotional needs because they are being taken care of by a granny. Such assumptions also surfaced in the study done by Urassa et al (1997). The study disclosed that there were no major disadvantages between orphans and non-orphans because the extended family system appeared to be able to provide care to the orphans (Urassa et al, 1997). What was missing from the study was a detailed report on the kind of care extended to orphans and the views of orphaned learners regarding the support that they received from their extended family. The care given would most probably be on the physical level, while the orphans also need social and psychological support (Wolff & Fesseha, 1999; Veale; Trocaire, Ndibeshye & Nyirimihigo, 2001; Walker, 2002).

The current study gives that impression that educator perceptions and provision of material needs seem to overshadow identifying and fulfilling emotional and social needs. Educators with limited involvement with the orphans in this study were more likely to have identified orphans when they lacked school uniforms, were unable to pay school funds, or did not eat during lunchtime or if their behaviour (while in class) was disruptive. This observation supports previous studies which indicate that educators identify orphaned learners by a lack of school fees, poor clothes, a lack of food or

misbehaviour (Foster, 1995; Giese et al., 2003; SCOPE-OVC/Zambia, 2003; De Witt & Lessing, 2005).

It is evident in the current study that the interpretation of the orphaned learner's behaviour by the educators seems to have partly depended on the physical appearance of the learner and the relationship between the educator and the orphaned learners. The educators who were more involved with the orphaned learners tended to inquire about reasons for the orphaned learner's misbehaviour and to explain the orphans' behaviour as a projection of lack of material needs, as well as emotional and social care. For example, two educators believed that orphaned learners got involved in criminal activities to survive because there was nobody accountable for their needs, while other educators who were less involved assumed that the orphans were troublesome, delinquent children.

It is evident from the study that there are different ways in which educators identify orphaned learners. While some educators identify the orphans by their appearance, by their behaviour and through interaction, other educators identify the orphans during the process of administrative duty. That is, when registering the learners' details in the class register at the beginning of the year. It seems that the processes of identifying orphaned learners and identifying their needs are interwoven. The interviews revealed that sometimes the educators would identify learners who are in need of material support and then confirm that the learners are orphans. At other times, the educator would identify the orphans and then determine needs that were not being fulfilled. Thus, the identification of orphans and the identification of their needs would appear to be connected.

#### **5.2.4 How educators' perceive their role in responding to the needs of orphaned learners**

The findings of this study suggest that the way in which educators perceived their roles<sup>24</sup> in helping to manage the needs of orphaned learners may be determined by how the educators responded to these needs. Some of the educators in the study played the role of

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<sup>24</sup> Educator role is the things that an educator does with regard to the expected responsibilities of an educator (Walkington, 2005).

**providing care** for the orphaned learners as part of their responsibility, while others preferred to **refer** orphaned learners to the educators who provided such care. These educator responses created **two identities** for the educators in School A and School B. Walkington (2005) describes educator identity as the personal things that indicate how one identifies with being an educator; one's beliefs about teaching and being an educator and how one feels as an educator. Jansen (2001) breaks down the definition of educator identity into professional, emotional and political perspectives. The professional identity is linked to the perception of educators' ability to teach, the emotional part of the educator identity is how educators feel about their ability to cope with the emotional needs of learners, while the political aspect of the educator identity is about how the educator understands and responds to change.

The emotional aspect of the educator identity speaks to this study in that the two identities that emerged are based on the emotional aspect of the educators' response to orphaned learners. There were *educators who helped orphaned learners* and *educators who referred the orphans to other educators for help*. The different identities further imply the varying abilities of educators to cope with the emotional needs of these learners. There is a possibility that the educators who refer the orphans to other educators for help feel more comfortable in the educator professional identity and less comfortable in the emotional identity. The possibility of the different areas of comfort is beyond the scope of this study to measure, thus it remains a hypothesis emerging from the analysis of this study

The two identities that emerged from this study also seemed to influence how orphans relate to educators. Some orphaned learners tended to open up to educators who were considered *educators who help orphans* and were reluctant to discuss their problems with other educators. In addition, the educators' responses impacted on their relationships with the orphaned learners and the way roles are perceived and vice versa. When orphans confided in an educator, the educator became aware of their needs and then became emotionally involved and committed to helping the orphan. In these cases the educator

included aspects of fulfilling the learners' needs as part of the educators' responsibility. For example, one educator narrated that:

*When you give them homework the learners would remain with you in the afternoon and ask you questions like: "I need your help here and there what should I do when I arrive at home" That is when you start helping the learner. We do not give him or her the answers. We try to simplify the work so that he or she may not find it difficult to do the work (Dube 8 & 9).*

It seems that the educator's response to the needs of the orphans is based on the knowledge of the needs and self-conceptualisation of the role of the educator. When the educator becomes aware of the needs of the orphaned learner, the educator looks for ways of helping the learner, unlike the situation where the needs are not disclosed by the learner or identified by the educator.

It is evident from this study that some educators perceive caring for orphans as a voluntary responsibility in addition to teaching. The implication of this perception could be that the educators may not be aware of some aspects of the seven roles of educators as listed in Chapter 1 of this study, especially the role of pastoral care (Department of Education, 2000). With regard to the role of pastoral care, the indicators of the Department of Education (2000) with regard to *Norms and Standards* stipulate that educators are expected to "demonstrate the ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators". The suggestion of the educator's pastoral role with regard to this study would imply that educators provide care and support for the orphaned learners and create an environment that is conducive to addressing the needs of the orphaned learners. Educators who emerged from the study as having a professionally driven identity may be supporting the learners by referring them to other educators owing to lack of competency or personality factors. The educators did act when they chose to refer the learners to other educators who have been proven able to help.

In this study, despite the presence of the policy that stated the roles of the educator, the educators interviewed did not seem to be prepared for the responsibility of caring for

children in special circumstances. Grove (1999) suggests that educators normally receive little or no formal training in pastoral roles and, consequently, lack of knowledge could be a reason for reluctance in taking up the responsibility of pastoral care.

Since one of the competencies of the educators stated in the pastoral role is the ability of the educator to seek professional services to address some of the problems in the school (Department of Education, 2000), one would expect such assistance to be accessible to the educators. From the current study there would seem to be a lack of resources and support through which the educators' pastoral role could be fulfilled. The educators stated that they were concerned about the lack of support from other government sectors. It is evident from this study that support systems for supplementing educators' support are not in place. For instance, some educators tried to access professional services, such as a social worker and the police (in cases of abuse), and it would seem – from the educators' responses – that there was little or no support from these professional services.

In their study, Bennell, Hyde and Swainson (2002) reported that some of the reasons why schools are providing little support could be due to the absence of a pastoral care policy from the Ministry of Education, a dominant perception about the role of the school, lack of necessary resources and an unsupportive school environment. The findings of this study suggest that policy without the necessary support structure may be ineffective where there is a need to provide such care to orphaned learners. In addition, the findings of this study also propose that educators who referred orphaned learners to other educators for help might not have known how to respond to the needs of a grieving learner. This finding relates to the Reid and Dixon (1999) study on educators' attitude to coping with grief in the public school classroom, which revealed that educators showed discomfort and lack of preparation for coping with the death of family members of children in their classroom and required assistance in knowing how to deal with grieving children.

The behaviour of the educators who respond to the needs of the orphaned learners by referring learners to other educators for help could be explained within the framework of

Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination theory; which states that social contextual conditions either undermine or enhance self-motivation, social function and personal well being. This theory explains that an individual's behaviour and motivation is controlled by external factors. In the context of the current study the educators who refer orphans to other educators, apart from not knowing how to help the orphans, probably feel alienated and passive because the school environment does not recognise them as being supportive. One educator expressed the following:

*I used to help but presently it is not part of what I am doing. I do not feel that I am doing enough because I am not able to help that much since they have a relevant person doing that (Malope 28 & 42).*

A possible explanation could be that the other educators are projecting their frustration of not being recognised as educators who help orphaned learners or assuming that the educator who helps orphaned learners are in a higher status position than the other educators. Another educator who helped orphaned learners did not want to condemn others who were not helping because her understanding was that providing care for the orphans was an individual choice. In this case it was not the social factors that influenced the educators' response but the choices the educator made. The general assumption was that it is not the responsibility of the educators to provide care for the orphaned learners. However, at the same time there was evidence that there was tension between the educators' two identities. One of the educators' reports:

*The other time I was angry when they said I am Mother Teresa. I ask myself: "Why am I Mother Teresa?" They said we are not being sarcastic. I asked them "How can you send a learner to me and tell the learner Go to Mother Teresa?" Do you think that it is fair? Can't you help the learner? When the learners come to you and tell you their problems you refer the learner to me. It is not fair (Khumalo 55-57).*

Despite what may seem to be a strained relationship between the educators, regarding their responses to the orphans, some of the educators who helped orphaned learners did seek assistance from the other educators at times and the educators who referred learners to other educators responded positively. It became apparent from this positive response

that, in general, the lack of response by these educators could be due to lack of motivation or lack of recognition of their ability to help orphans. Ryan and Deci (2000) explain such a tendency as *amotivation* – a state where there is lack of intention to act at all or act without intent. The possible reasons for amotivation in this study could be a lack of competence to take up the role of providing appropriate care and the personality type. Another possible consideration could be high educator workload.

In recent years the *educator-learner ratio* for primary schools was set at 40:1 and for secondary schools at 35:1 resulting in large class sizes. In this study two educators in School A mentioned that they had classes of 75 to 80 learners. Overpopulation of the classroom may make it difficult for the educators to identify and fulfil the needs of the orphaned learners. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) point out that it is impossible to meet the needs of all learners in overcrowded and under resourced classrooms.

Ayers (2006) concur and suggest that reduced class size is beneficial for learners experiencing learning and other socioeconomic problems. Apart from class size, education has become learner centred and educational policy has also changed to being *learner centred*, which implies that educators have to give more individual support. Inclusive education has also been introduced into schools, resulting in learners with special education needs entering their classes. The diversity of needs to which educators are required to respond becomes overwhelming.

Other researchers have also indicated concern over educators' workload and the responsibility of providing care. For instance, Giese et al. (2003) point out that the lack of response from educators could be due to over-extension of the role of the educator, without providing assistance from other service providers; like social workers, police, nurses and others. Bennell (2005) concurs with Giese et al. (2003) in reporting that some educators identified time constraints and an overcrowded curriculum as factors that hinder educator response to the needs of the learners. The general feeling is that if educators cannot give all learners the same amount of care and dedication, then they would rather give less support to everyone.

There is also the question of training as mentioned earlier. Many educators may not have been trained to deal with learners with special education needs (including the orphaned learner). The educators do not help because they do not know how to help. Or they wanted to become an educator (read as *instructor of content*) not a pastoral worker – what Jansen (2001) refers to as professional identity.

The educators' dilemma with regard to their role priority appears to be a common problem. A study in the United Kingdom aimed at reviewing the relationship between the pastoral care and the academic function of secondary school educators indicated that at times educators tend to prioritise one role over the other (Watkins, 1999). Chittenden (1999) describes his study of pastoral care in Australian schools, relating how pastoral care in the study was structured around the house system and it was the house tutor's responsibility to provide pastoral care for the learners in a particular house. Although the provision of pastoral care is specified within the role of tutorship, it is the same educators who are tutors, academic instructors and managers of extracurricular activities. The educators who participated in this study seemed less interested in formal pastoral programmes and more concerned with academic work and informal caring during the teaching process. The findings of this study and experiences from other countries suggest that expecting educators to teach and provide pastoral care may be overstressing the role of the educator, if not creating conflict in their roles.

Apart from a possibility of the educators' lack of response due to uncertainty of how to approach the orphans, other reasons for lack of response could be a lack of resources, coupled with an inability of educators to fulfil their own needs. A study by UNAIDS (2002) indicates that educators reported lack of resources as a reason for their inability to assist orphans. Bennell and others (2002) further report that the caregivers were of the opinion that educators lacked sensitivity to the needs of orphans and other children; educators on the other hand pointed out that their personal lives outside the school had impacted on their morale and their response to the needs of the orphans. These studies point to the fact that educators are also human beings with different personalities, strengths and weaknesses; implying that the way in which the educators responded to the

orphaned learners could be determined by other factors and is more unsatisfactory where there is lack of training in providing the necessary care.

### 5.2.5 “Personality or policy”

In the current study there was no indication that the response to the holistic needs of the orphaned learners was initiated or directed by policy guidelines. It is likely that educators responded to the needs of the orphaned learners through intrinsic motivation and the way in which they identified themselves with the orphaned learners, and not necessarily in compliance with externally imposed regulations, such as the pastoral role stated by the Department of Education (2000). What appeared to be the accepted definition of *pastoral work* for the purpose of this study was educators providing for these children’s material and as interpersonal needs, including counselling, supervision and care. Some of the educators’ responses engendered the impression that the common factor among the educators who provided emotional and social care was that they were intrinsically motivated<sup>25</sup> by their own background experiences, religious beliefs and counselling values. Some of these educators could relate to the circumstances of the orphaned learners and respond in an empathetic and altruistic manner. The emerging finding that suggests the possibility of motivation as a factor that explains the different responses of the educators towards the orphaned learners is relevant to Ryan and Deci self-regulation theory, which emphasises that “people will be intrinsically motivated only for the activities that hold intrinsic value for them, activities that have appeal of novelty, challenge and aesthetic value” (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 71). In the present study, responding positively to the needs of the orphans seems to hold intrinsic value for the “educators who help orphaned learners”, for example the educators who help orphaned learners said that:

*Once you help these kids and you see their faces it makes you feel happy. Just to see them happy fulfils you. Even during lunch when you look at them, when they eat it makes you feel happy (Chabalala10 & 33-34).*

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<sup>25</sup> Intrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 71).

Figure 5.1 represents the relationship between the categories identified from the findings of this study.

**Figure 5.1: Relationship between categories**

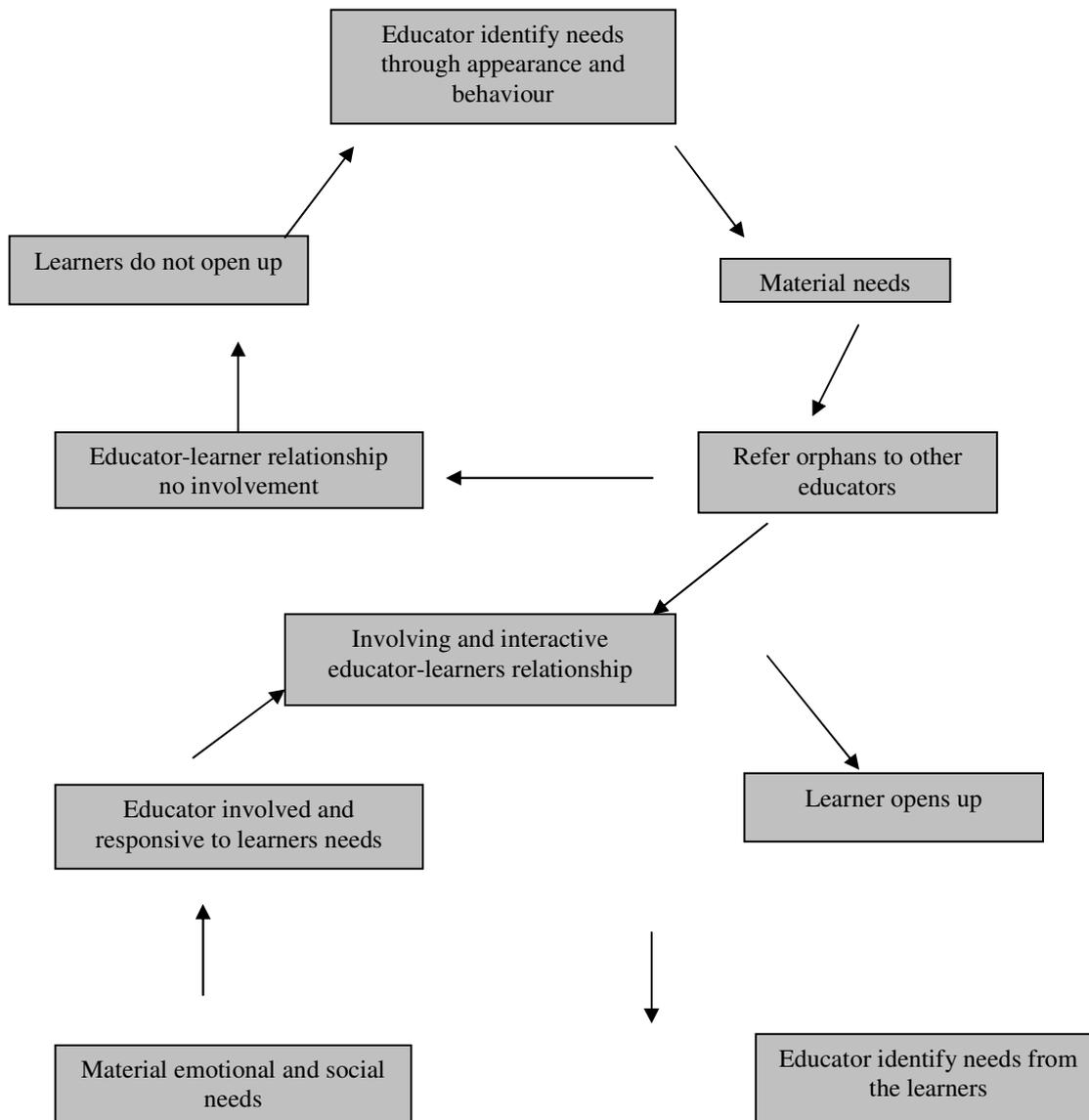


Figure 5.1 presents two cycles, one leading to the other. One of the educators in this study identified the needs of the orphaned learners by the appearance and behaviour of the learners. The needs identified by the educators were mostly material requirements. Some

of the educators, after identifying the orphaned learners, refer the learners to other educators for support. There seems to be little involvement in the relationship between the learners and the educators who refer the learners to other educators for support, thus the learners appear reluctant to confide in them. Owing to the lack of an involved relationship, it seems that educators' identify orphans by their appearance and infer their needs from their behaviour and appearance. However, the learners tend to confide in educators who establish a committed, interactive relationship with them. The educators identify the learners' needs by interacting with them. Through an interactive relationship the teachers are able to identify the emotional, social and material needs of the learners and respond to these needs.

### **5.3 SUMMARY**

In Chapter 5, I recorded that it became evident the educators tended to identify the orphans by their appearance and behaviour but also when they disclosed their experiences to the educators. Where there were indications of limited interaction, the educators tended to identify material needs and referred the orphans to other educators for help. However, in other cases of educator-orphaned learner involvement, the orphans shared their experiences with the educators and the educators also shared their lived experiences with the orphans. Owing to the mutual relationship established, a level of trust was developed and the educators were able to identify the material as well as emotional and social needs of the learners. The depth of educator involvement seems to allude to their commitment to helping the orphaned learners.

In Chapter 6 the themes that emerged from this study are examined in relation to literature on this subject.

## CHAPTER 6

# EXAMINING THE EMERGING THEMES IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the emerging themes from the interviews with the orphaned learners and the educators. The relationship between the educators and orphaned learners in terms of fulfilling the needs of the learners emerged as the core category. In this chapter, a review of the literature on studies and theories related to the emerging themes are discussed. The literature review explores how the emerging themes relate to the existing knowledge of basic human needs and behaviour to provide an understanding of the responses of the educators towards the needs of the orphaned learners.

In the following section, I review the following:

- Attachment theory – which was developed by Bowlby and Ainsworth
- Choice theory – which was developed by Glasser

These authors and researchers theorise about the factors that contribute to fulfilling human needs. I chose attachment theory because the theory explores the relationship between a child and a parent or parent figure that facilitates the fulfilment of needs. The nature of the relationship described in the theory may provide insight into understanding the needs of orphaned learners and the relationship between the learners and the educators that emerged in the study. Choice theory focuses on involved relationships based on love and care as an essential component in the process of fulfilling needs. In this study the educators reported that orphaned learners tend to confide in educators who had a close involved relationship with them. I argue that these theories have relevance to the

emerging themes in this study and may provide insight into understanding the phenomenon.

## 6.2 ATTACHMENT THEORY

Parents are normally expected to provide for their children's material and non-material needs, including emotional and social needs. In addition, parents are expected to provide a secure base from which the child can explore the world and to which they can return if stressed or frightened, or for comfort (Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman & Powell, 2002). The **supportive relationship** that bonds a child to the parent and **facilitates the fulfilment of the child's needs** is explained by *attachment theory*, which was developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992; Holmes, 2003; Bettmann, 2006). I will present some of the principles of attachment theory and highlight those features that are relevant to the present study that could be used as a lens through which we can understand the behaviour of the orphans and the educators. The premise of attachment theory is that children are born with a predisposition to attach to the parent or caregiver and their behaviour is geared towards maintaining proximity with the parents (Bettmann 2006). In other words, when the parent or caregiver is around the child feels safe and secure. The bond established between a child and a parent or caregiver is mutual in that the child seeks protection from the parent or caregiver, who provides safety and security for the child (Goldberg, 2000).

Attachment theory further postulates that when a child is faced with a threat the child will seek to connect with the *attachment figure*, from whom the child may obtain comfort and, when the threat is eliminated, they will begin to explore again (Bowlby, 1988; Holmes, 2003). The behaviour of the child that develops when seeking a secure base is called *attachment behaviour* and it is triggered by separation from the attachment figure (Holmes, 2003). The relationship or connection between the parent or caregiver perceived by the child as the attachment figure not only meets the needs of the child (social, emotional and cognitive) but also determines the child's behaviour, in that the child internalises the

experiences with the caregiver in terms of the internal working model,<sup>26</sup> which determines the way in which the child perceives and develops concepts of the world and the self (Bretherton, 1992; Holmes, 2003; Fonagy, 2003).

Pringle (1975) concurs with the notion that the child's early experiences determine future behaviour and he asserts that the parents in a stable loving relationship provided by the mother and the father initially meet the child's need for love. The relationship established forms the foundational base for future relationships. Fonagy (2003) describes the process as "taking forward early relationship experiences into adult personality and functioning". In the context of this study, the **influence of the attachment figure** that may greatly influence the behaviour of the orphaned learner in some cases seemed to lacking. The results of this study revealed that two learners from child-headed families experience a gap in finding an appropriate attachment figure for **support and to fulfil the role-model function**. From the narrations of one learner it appeared that the learner was at risk of growing up without an appropriate parenting pattern or working model to form a base for future behaviour.

There are four major working models identified by certain attachment theory researchers (Bretherton, 1992; Marvin et al., 2002; Holmes, 2003). In the first model, the *secure attachment*, the child experiences autonomous parenting patterns in which the relationship with the parents or caregivers is one that acknowledges the needs of the child and provides security, protection, comfort, emotional reassurance and independence to explore the environment. Such attachment in the context of the current study would be orphans with caregivers who provide material as well as emotional and social support. The orphaned learners in such families, according to this model, are likely to develop internal working models of self as being worthy, reliable, responsive and loving and to view the self positively. The experiences of some of the orphaned learners interviewed suggest that most of the caregivers and educators were unable or unwilling to provide the orphans with holistic support.

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<sup>26</sup> Internal working models are generalised models of self and others built on repeated patterns of interactive experience between the child and the parent or caregiver (Holmes, 2003:16). The models are constructed depending on the experiences of the child with the attachment figure.

The second model is *insecure-anxious attachment*. A child experiencing this attachment pattern is one whose parental behaviour is characterised by avoidance and dismissal. The parents have minimum intimate attachment and care-giving interaction. With such experience the child may grow into an adult with a tendency to avoid or reject intimate relationships, shared experiences, feeling, goals and plans.

The third model is *insecure-avoidance attachment*. A child from a family with an avoidance behavioural pattern experiences parents or caregivers who portray ambivalent-preoccupied behavioural characteristics. Such a child is over dependent on the parents and the parents minimise the child's opportunities to explore because the parents feel uncomfortable.

The last model is the *insecure child* in disordered parental behaviour. The attachment pattern in this model lacks coherence and stability. The child grows up in fear and the roles may be reversed, such that the child organises emotional attachment care instead of the parent or caregiver. In the three insecure models the child generally experiences being rejected and not being given the independence to explore. The child tends to develop internal working models of self as unworthy of love, incompetent and ineffective and may display symptoms of anxiety, depression and disruptive personal bonds (Bretherton, 1992; Marvin et al., 2002; Holmes, 2003). Some of the experiences of the orphaned learners in this study suggest a sense of insecurity, the feeling of being rejected and unworthy of love, especially the orphans living in child-headed families without adult supervision.

The focus of relevance of attachment theory in the present study is that it provides an **understanding of the supportive relationship** (Bennet & Saks, 2006) **needed by orphans**, whose bond with the attachment figure is broken when the parent(s) pass away. Holmes (2003) points out that when children are separated or bereaved they may experience anguish, withdrawal, yearning, despair, apathy, anger, misery and protest. Some of the orphans in the study had similar emotions. Although some of the educators described them as delinquent learners, attachment theorists view such behaviour as the

consequences of the lack of an attachment base. The narrations of some of the experiences of the orphans suggest that they do not have a secure base to turn to when they need material, emotional and social support. One of the orphaned learners expressed:

*...I felt good because my mother was still alive and everyday she bought me something (Thato.1.4)*

Some of the orphans had caregivers who did provide well for their material needs but the small number of narrations involving a positive relationship may suggest that the social and emotional needs of the orphans were not being fulfilled. Two orphans interviewed from child-headed families did not have an attachment figure to provide a secure base for them. They relied on their older sibling for guidance and protection.

In one of these families the older sibling did not provide a secure base but instead the sibling was the source of threat. For example, the sister of the orphaned learner brought men into the house who threatened and raped her. Based on the experiences of this learner, it appears that in the absence of parents, orphaned learners have to find **new ways of meeting their needs** and, more particularly, establishing new safe havens with someone who is able and willing to provide support and protection. In response to this need of the orphaned learner, further research is required to determine whether educators are able to provide such a *secure base* for the orphaned learner.

Attachment theory explains that a child's internalised working model of attachment is developed during infancy in response to the behaviour of the attachment figure and could influence the way the child behaves and interacts with others in adulthood (Holmes, 2003). Knowledge of different attachment patterns may provide insight into the child's behaviour consequently providing appropriate assistance when necessary. The findings of this study confirm the necessity of having someone as a secure attachment base for the child when the need arises. The theme *parental longing* specifically highlights the material and emotional gap created when parents die and suggests that children who were attached to their parents feel insecure in the absence of the attachment figure.

*The day I will not forget is 11-04-2005 because this is the day my mother passed away. When I heard that my mother died I cried and asked myself a question: “Why did God take my mother?” Because my mother is the person close to me (Tshepo.1.25).*

The key findings of this study in relation to attachment theory are that when a learner is orphaned it seems that the child-parent supportive bond is broken. Some of the orphaned learners appear to be in need of an adult figure to provide an attachment base in addition to the need for material support reported by the educators.

### 6.3 CHOICE THEORY

Current and previous studies (Sengendo & Nambi, 1997; Black, 2005; Schoo, 2005) report on the relationship between the **fulfilment of human** needs and the way an **individual behaves**. Sengendo and Nambi (1997) report that most of the orphans in their study were still angry about their parent’s death, especially when they were deprived of needs and because of the situation in which they subsequently found themselves. Black (2005) points out that the behaviour of children between 15-17 years that involves mood swings; withdrawal from their friends, poor school performance and high-risk behaviour could be an expression of grief. In terms of theory, Glasser (1965) explains that the different types of behaviour displayed are as a result of the different ways in which people manifest their inability to fulfil their needs.

It has been noted in this study that the **relationship established** between the educator and the orphaned learner was **determined by how the educators identified the orphans, perceived the orphans’ behaviour and responded to their needs**. This theoretical position is consistent with Glasser’s choice theory<sup>27</sup> applied in reality therapy.<sup>28</sup> Choice

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<sup>27</sup> Choice theory asserts that all behaviour is internally motivated and an individual’s behaviour it is an attempt to satisfy one or more of the five basic universal needs, namely love and belonging, freedom, power, fun and survival (Glasser, 1985; Loyd, 2005)

<sup>28</sup> Glasser (1965:6) defines reality therapy as “[a] therapy that leads all patients towards reality, towards grappling successfully with the tangible and intangible aspects of the real world, might accurately be called therapy towards reality or simply Reality Therapy”. The therapy consists of seven distinct steps which include: involvement, current behaviour, evaluating behaviour, planning responsible behaviour, commitment to plans, no excuses, no punishment and never giving up (Glasser, 1980).

theory is based on the premise that all behaviour is chosen and an individual has control over his or her behaviour. The behaviour of an individual is a means through which one or more needs are satisfied (Glasser, 1985).

According to Glasser (1980), in a school situation the learners become disruptive when they cannot cope with feelings of not being worthwhile to others. Their behaviour might be a way of seeking the attention of an educator who seems not to care for the learner. Glasser's explanation of the relationship between needs and behaviour speaks to the emerging themes in the current study. The educators who were interviewed consistently talked about **orphans' behavioural problems** but **lacked strategies** for getting them to become responsible. In this study, there is evidence that alludes to the educators' comprehension of learners' deviant behaviour. This behaviour is seen as a means of **material gratification**. For example, some of the educators revealed that orphaned learners engaged in **risky sexual behaviour** and household theft to fulfil their needs for food and clothing. Another study also reported the link between needs and behaviour by pointing out that children who are still grieving might exhibit unruly behaviour, lash out at others or have a sullen attitude because they have not overcome grief (Haggard, 2005).

Glasser (1965) points out that having a loving, **caring and involved relationship** with someone is the **basic component of fulfilling our needs** and a key element in *reality therapy*, which is a process that aims at changing an individual's behaviour through commitment and involvement in the relationship. Glasser (1965) argues that the process of **being involved in a relationship facilitates an individual's acceptance of reality and fulfilment of their needs**, leading to responsible behaviour. The relationship between *choice theory* and *reality therapy* is that choice theory explains how reality therapy works, what needs to be changed and how to change it (Howatt, 2001). In applying reality therapy to the context of this study the relationship between the educators and the learners seems essential in helping orphans to cope with the reality of losing their parents and choosing behaviour that could help them satisfy their needs.

Glasser (1965) explains that we are all born with two basic built-in psychological needs. The needs **to belong and be loved**, and to gain **self-worth and recognition** are the foundation of all other needs. Glasser (1984) extends the two initial needs to five basic needs, which include four psychological needs, namely love and belonging, power, fun, freedom and one physiological need, the need to survive. According to Glasser (1965), everybody needs to love and be loved and, in the absence of love, psychological symptoms like depression, withdrawal anxiety, discomfort and other forms of deviant behaviour may arise.

Glasser further explains that when a person is **unable to fulfil** their needs they deny the reality of the world around them and start **behaving irresponsibly**. Maslow,<sup>29</sup> unlike Glasser, presents basic needs in a hierarchy of prepotency in his *motivation theory* (Huizinga, 1970). Maslow's basic needs appear in two categories. The first category consists of deficiency needs, namely physiological needs (food, water, shelter, sleep etc), safety needs (security, job, medical care etc), social needs (love, affection, belonging etc) and self-esteem needs (recognition, achievement, freedom, status, importance etc). The second category consists of the growth needs, which is self-actualisation (the desire to become everything one is capable of becoming). Maslow argues that physiological needs are the most basic needs and have the strongest influence on the motivation of behaviour and, therefore, they have to be satisfied first. Once the physiological needs are satisfied, the next category of needs in the **hierarchy emerges** and becomes the strongest needs to be fulfilled (Huizinga, 1970).

The difference between fulfilment of needs in Glasser's choice theory and Maslow's motivation theory is the emphasis on the most basic needs or the need to be fulfilled first before the other needs could be satisfied. While Maslow proposes that the **physiological need** is the most **prominent** need, Glasser emphasises the psychosocial needs and further explains that some **needs may suppress others**, depending on the individual's

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<sup>29</sup> Maslow's Theory of motivation identifies five basic needs and presents the needs in a hierarchy. The needs are related, the most basic need is the strongest because it must be satisfied first (Huizinga 1970)

circumstances. For example, the need for power may suppress the need for belonging (Glasser, 1985).

The findings of this study are in agreement with the Glasser's views on the fulfilment of needs. The interviews with the orphaned learners revealed that the value of self-dignity and self-worth seem to be more urgent than the need for nourishment such that the orphaned learners at times forego a free lunch to avoid being humiliated by their peers. The fact that some of the orphans in this study, in the face of hunger (basic physiological need), refused to accept food and handouts is a direct contestation of Maslow's theory and thus a rejection of the notion of a hierarchy of needs. There were other instances in the present study when the **need for love and belonging suppressed survival needs**. For example, some orphans isolated themselves during lunchtime and did not go for donated food because they preferred being with the other orphaned learners. This study appears to support the idea of contesting needs, where the need for self-respect may override the most fundamental material needs. Seen from the attachment theory point of view, in such instances the behaviour of the orphaned learners could be explained as being caused by the lack of a *secure base* to turn to for comfort. In this instance, the **orphaned learners turn to other orphaned learners as a substitute attachment base**.

Glasser (1965) emphasises that one of the essential components of the process of fulfilling needs is being involved with another person. That is, having someone you care for and who cares for you. The other person should be somebody who is able to fulfil his or her own needs and is in touch with reality. Bowlby and Ainsworth (Holmes, 2003) describe a person considered to be an attachment figure in a similar way. Apart from **involvement**, reality therapy emphasises that **self-worth and responsibility teach an individual to make choices** that may lead to the fulfilment of needs. In this study some orphans experienced being shunned by their peers. The orphans appear to feel that nobody cared for them or were involved in their lives after their parent(s) died. It seems that some of the orphans were unable to fulfil the basic needs for loving, being loved and belonging in the absence of their parents. The need for love and belonging encompasses the feeling of being respected, trusted, cared for and accepted by others (Atkinson, 2005).

Some of the narrations of the orphans suggest a **desire for acceptance by their peers**.

One orphaned learner narrated:

*Children at home and in school say that I am going to infect them with epilepsy. When we are working in a group they do not want me to touch their things and they do not want to touch me. If I touch their things they want to fight me (Mpumi.2.4, 5 & 6).*

The interviews with the educators revealed that some of the educators did not have an involved relationship with the orphaned learners. It appears that a **lack of interaction** between the orphaned learners and their peers or their educators may have reduced the orphans' chances of being involved in a **caring relationship**. This is more critical owing to the lack of an adult parent figure in their lives. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that some orphans involved in the grieving process had a tendency to isolate themselves or engage in violent and disruptive behaviour in class, as indicated by the educators. Glasser (1992) explains that the learner's disruptive behaviour in class is a way in which the learner seeks to fulfil needs and wants by drawing the attention of the educator and other learners to him. Such behaviour occurs when the images of schoolwork and the relationship with the educator starts diminishing from the learner's quality world<sup>30</sup> (Glasser, 1992). In other words, the failure to relate schoolwork and a relationship with educators in the learner's quality world is the result of an inability of the school or educator to fulfil the learners' needs.

Glasser (1992) suggests that the action taken by the educator should not be coercive, as punishment does not work. Rather, the educator should **discover what unfulfilled needs** the learner has, then find strategies to fulfil these needs. Some of the educators in the study had experienced orphans with **disruptive behaviour** and recommended that other educators should talk to the orphans to **establish the cause** of their problems and attend to them.

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<sup>30</sup> Quality world is a mental picture that a person develops out of memories of past experiences of fulfilling needs. People have different quality worlds because our perceptions and experiences are unique (Glasser, 1992).

*I normally say: “If you see the learner who is clumsy or a little bit funny, you just call the learner and if you see the learner cannot open up, bring the learner to me.” When they are with me, although I am strict, they are at ease when they talk to me. They can open up (Mtlala 44-48).*

When some of the orphaned learners talked to their educators they revealed the **need for food** in relation to social acceptance by their peers. It appears that non-orphan and other learners at School A isolated orphans who did not bring lunch to school, while at School B learners who brought food from home to eat during lunch did not associate with learners who ate lunch provided by the Government Feeding Scheme. It seems that learners form **different social groups** during lunchtime depriving some learners of the freedom to associate with others.

The results of this study indicate that while some orphaned learners had no power over being **isolated by other learners**, other orphans seem to take control of the situation by isolating themselves and building up relationships with other orphaned learners who did not eat lunch. In the latter case the orphans seemingly attach themselves with other orphans to fulfil the need to belong and to have a *secure base*, which the other orphaned learners helped provide. The emerging theme of **social deprivation** in this study is in agreement with Haggard (2005), who proposes that other learners in the school need to understand what their peers are going through and provide support and friendship. Providing support and friendship is part of being involved with someone and shows that the other person cares. According to Glasser (1965), an involved relationship is crucial in enabling people to fulfil their needs. Some non-orphans in this study, as mentioned earlier, teased and stigmatised the orphans because of their deprived needs. Such responses could further aggravate the inability of the orphans to fulfil their needs.

Glasser (1985:45) explains that “regardless of how we feel we always have control over what we do”. Having control over our behaviour by making choices about what we do and being responsible for our actions are the basis of choice theory (Howatt, 2001). In applying choice theory, Glasser points out that our behaviour is made up of four components: acting, thinking, feeling and physiology. The four components constitute

our total behaviour. How individuals act and think affects their physiology and emotions; since people do not think in the same way they will behave in unique ways in an attempt to bring their perceived world closer to a quality world (Glasser, 1998). When explaining or trying to understand a person's behaviour, one should examine all four components of total behaviour and understand the person's quality world. Similarly, in gaining an understanding of an individual's behaviour through the lens of attachment theory it is crucial for internalised working models to be part of analysing an individual's behaviour. In this study and the study reported by Sengendo and Nambi (1997), the participants explained the behaviour of the orphaned learners from the physiological component of the behaviour. The educators interviewed explained that orphans in their schools were involved in criminal or risky sexual behaviour in order to fulfil their material needs. The educators seem to analyse the orphans' behaviour by concentrating on their actions and the physiological components, with less focus on the cognitive component, which might influence the choices the orphaned learner makes on how to fulfil their needs.

According to Glasser (1985), what can be changed is how we think and what we do. The feeling and physiological component of one's behaviour may change when one changes how one thinks and what one does. Consistent with the present study, orphaned learners seem unlikely to be able to change the feeling of grief. They have no control over the fact that their parents have passed away and that they are missing them. However, the orphans can control the actions they take to fulfil their needs and to fill the gap created by their parents' death. Glasser (1992) argues that our behaviour is internally motivated and the external factor informs the choices we make on the type of action we take. This implies that the orphans can change the way they think and make better choices of behaviour, which are not destructive, provided that there is an external support structure.

Furthermore, certain educators reported that some orphaned learners lack concentration, fall asleep in class or become disruptive when they are hungry. Based on the findings of this study in relation to Glasser's concept of total behaviour, I argue that if orphans are encouraged to think of actions that may lead to fulfilling their need for food, they may become less irritable and concentrate in class once they have eaten. Furthermore, it is

likely that the orphaned learners have total control over their thinking and action component. The problem is that some of the responses from the orphaned learners give the impression that they may not be aware of their capabilities or self-worth and therefore underestimate what they can achieve on their own. Some of the orphans may fail to develop a positive self-identity and a possible way of influencing their thinking may be by establishing positive involved relationships that empower the orphaned learner.

*I see the other learners they are beautiful. I do not like myself. I do not want to be sick everyday. I have epilepsy and it is not right for me. I want to be beautiful (Mpumi.1.16 & 29).*

Developing our own identity is to develop who we see ourselves as being (Glasser, 1969). Positive self-identity<sup>31</sup> emerges from fulfilling the need for love and self-worth, while loneliness and negative self-identity are consequences of an unfulfilled need for love and self-worth (Glasser, 1969). Glasser's view of the formation of self-identities links up with the core category of the relationship between the educator and the orphaned learners. The interviews with the orphaned learners revealed that some learners are isolated by their peers or isolate themselves from their peers and are reluctant to open up to the educators because they do not share an interactive relationship. Narrations of the learners who experience isolation give an impression of negative self-identity.

As an illustration, in one of the schools in the study there was a learner who had epilepsy. The interview with her revealed that she felt powerless about her health condition and other learners did not want to share learning materials with her or allow her to be part of their group in class. When the learner reported the matter to the educator, the educator moved the learners to the next desk. Isolating the learner reduces the opportunity to be involved with others and a chance of giving love and to be loved and to establish a relationship that fulfils the need to belong. It is likely that the learner was unable to develop a positive self-identity due to the lack of a relationship with others (Glasser, 1969). The learner felt that she did not have worth for others because she was ill and

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<sup>31</sup> Positive self-identity results from taking a path that leads to fulfillment of the need for love and self-worth (Glasser, 1969).

expressed that she wanted to get well and be beautiful like others. The longing to be like other learners is a desperate plea for social acceptance, a need highlighted in both choice theory and attachment theory.

As gathered from the interviews, there was evidence of a need for power and self-esteem. For example, orphans talked about wanting careers that involved helping other people who are less fortunate or even other orphans. The professions they mentioned (nurse, social worker, doctor, police) put them in a position where they could gain control over their lives and have power and control over the lives of others. Certain of the orphans could not take donations, although they needed the material support. It seems that educators and the others who supported orphaned learners by providing them with material needs are in a power position, while the orphans – on the receiving end – felt powerless and experienced low self-esteem. Choice theory and reality therapy may apply to such situations: where possible, instead of just supplying the orphans' material needs, the educators could help the orphans realise that they have the power to make choices about the way in which they fulfil their own needs and so be in control of their behaviour. Bennet and Saks (2006) assert that adults who show the capacity for empathy and emotional regulation are those who had secure attachment figures who were responsive, predictable and sensitive to fulfilling their needs during childhood. In the current study, the educators who responded and took up the responsibility of caring for the orphans were the educators who were involved with the orphaned learners. The motivation for the positive response was from their past personal experiences. However, as responsibility is learnt, educators can learn to establish a relationship with the orphans and help the learners to help themselves by teaching the learners to fulfil their needs through love and discipline (Glasser, 1992).

The central argument in Attachment and choice theory is that involved, loving and caring interpersonal relationships are likely to facilitate the fulfilment of needs and may have a positive influence on behaviour. Attachment theory highlights that the bond a child develops with a parent or a caregiver acts as a secure base for fulfilling the needs of the child and the relationship established may have an influence on the child's behaviour

(Bowlby 1988; Holmes, 2003; Bettmann, 2006). Glasser (1965), in choice theory, also alludes to the importance of relationships and points out that the need for love and belonging, which is normally fulfilled through relationships with others, is the foundation from which other needs are met and failure to satisfy this need for love and belonging may result in disruptive behaviour. The basic premise of these authors is that the relationship that a child develops with others may influence the child's behaviour. What needs to be further explored is what happens when the relationship with the attachment figure is broken, as in the case of orphaned learner and more so orphans in child-headed families with no adult role model or adult figure to emulate the role of parents. The question that we need to reflect on is that whether, as a result of the gap created by the death of parents, it would be a reasonable expectation for the school – being an educational institution – to provide a *secure base* for the orphaned learners and the possibility of educators becoming attachment figures. One may argue that the role of providing care is not an educational activity and, as such, should not be part of the responsibilities of the educators. For the purpose of this argument I reviewed literature on how scholars define the role of education, followed by the expected role of educators.

#### 6.4 THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

*Education* as a concept has been contested and there are different views and definitions of this term. There is no universal meaning of what *education* should entail because the concept is normally defined in relation to what people value and different people value different things (Pring, 2000). In addition, the aims of education are debatable and depend on the nature and ideals of the society (Noddings, 2005). In this study, I examine the term *education* from a **formal** and **holistic** perspective. Formal education involves the process of teaching and learning, which is normally associated with schooling (Feinberg, 1983). From a formal education stance, a school is a social institution where children go for learning and are expected to acquire knowledge and skills that would enable them to become socially responsible, productive and financially successful members of their society (Smith, 2003; Carr, 2004). The formal nature of education takes up a **utilitarian approach**, that is job oriented and aims at equipping individuals with knowledge,

understanding and skills that would make them economically productive (Feinberg, 1983; Pring, 2000; Winch, 2002; Carr, 2004).

It would seem that an educational aim that views schools as institutions where learners are equipped with knowledge and skills for the labour market would concentrate on the academic needs of the learners. The pedagogical approach to education would imply that the **role of educators** mainly be to ensure effective **teaching and learning**. This presents a major challenge in environments where educators are faced with such large classes and limited resources that they can hardly be expected to take up additional roles such as caring for the orphaned learners, as this will *dilute* their focus on teaching and learning. The needs of orphans would then be defined away from schools, with strong recommendations that other agencies should take up this role. This would effectively take away the **pastoral role** or emotional perspective of the educators' identity described by Jansen (2005) and would restore the educators as teachers' **professional identity** and, in the process, reduce the emotional stress and burden on educators, especially in schools that cater for many orphaned learners.

Another line of argument would be that the utilitarian approach to education is limiting, as it emphasises the process of equipping learners with skills for the job market and pays little attention to other aspects of the learner's life. Moreover, the educational approach that emphasises economic outcomes would probably lose its value in the event that it fails to ensure economic returns (Winch, 2002). Hamm (1989) proposes that education should prepare children for a good life, not only in terms of economic status but also in fulfilment of emotional needs, transmission of values and ethical considerations. In line with this thought, White (2002) points out that the central aim of education is to promote the well being of the learner. Nodding (2005) concurs, and argues that the aim of education should be more than producing a literate person, because a learner is a whole person with other needs besides knowing how to read and write, and the school not only serves an individual but the society as well. The implication of such an aim of education is that the educators would be expected to help the learners in fulfilling their needs; to promote the learners' sense of well being. In other words, a school would be seen as an

environment where children receive emotional support, supervision from adults, opportunities for socialising and a chance to develop social networks (UNICEF, 2003; Richter, 2003; Blasco, 2004) The role of the school would thus be defined in broader, more inclusive and holistic terms.

Holistic education targets the education of the whole child and aims at achieving cognitive understanding, appropriate emotions and attitudes (Hamm, 1989). Hamm (1989) further explains that, when educating a child, one cannot separate emotional and social factors from cognitive factors because they are interrelated. The implication of Hamm's perspective is that educators should be able to deal with intellectual, emotional, social and other aspects of the child's development during the teaching and learning process. The holistic approach to education seems to be relevant to all children and, perhaps more importantly, to orphans; whose needs, as established in this and other empirical studies, may go beyond mere academic support (Hepburn, 2001; UNICEF, 2003; Richter, 2003; Blasco, 2004). In this study it has been established that the needs of the orphaned learners – such as food, peer acceptance and overcoming grief, among other needs – if not fulfilled, may interfere with the teaching and learning process. Hepburn (2001) also notes that orphans might need guidance and emotional support in the process of teaching and learning.

According to Miller (1990), the educational approach that emphasises the utility function of education fails to be humane if it neglects values, such as: compassion, love, justice and peace, which contribute to the emotional development of a child. In addition, it has been argued that social and emotional security is imperative for developing the child's personality; therefore educational objectives should incorporate the holistic principles of *whole person learning* (Powell, 1983). Powell further points out that the learning process should include affective, physical, mental, cognitive-intellectual and personal development of mind, body, spirit, feeling and imagination. In the same line of thought, Miller (1990) points out there should be a **balance** between **intellectual and emotional development**, for education to be regarded as holistic.

## 6.5 THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS

Comparing the formal and holistic view of education, the findings of this study suggest that education should aim at addressing the cognitive as well as the emotional and social needs of the learners because the needs of the learners interviewed were interwoven and appear to affect their behaviour, as well as the teaching and learning process. It would appear that to engage learners in a teaching and learning process the educator has to attend to needs of the learners, which were not necessarily academic but seem likely to be a barrier to the teaching and learning process. For example, in this study, some of the educators reported that there were orphaned learners who appeared to be still **grieving**, while others felt **socially isolated** by their peers and, as a result, were **withdrawn or disruptive** during class. This kind of behaviour could have a negative effect on the teaching and learning process.

It is likely that the view of education that emphasises teaching and learning, while paying little attention to the other learner needs, may overlook causes of learners' disruptive or withdrawn behaviour in classroom. Pomeroy (1999) points out from his study that the educators' willingness to help the learners to pay attention to their learning is as important as the ability to teach. This implies that the **teaching and learning** role of an educator and the role of providing **pastoral care** are inseparable, and there is need for **balancing** these **roles** of caring and teaching – especially in the case of orphaned learners. The Department of Education (2000) Norms and Standards state seven roles of educators. Among the seven roles the educator is expected to be a learning programme designer, learning mediator, assessor, learning area specialist, an administrator and a scholar in addition to the role of providing care.

Literature, as indicated in Chapter 1, highlights the fact that the task of educating the child is a shared responsibility between educators and parents. The care and support the child gets from the parents and the educator contributes to a positive educational experience and the child's behaviour (Hepburn, 2001; Jarolimek, Foster & Kellough, 2001; Hunter & Williamson, 2000). Furthermore, parental involvement in the activity of

the school increases the possibility of establishing a partnership between the parent and the educator. This **partnership** between the **educator and parent** enables the educator to inform the parents about the child's academic progress and/or disciplinary problems, academic strengths and weaknesses, and also provides opportunities to inform the parents on how to help their child learn (Jarolimek et al., 2001; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems & DoanHolbein, 2005).

These researchers assume the reality of a *normal* situation, where there are parents to support the child. The assumption is that parents will provide a supportive environment for the child, not only by providing for the material needs of the learners, but more importantly, the emotional and psychological needs (love and affection). Apart from the triad relationship in school between the educator, parent and learner, the parental or guardian duty to educate the child is contained in section 3(1) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996).<sup>32</sup> The SASA is consistent with section 29(1a) of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), which stipulates that *everyone has the right to basic education*. The right to education imposes a legal obligation and responsibility on parents and guardians to educate their children. For instance, SASA section 6(a & b) imposes a penalty on parents and guardians who fail to comply with section 3(1) of the Act. The policy assumes the presence of a parent figure who will ensure that the child attends school. However, the **policy** remains **silent** on who should be accountable for **educating orphans**, particularly children from child-headed families where there is no parent or guardian to be held liable for failing to enrol, support or ensure that the children attend school. There is also a gap created in the educator-parent-learner partnership and it remains uncertain as to how the gap should be filled – although there seems to be an urgent need to fill the gap. For example, it was evident from the current study that some of the orphaned learners had nobody to help them with their homework. The educators interviewed also confirmed that some of the orphaned learners had nobody to represent them at school functions, to collect report cards or to

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<sup>32</sup> South African School Act (SASA) (Act 84 of 1996) provides that: " Subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible for to attend school from the first school day of the year the in which the child reaches the age of seven years until the last day of the year in which the learner reaches the age of fifteen years or in the ninth grade, which ever occurs first."

discuss their academic progress with the educators. In such cases the assumed partnership does not exist, raising the question as to **who should act as surrogate parents**.

In addition, it is a common law practice for educators to take up the duty of care – in place of parents or guardians of the child – *in loco parentis* (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001). The **duty of care** means that the educator is supposed to take care of the child, as a parent would take care of his or her own child (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2001). The type of care *in loco parentis* involves being a parent representative who is expected to control the behaviour of children when they are in school and not the role of feeding, clothing and buying materials for the learners that emerged in this study. Given the emerging situational role of the educators in providing needs to the orphaned learners, it would imply that the educators take up pastoral care alongside pedagogical responsibilities. However, the Norms and Standards policy statement (2000) is not clear enough on how educators should provide pastoral care to fulfil the needs of orphaned learners. Moreover, the educators interviewed in this study seemed not to be aware that they are expected to play a pastoral role, among their other responsibilities. The educators voiced the opinion that it was not their responsibility to provide care and believed that helping orphaned learners was an individual's choice. In the absence of training that would enable the educators to meet the current challenges, it is likely that they will continue to regard their role of providing care in terms of showing good behaviour.

Researchers have found that the concept of pastoral care lacks a clear and shared definition (Best, Jarvis & Ribbins, 1997; Watkins, 1999; Chittenden, 1999). According to Best and others (1997), pastoral care encompasses the educators' response to the non-academic personal needs of the learners, which may include guidance and counselling. In Pomeroy's (1999) study, students described the pastoral role as *establishing a meaningful relationship, preventing disruptions, guidance and showing concern for the well being of the learners*. Pastoral care could also be viewed as official institutional structures that provide for the non-academic needs of the learners (Nodding, 2005). The common element in these definitions is the care and the emphasis on relationship, which goes beyond the traditional pedagogical role of teaching that focused on content delivery.

According to Grove (2004), respect and responsibility are other components, besides relationships, that contribute to pastoral care. The findings of this study demonstrate that educators are responding to the needs of the orphans in different ways and may be in a position to provide care to the orphaned learners; however, they need training in how to identify the learners' needs – especially the emotional and social needs.

Based on the findings of this study it would seem that one cannot separate the needs of a child because they are spontaneous. Hence, the educator's pedagogic and pastoral roles are not exclusive but complementary. For instance, some of the educators were of the opinion that orphaned learners were underachievers in class and their poor academic performance could be due to lack of fulfilment of their emotional and material needs. The challenge that this situation posed to the educators in the two schools in this research study was the ability to identify these emotional needs and provide appropriate support. Two distinctive identities of the educators emerged from the study. There are *educators who help orphans* and *educators who refer the orphaned learners to other educators for assistance*. It would seem that the action the respective educators took was determined by the way in which they perceived their role. Some of the educators interviewed reported that providing care for the orphans was not part of their responsibility. This understanding was according to the premise that the role of providing care was optional; therefore the educators responded to the needs of the orphaned learners by referring the orphans to educators who volunteered to help.

A common factor among the educators who helped the orphans would seem to be their motivation, which seemed to come from their own experiences. Some of the educators could reflect on their own experiences and empathise with experiences of the orphans. In addition, the educators talked of internalised family and religious values that underpinned their altruistic response to the orphans' needs. Although some of the educators were willing to provide emotional support, there is a need to assist the educators to support the orphaned learners – by providing skills, material support and, in some cases, specialist support (depending on the nature of the need). For example, the educators reported that

some of the orphaned learners had been raped. Learners that have had such an experience need care that the educators may not be able to provide.

It appears that owing to the lack of a clear definition of the role of pastoral care and the necessary training, educators respond to the needs of the orphaned learners on the basis of the relationship they establish with the learners, intuition, sensitivity, empathy and the perception of their role. Holland (2000) suggests that schools should have a policy on loss and education on loss should be part of the school curriculum. They should also seek a variety of outside support in teaching about death and bereavement – with an aim of supporting the educators in their efforts. The research finding of the study done by Cooper (2004) on the role of empathy in educator-pupil relationships revealed that empathy had a significant effect on the relationship between the educator and the learner, learner behaviour and the quality of learning. This finding supports the argument being presented in this study that pastoral care should be seen as part of teaching and learning. However, educators need to be assisted to support orphaned learners.

Some of the educators who help orphaned learners seemed overburdened with responsibility and were concerned with the lack of help from their colleagues and/or external assistance from social workers. Assistance with some of their responsibilities, such as administrative duties and helping children with homework, could leave these educators with more time to build relationships, through which the emotional and social needs of the orphaned could be fulfilled. Blasco (2004) and Cooper (2004) identify overfilled curriculum, poor educator/pupil ratio, and lack of management support, lack of resources and lack of time as factors that serve to constrain educator displays of empathy, such that even empathetic educators could not find time to interact with learners.

Educators interviewed in this study seem to respond to the needs of the orphaned learners depending on their self-conceptualisation of the role of the educator. The educators who assumed providing care to be part of their role interact with the orphans and give emotional and material support, while other educators who seemed to be uncertain of the role of care referred the orphans to other educators for help. The educators committed to

providing care in this study felt overburdened with responsibility because they had to take care of so many learners. The findings of this study suggest that educators could make a difference in the lives of orphaned learners, provided that the role of the educator is redefined to emphasise the building of relationships based on care, trust and empathy, to encourage interaction and facilitate identification and fulfilment of the material, social, and emotional needs of the orphaned learners.

The motivation for involving educators in providing such care is grounded in the fact that, after a death in the family, the grieving child comes to school with emotional needs and may find it difficult to concentrate in class. It therefore calls upon the educators to be able to support the child through the grieving period. It also became apparent from this study that some educators were uncertain of how to deal with the emotions of a grieving child. For example, one educator viewed an orphaned learner who could not stop crying as weak. Other educators could not understand why some of the orphans were withdrawn and emotional and regarded orphans as children with behavioural problems. Literature indicates that children who have been traumatised by death may experience detachment and withdraw from others (Cohen & Mannarino, 2004). A normal grieving reaction may include pain, anger, anxiety, sadness, loneliness and longing for the deceased (Willis 2002; Cohen & Mannarino, 2004; Haggard 2005; Black, 2005). Foster (2002) points out that children at times portray different reactions to grief, they may weep at one point and play soon after. Such behaviour may cause confusion and the educator and other adults may not understand it. According to Willis (2002), grieving children often do not understand their own feelings and may exhibit unacceptable behaviour as a result of the disruption of their daily routine or confusion surrounding their feelings.

In a school situation, the grieving child may need support from the educator and understanding and friendship from peers to cope with the grief (Haggard, 2005). In both the schools from which the participants of this study were drawn, there was no school counsellor, psychologist or social workers to attend to the non-academic needs of their orphaned learners. The educators seem to be the only adults, besides relatives, to support these orphans – though some of the educators seem unprepared or uncertain of how to

handle the emotions of a grieving learner. The Reid and Dixon (1999) survey on educator attitudes toward death and how they cope with grief in a public classroom indicates that educators need to be prepared to deal with grief. Grieving is a process that may have emotional and social implications, that manifest as behavioural problems in the classroom. Haggard (2005) points out that most educators and counsellors do not know how to support a grieving child, although the educators may be willing to support the children despite their other responsibilities. The Spall and Jordan (1999) study of a group of educators' personal perspectives on working with bereaved children revealed that the educators had high expectations of themselves and they mentioned they would find extra energy to help a grieving child. The question that arises from both these studies and the findings of this study is: *If educators are not trained to support a grieving child, is it reasonable to expect these educators to cope with death and grieving, while in the process of providing pastoral care to their orphaned learners?*

Research done previously (Bowie 2000) that aimed to determine the opinions of learners and educators on including death education in the curriculum identified two main views. The first view was that death should be discussed as the need arose. The second view supported death education as a subject in the curriculum, with the argument that it would develop a healthy attitude towards death and prepare learners for future deaths. In my opinion both views require that the educator is to have prior knowledge about death and grieving in order to be able to respond appropriately either way in preparing the learners for the eventuality of death or to help a learner who is **grieving** the death of a family member. In order for the educator to create an atmosphere in the classroom that promotes teaching and learning, the educator needs to be able to support the learner in **coping with grief**. Educators with orphaned learners in their classes also need to be aware of behavioural problems that may be due to learners experiencing difficulties adjusting to parental death, in order to differentiate reaction to loss from other forms of misconduct.

The findings of this study support the literature indicating that instruction on how to deal with grieving children is not part of educator training (Reid & Dixon, 1999). Given the length of time the orphaned learner interacts with the educator in school it seems that

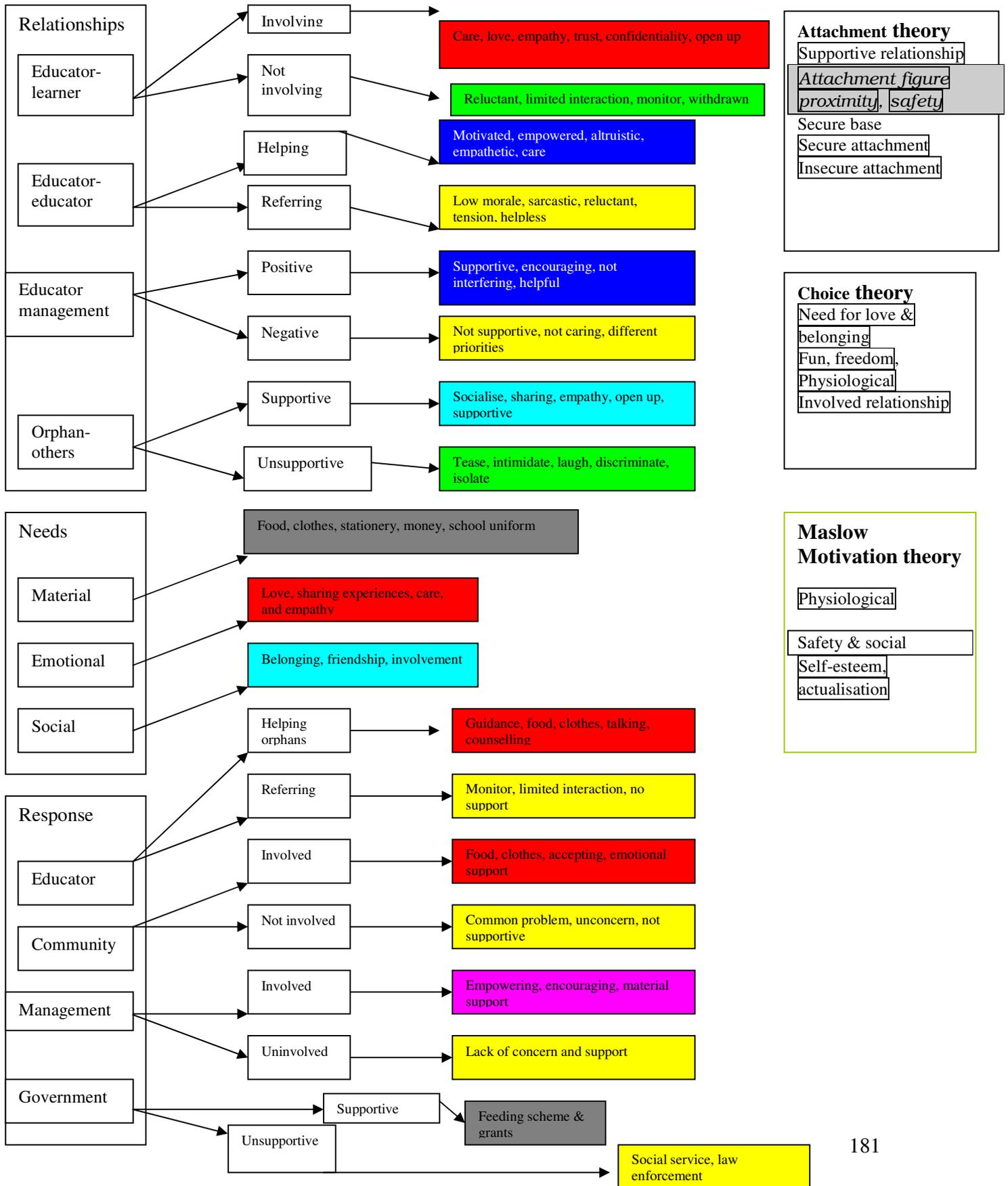
educators may be in a position to provide pastoral care to the orphaned learner and deal with grief in the classroom or refer the orphans for external help, as and when the need arises. For the educators to be empowered to support orphans during the grieving period, they need to be prepared through pre-service and in-service training to counsel learners in the school environment who are traumatised by the death of their parents.

There are training programmes that prepare educators for teaching learners about AIDS. For instance, the Life Style Education Programme for Secondary Schools in South Africa, which teaches learners behavioural intentions, gives them information on HIV/AIDS and teaches them attitudes towards people with AIDS (Visser, 1996). Similar programmes have been introduced in Uganda, Tanzania and Nigeria, among other countries. The intentions of the programmes are to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission by increasing the level of knowledge, influencing attitude and encouraging safe sexual practices (Klepp, Ndeki, Leshabari, Hannan & Lyimo, 1997; Kinsman, Harrison, Kengeya-Kayonda, Kanyesigye, Musoke & Whitworth, 1999; Fawole, Asuzu, Oduntan & Brieger, 1999). What seems missing from these programmes is how to care for not only people infected by HIV/AIDS but also those affected by deaths caused by the infection, such as orphans. One of the educators interviewed believed that knowledge and skills of providing care should be part of the Life Skills Programme. It might be of benefit to the orphans if a pastoral care programme were incorporated in the educator training curriculum, which would then lead to encouraging care and relationship building in schools based on Life Skills/Orientation programmes.

Figure 6.1 on page 182 is a graphic representation of the themes that emerged from this research study. The column on the far left represents the three main themes emerging from the study namely, **relationships, needs, and response**. Moving towards the right the second column shows the nature of relationships identified between educators and learners, educators and management team, among the teachers and between the orphaned learners and their peers. The **first theme, relationships** was described as involving/not involving, helping /referring, positive/negative and supportive/unsupportive. Examples of codes that constitute the categories are represented in the coloured boxes. The **second**

**main theme** includes **the needs** of the orphaned learners identified in the study. The categories of needs are material, emotional and social; the codes that constitute the three categories are listed in the coloured boxes. The **third theme** entails the educator, community, school management and government **response to the needs** of the orphaned learners. The type of response and the codes that describe the responses are presented. The **last** column on the right **presents the three theories** (attachment theory, choice theory and motivation theory) that relate to the emerging themes in this study. The directional arrows indicate connections among items.

Figure 6.1: Emerging themes and theory



## 6.6 SUMMARY

In studying the relationships between all the emerging themes of this study, it became evident that how educators **respond** to the needs of the orphaned learners seems to be **driven** by how they **perceive** orphaned learners and how **they identify** the orphaned learners and their needs. The different responses of the educators towards the orphans appear to be **determined by the relationship** between the educator and the orphaned learner. In this study I have applied some of the concepts from *choice theory* and *attachment theory* to provide insight into the emerging relationships and the behaviour between the orphaned learners and the educators. The common factors between the two theories were discussed in relation to the emerging themes of this study, which are the **relationship between the fulfilment of needs and behaviour**. They highlight human interpersonal relationships as a central factor in fulfilling needs and hence determining behaviour. In *choice theory*, the need for love and belonging sets the foundation for fulfilling other needs. Likewise, *attachment theory* highlights that the relationship established between the child and the attachment figure during infancy is internalised and influences the child's future relationships.

It is evident from the current study that an **involved relationship** between the educator and the orphaned learner may provide opportunities for the orphaned learner to confide in and interact with the educator. When an orphan confides in the educator he or she is likely to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and subsequent behaviour of the orphaned learner and to develop a more accurate assessment of the learner's needs, which may shape how the educator then responds to the orphaned learner's needs. What also emerged from this study was the impression of a compromised relationship between orphaned learners and some educators with concurrent uncertainty of how to respond to the needs of these learners. The findings of this study reveal that the *educator who helped orphaned learners* responded out of **empathy and not necessarily as a result of fulfilling the pastoral role**, as one of the seven roles of an educator stipulated in the Norms and Standards.

The findings in the study suggest that the educator's life experiences are likely to be a source of motivation for initiating interactive and involved relationships with the orphans. Some of the educators in the study helped orphaned learners by reflecting on own experiences that were related to those of the orphans. It appears that the process of helping orphans possibly also fulfilled the educator's own need for recognition, self-worth and being worthwhile to others. Though not obvious, certain educator narrations implied that the educators responsible for supporting orphaned learners seemed – in the minds of their colleagues – to acquire power and status, while others who were less involved, felt disempowered and lacked self-worth when other educators were appointed or volunteered to care for the orphans. An alternative explanation could be that a lack of involvement in supporting orphaned learners by certain educators was a means of protecting themselves from becoming emotionally attached to the orphans and the feeling of disappointment and helplessness should they not be able to meet some of the orphaned learners' needs. This hypothesis could be further explored in future studies.

Another concern raised in this chapter is the role of education and of educators. The researcher present a view that argues that the aim of education is to equip learners with knowledge and skills and the educators' role be mainly teaching and learning (professional identity) while an alternative view presented argues that education should aim at addressing cognitive as well as emotional and social needs of the learners because the needs are interwoven. The second view advocates for integration of teaching and learning role of the educator with pastoral care. This study suggests the need for balancing the role of teaching and caring especially in case of orphaned learners.

## CHAPTER 7

# EMERGING THEORY, FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of educators in managing the needs of the orphaned learners in their classes. The scope of this study included an investigation of how educators identified and then responded to the needs of the orphaned learners. It was argued that orphans might have needs that can only be served by the educational system and their educators – if the role of an educator working under such circumstances was broadened or redefined. Literature reviewed on this subject, as was indicated in Chapter 6, tended to focus on the material needs of these learners (e.g. food and clothes), while less attention was paid to their social and emotional needs, which seems significant from the interviews with the orphaned learners (Foster, 1995; Walker 2002; SCOPE-OVC/Zambia, 2003; and Chatterji, Dougherty, Ventimiglia, Mulenga, Jones and Mukaneza, 2005). Furthermore, in most of the studies reviewed for this research, it was often the caregivers and the educators who described the needs of the orphaned learners (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997; Bennell 2002; Foster, 2002; Schierhout et al., 2004; De Witt & Lessing, 2005). However, for this study I assumed that the reality and knowledge of the needs of the orphaned learners could best be established by talking to the orphaned learners themselves. I then explored how the educators who work in schools that have a high percentage of orphans in their student numbers make sense of their daily experiences when dealing with these children; how they construct their knowledge and respond to the unique needs of these learners.

To provide an understanding of the realities being constructed, it was necessary to see the orphans' world and the perceptions of their educators from their individual points of view. This I did by exploring the lived experiences of the orphaned learners and their

educators from two schools by listening to their different voices, each representing different lived experiences and perspectives. I engaged learners allowing them to express their needs through individual narrative interviews, thus giving them an explanatory voice. The responses from the orphaned learners and the educators, each presenting different versions of their reality, were analysed in accordance with the *grounded theory research* approach and then interpreted in order to give a balanced perspective of and possible explanations for the way in which the educators identified and responded to the orphans' needs.

I opted to use a grounded theory approach in this study to enable me to generate a substantive theory on the educators' experiences with orphaned learners based on the data instead of imposing existing theories on the data. Using a grounded theory approach, issues that were important to the educators were allowed to emerge from the data to provide a theoretical understanding of how and why educators respond to the needs of the orphaned learners in the way they do. In addition, the theory generated using a grounded theory approach is more likely to be relevant to the context of the study – in this case the experiences of educators in schools with orphaned learners.

In the previous chapter, I interpreted the emerging themes in terms of relevant literature. In this review, the relationship between the educators and the orphaned learners emerged as a core theme that seems to influence the way educators identified and responded to the needs of the orphaned learners. From the literature reviewed, it would seem that the educators' knowledge of the orphaned learners' needs was lacking and the response to the needs identified was inadequate. Most literature reports on the material assistance that the orphans receive from the educators; emotional and social needs, although mentioned in some studies, were given less precedence (Foster, 1995; Sengendo & Nambi 1997; UNAIDS, 2001; Giese et al., 2003; Schierhout, 2004). The results of this study show that orphaned learners need emotional and social support as much as material support. It is evident from the theme of *relationships* that emerged prominently from the interviews with orphaned learners and their educators that concern for social and emotional needs

sometimes preceded material needs. The educators' narrations suggest that identifying the learners' social and emotional needs was problematic.

## 7.2 FINDINGS AND EMERGING THEORY

Educators in this study responded to the needs of the orphaned learners in different ways. It appears that what determines educators' responses to the needs of orphaned learners and how educators perceive their role was influenced by a combination of factors such as the relationship between educator and learner, the way in which educators identified learners' needs and the educators' background experiences.

The central underlying theme that emerged from the interviews was the relationship between the educators and the orphaned learners. This relationship, which was based on communication, empathy, confidentiality, trust, friendship and sharing experiences, seemed to encourage the learners to confide in the educators and to disclose their needs. Such a relationship seemed to develop a mutual understanding between the educators and the learners. Education theory has always claimed the importance of relationships that facilitate teaching and learning. The kind of relationship that seem to influence the way educators responded to the learners' needs is one that is **built on empathy** of what it means to lose a loved one, and the ability to establish a **trusting relationship** in which the orphaned learner can express his/her hurt, pain, frustration and other emotions related to grief. In this study, the interviews with the orphaned learners revealed that physiological, social and emotional needs were intertwined such that it was important to fulfil these needs simultaneously. The interactive relationship between educators and learners seems to provide insight into the social and emotional needs of the orphans that could not be inferred from experience or behaviour.

Through interaction, some of the educators seem to be able to identify the most crucial needs of individual orphaned learner. Supportive relationships between the educator and the learner established the bond and attachment figure relationship that had been compromised by the death of a parent or parents. The educators who were involved in

interactive relationships with the orphans seem to have more understanding of and empathy for the orphan's experiences, thus becoming emotionally attached to the learners and responding to their needs.

On the other hand, educators who are less involved with the orphaned learners seem unable to identify emotional needs that might have been internalised by the learners. These educators were more likely to deduce the needs of the orphans from appearance and behaviour and respond to the needs identified by referring such orphans to educators who were more involved in helping orphans. The findings of this study suggest that educators who refer orphaned learners to other educators for assistance possibly may not know how to respond to a grieving child or be able to handle grief. Educators are trained to be teachers. The knowledge and skills acquired during training focus on teaching and learning and not emotional involvement with learners' pain and hurt. They may therefore feel totally disempowered in the face of dealing with bereavement and the hurt and emotional pain of learners. The educators' lack of knowledge of the grieving process could have resulted in the educators' misunderstanding of the orphans' behaviour and they may have assumed that the orphans were troublesome learners. Because of this lack of communication, the learners might also have assumed that the educators were not interested in their problems.

Based on the findings of this study, the different ways of responding to the needs of the orphaned could also be influenced by the educators' motivation to respond to the learners' needs. The educators' background experiences may have been a source of motivation for initiating an interactive relationship through which the needs of the orphaned learners are identified and fulfilled. The common factor among the educators who responded to the needs of the learners by providing support seemed to be intrinsically motivated by their background experiences that related to the orphans' experiences, religious beliefs and values of caring for other less fortunate people. Some of the educators could reflect on their own experiences and empathise with the experiences of the orphans. The educators seem to be addressing a situation that they were familiar with and understood from their own lived experiences. In addition, the

educators talked of internalised family and religious values that underpinned their altruistic response to the orphans' needs. The educators' intuition, sensitivity and empathy seem to influence how the educators perceived their role of providing care.

It was evident from the interviews that educators perceived their role in managing the needs of the orphaned learner in different ways. The more involved educators tend to perceive the role of providing care for the orphaned learners as part of their responsibility while other educators believed that this was a voluntary responsibility and not part of their role. Lack of understanding of the educators' role expectations, and lack of the training and support that educators may require to perform the seven roles of the educator as stated in the Norms and Standards (Department of Education, 1996) may have resulted in the different role perceptions and how the educators responded to the orphans' needs.

The two educator identities that emerged from the two schools ("educators who help orphaned learners" and "educators who refer learners to other educators for help") seem to empower certain educators and disempowered others. The educators identified as "educators who help orphaned learners" seem to be in a more empowered position than other educators according to the narrations of some educators. There were incidences where other educators felt that their efforts at helping the orphans are not recognised because they are not "educators who help orphaned learners". It may be that the process of helping orphans also fulfilled the educators' own needs for recognition, self-worth and being worthwhile to others since the educators talk of their past experiences as a source of motivation for helping orphaned learners.

The theory emerging from these findings is that the kind of relationship established between educators and orphaned learners seem to influence the way in which the educator identifies and responds to the orphans' needs. A sound relationship between the educator and the orphaned learner seems to create trustful relationship in which learners open-up to educators and express their needs and concerns in this relationship of trust. There is a pattern that suggests that the more the educator understands learners' behaviour and needs through an involved, empathetic and trusting relationship, the more

the educator is likely to become committed to assisting the orphan. The implication of such relationship is that the educators would respond to the individual needs of the learners rather than a collective response. A positive and involved relationship appears to be a critical factor in determining how the educators perceive their role and the action they take in responding to the orphans' needs. Factors such as the educators' personal experiences and religious beliefs among other factors determine the way the educators identify and respond to the learners' needs.

### **7.3 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study concentrated on the experiences of twelve orphaned learners and eight educators, who were identified as being involved with the needs of orphaned learners. The experiences of the non-orphans and the caregivers, in relation to the narrations of the orphans, were not part of this study although their knowledge could have enhanced the findings and contributed to a more holistic picture, adding to the self-reported experiences of the chosen orphans; for example, while the learners talked of their experiences with other children, other children were not included in the sample. Had certain of the non-orphans been interviewed, their inclusion would have added another perspective to the orphans' narrations, although the educators did confirm that the other learners isolated some of the orphans.

The general behaviour and discipline problems educators experienced with orphaned learners in these schools were not explored to rule out the possibility that truancy and disruptive behaviour is a common problem in the school and not just with these learners specifically. There is the possibility that there are other factors that contribute to the poor behaviour of some of these learners, given the context of the two schools (see Chapter 1).

I acknowledge that the experiences and views of educators who were not involved with the orphans were not addressed in this study, which could have provided deeper insight into the relationship between the educators and the orphans to affirm the findings.

Another limitation is that there might have been other contextual factors influencing educator response or lack of response to the needs of the orphans, which were not explored in this study.

## 7.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to an understanding of the educators' responses to the needs of orphaned learners by presenting an emerging theory of relationship between the educators and the learners as a determining factor in how the educators identify and respond to the learners' needs. It became evident that some orphans were more concerned about their relationships with others than the fulfilment of their material needs; a situation that also appears prominently in other studies.

In addition, this study adds to the knowledge base of how educators understand their role as educators. It appears that the way educators conceptualise their role is influenced by the experiences of their relationship with orphans and their background experiences. Two educator identities emerged from the way in which different educators responded to the needs of the orphaned learners. Some teachers supported the orphaned learners directly while other educators responded to the learners' needs by referring them to other educators for assistance. These different educator responses may need to be taken into account when developing policies that address learners' needs.

There is need for the Department of Education to revisit the seven roles of the educator, in particular the pastoral role. Based on the findings of this study, which indicated the different conceptions of the role of educators, the question that arises is the following: Is it reasonable to expect people who choose a teaching career to spend time acting as social workers, counsellors and pastoral workers? To address the current situation in schools given the rise in numbers of orphaned learners it may be prudent for the state to consider the **appointment of counsellors** to provide pastoral support to learners in schools. Even if counsellors were appointed educators would still be faced with orphans in their classes and the need to address their needs. This study therefore strongly suggests that educators

need to be **trained in bereavement counselling** as part of their initial training. Helping orphans to fulfil their psychosocial needs is likely to have long-term benefits, compared with providing assistance in terms of immediate and short-term material needs.

## 7.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

This study proposes that relationships between educators and learners in school may influence the way in which the educators identify orphaned learners' needs and conceptualise their role in responding to them. What is not well understood are the factors in social relationships that promote or hinder the development of supportive relationships for the orphans.

In addition, future research could focus on exploring the nature of the relationship between educators and orphaned learners, educators and educators, as well as orphans and their peers in schools that cater for many orphaned learners, and the consequences of these different relationships.

Research could also explore other factors that may limit or extend the educators' response to the needs of the orphaned learners. The concept of different educator identities in schools with regard to helping orphaned learners can be further explored. The different role perceptions and educator identities with regard to responding to the needs of orphaned learners seems to have implications for educator workload and the working relationships between educators, as there seems to be a power disequilibrium in both schools because some educators took on most of the pastoral role in providing for the needs of the orphans. Future research could explore the practicality for a social worker to support the efforts of the educators in providing pastoral care to learners in the classroom and in the school as a whole.

## 7.6 CONCLUSION

This study found that educators understood and distinguished their roles in supporting orphaned learners in different ways. There were educators who identified orphaned learners and provided for their needs or sought assistance from other sources; while other educators, after identifying the orphans, responded by referring the orphans who were in need to the *educators who help the orphans*. The differential role perception seemed to be influenced by the relationships between the educators and the learners and among the educators.

Despite the inherent difficulties in dealing with orphans and their unique needs within the school situation identified in this study, there is evidence that suggests that educators can make a difference in orphaned learners' lives. And this difference would be even further enhanced if educators were to receive the support and assistance of specialist intervention within the situation of the orphaned learners in the school context. The knowledge and skills needed to care for grieving orphans, if included in pre-service and in-service training, may help to sensitise educators in considering providing care as part of their educational responsibility.

I conclude this study by reflecting on my original idea of redefining the role of educators who manage the needs of orphaned learners. In the current situation in some school where there are large and increasing number of orphans, it is likely that educators will continue to perform the multiple roles of teaching, and providing guidance and care – in the absence of counsellors and social workers. There is need to redefine the roles of educators, to include pastoral and counselling role to be able to help learners meet their educational aspirations, which may be affected by emotional and social needs. What could also be helpful based on the findings of this study is the suggestion that educators focus on establishing relationships that are conducive to eliciting a positive response to orphaned learners as well as reshaping the way in which educators conceptualise their role. This role should be refocused from the provision of material needs to the

establishment of a supportive relationship. One way in which educators could expand their role and be motivated to support orphans could be through training.

In my closing reflection, I echo the opening anecdote in Chapter 1, by quoting the words of one of the educators interviewed in this study,

*I believe if all educators in all schools can do it, it can be better because they spend most of their time with us. They are mostly with us so we should do that. The extended family should also play a role, I believe (Mabena).*

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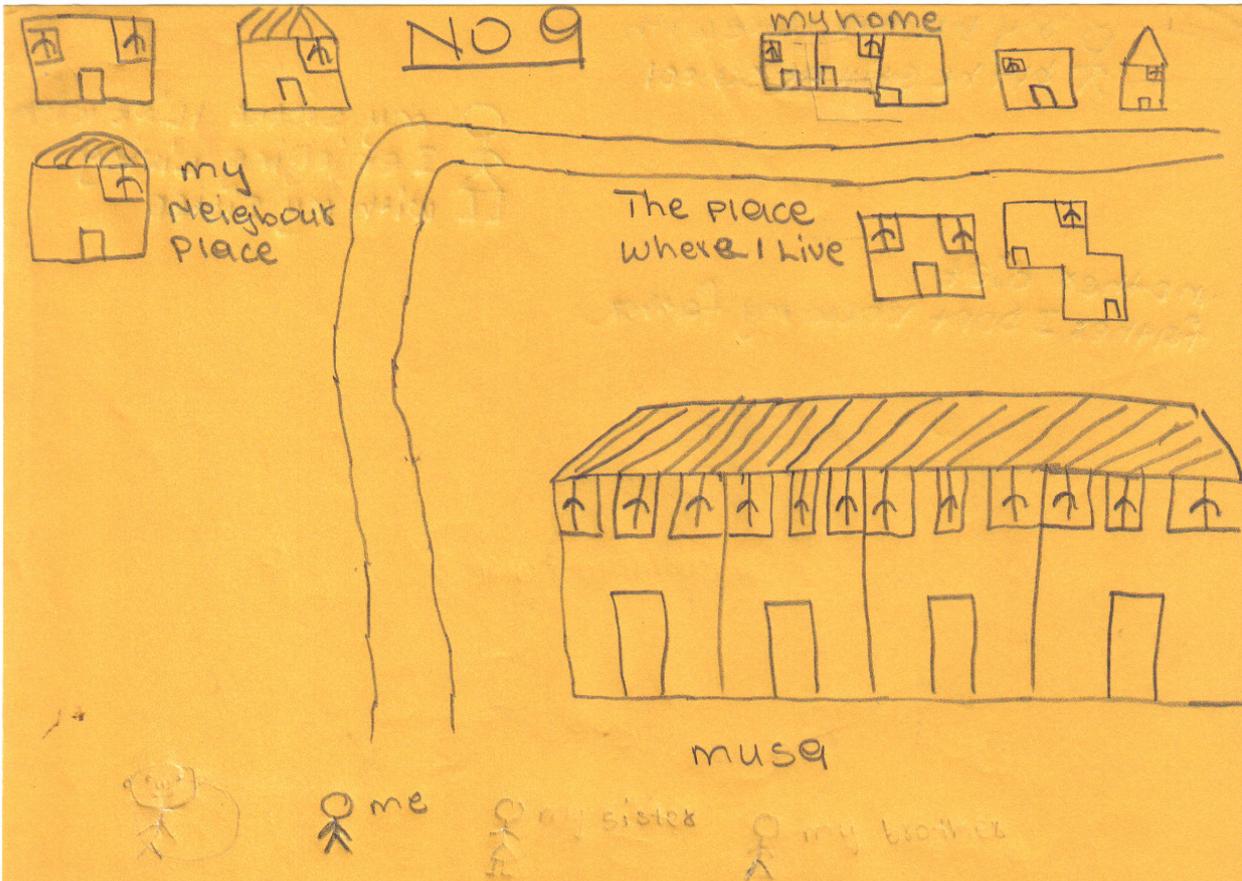
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APPENDIX A

ORPHANED LEARNER PICTURE AND NARRATION



my NAME is xolani I am 16 years old  
 I am IN grade 9 I live in thembaletshu  
 section 16<sup>th</sup> when I grow UP I want  
 to become successful doctor the reason why  
 I want to become a doctor I want to help people  
 The day I wont forget is the 11-04-2005 because  
 is the day my mother Past with I was love my mother  
 and always I will love my mother I cant forget my mother  
 because she was close to me I feel Pain because I dont  
 know my father I am suffering Now maybe my father is  
 still alive he enjoy live with ather family I was Always  
 wondering one day I want to see my father with my eye

## APPENDIX B

### EXAMPLE OF REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ENTRY AFTER INTERVIEW SESSION

*INTERVIEW WITH STUDENT NUMBER 14*

*DATE 8-2-2006*

*Student number 14 was the first learner I interviewed. The learner talks about a friend who is HIV positive. She changes and becomes very emotional when she is referring to her friend. The learner talks of caring for her friend. I need to explore the kind of care she extends to her friend. She seems to have a strong dislike towards people who talk ill of her friend. My assumption from the interview is that L 14 feels sorry for her friend and in the process, suppresses her own feelings of being an orphan. What is of concern to L14 is how other people respond to her friend and to her. What surprised me is the learner's strong negative feeling and irritation when people ask her how she feels. Could she be in a stage of denial or could it be her way of coping with the situation? I need to explore this line of thinking further.*

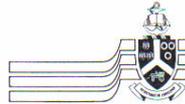
*The learner also uses the phrase "laugh at you" I am not sure of what she means. She says that when you reveal your HIV status they laugh at you – laughing in this context is not an expression of a happy feeling. The term laughing could have different meanings. Secondly, the learner says that when you tell people how you feel about being an orphan, they laugh at you. Again I am not sure what laughter means in the second case. They laugh at you when you cannot pay for trips and they hide their faces so that the teacher does not see them laugh. I will explore what laughing means in the three instances to understand what the learner is experiencing. "Who" are "they"- teachers? Peers? Or the community...*



## APPENDIX C

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER -1

ANNEXURE D



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**DATE CONSIDERED**

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER :** EM03/11/23DGINA

PhD The Role of Educators Managing Needs of Orphaned Learners

Teresa Ogina

Educational Management and Policy Studies

24 November 2003

APPROVED

This ethical clearance is valid for  years from the date of consideration and may be renewed upon application

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Dr C Lubbe

29 August 2005

CC

DR. J. Nieuwenhuisen

Mrs Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER- 2

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ANNEXURE D



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER :** EM07/10/01

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

PhD Educational Management and Policy Studies  
Redefining the role of educators in managing the needs of orphaned learners.

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

Teresa Ogina – 98048075

**DEPARTMENT**

Educational Management and Policy Studies

**DATE CONSIDERED**

15 October 2007

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

APPROVED

This ethical clearance is valid for 6 months from the date of consideration and may be renewed upon application

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Dr C Lubbe-de Beer



16 October 2007

CC

Dr. J. Nieuwenhuisen  
Dr. L Ebersohn  
Mrs Jeannie Beukes

**Please note** that this certificate is a re-issue of the original certificate that was issued on 25 August 2005 by Dr Lubbe-De Beer. The original certificate had incorrect dates printed on it.

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.



APPENDIX D

PERMISSION LETTERS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

19.SEP.2005 8:47

DEPT EDUCATION

NO.586 P.2/34

DEPT EDUCATION

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

PEACE STREET  
NEXT TO  
KWAMHLANGA  
MAGISTRATE COURT  
1022



P.O. BOX 670  
KWAMHLANGA  
1022  
TEL: 013 947 2948  
FAX: 013 947 2718

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NKANGALA REGION

KWAMHLANGA NORTH EAST CIRCUIT

*Litiko leTemfundo umMnyangowefundo Departement van Onderwys Department of education*

ENQ: SKOSANA ZJ

TERESA OGINA  
P.O. BOX 734  
GARSFONTEIN  
0042

DEAR MADAM

**APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT A  
SECONDARY SCHOOL: YOURSELF.**

1. This serves to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 9/09/2005 and addressed to Ms KC Masango in which you apply for permission to conduct a research at Musa Secondary School.
2. It offers me great pleasure to inform you that your application has been approved.

Thank you,

  
.....  
CIRCUIT MANAGER

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
CIRCUIT MANAGER  
2005 -09- 19  
Kwamhlanga North East Circuit  
P.O. Box 670 Kwamhlanga 1022  
DATE



# MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Next to Kwamhlanga  
Filling Station  
Old Works Department

P.O. Box 1129  
Kwamhlanga  
1022



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NKANGALA REGIONAL OFFICE Tweefontein North

Our Ref:

Tel. No. (013) 947 2927  
Fax No. (013) 947 2097

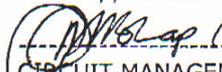
Inquiries:

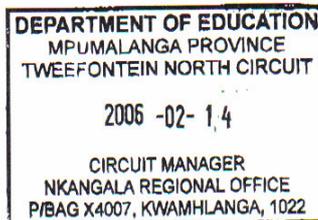
SJ MOHAPI

THE PRINCIPAL  
SGB  
SMT  
EDUCATORS  
LEARNERS

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

1. Ms. Teresa Oginkis conducting a researched entitled "Exploring the needs of orphaned learners"
2. Permission has been granted to her.
3. Your school is selected to form part of the research.
4. All interviews will be conducted between 13h30 and 15h00.
5. The researcher must firstly come to introduce the objectives of the research to management.
6. Hoping your co-operation in this regard will be appreciated.

  
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CIRCUIT MANAGEMENT  
Mrs. MOHAPI  
17 FEBRUARY 2006



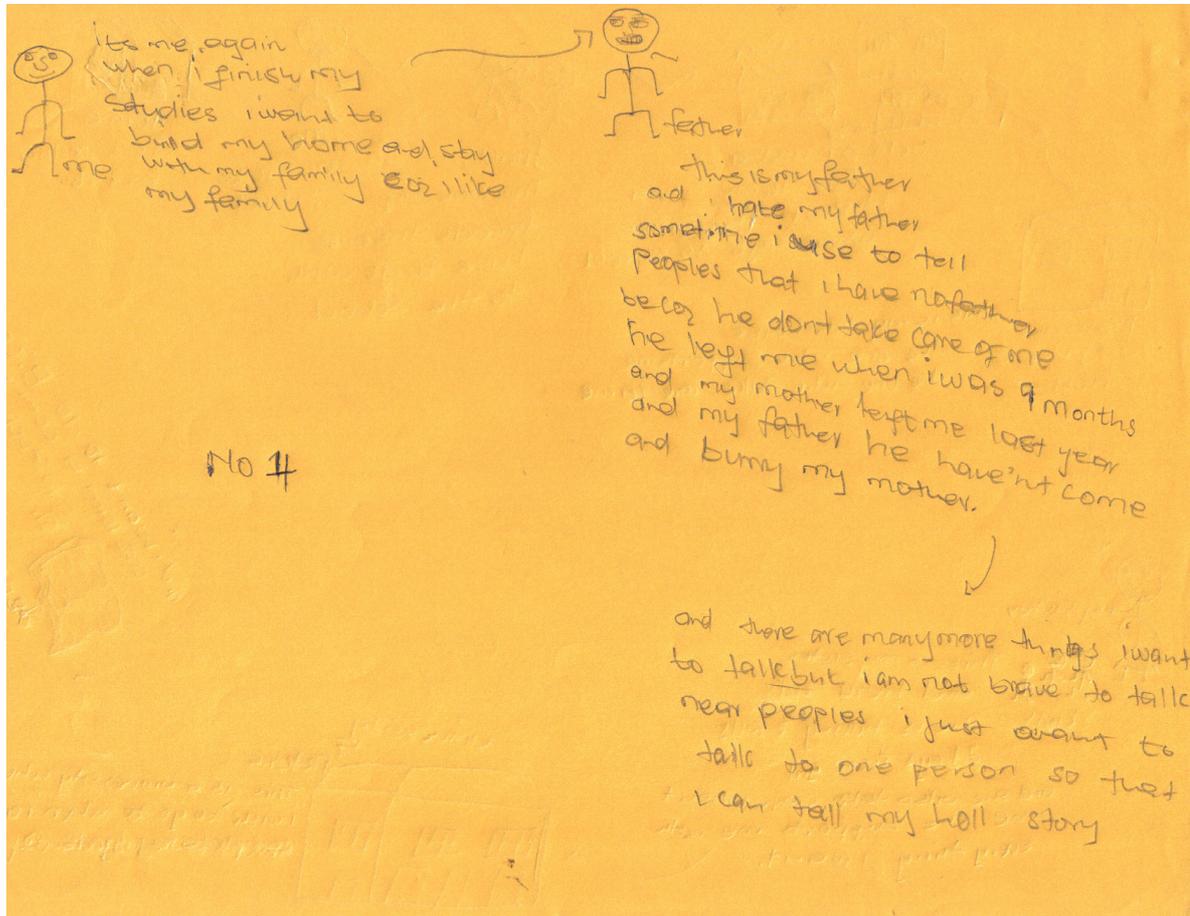
## APPENDIX E

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY AND DATE OF FIELD VISITS FRAME

DATES	RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
26 – 1 - 2006	First meeting in school A. Talked with the Deputy principal and the teachers about my research. Gathered information on background of the school. Time duration 1 hour.
2 – 2 - 2006	First meeting with the learners in school A. Introducing myself to the learners and the study. Draw and write session with the learners. Time duration 45 minutes.
8 – 2 - 2006	First set of face-to-face interviews with three learners in school A. Discussions of the drawings and follow up questions. Time duration 2 hours.
15 – 2- 2006	I went to school A but could not do the interviews because the learners were dismissed early because the teachers had to go for a special meeting.
21 - 2- 2006	First visit in school B. Talked with the principal about the research. Information about the background of the school. Talked with the educators informing them of my research. Time duration 2 hours.
27 - 2 -2006	Interview the HOD of school B senior phase (educator Mtalala) Time duration 1hour 15 minutes.
3 – 3 -2006	First meeting with learners in school B. I introduced myself and explained what my study is about. Draw and write session with the learners. Time duration 1 hour 30 minutes.
10 –3 -2006	First set of face-to-face interviews with the learners in school B. Discussion of the drawings and follow up questions. Time duration 2 hours 15 minutes.
23 – 3 - 2006	Second set of face to face interviews with learners in school B. Time duration 2 hours.
24 – 3 - 2006	Second set of face to face interviews with three learners in school A. Time duration 2 hours
4 – 5 -2006	First interviews with the educators, School A- Mabena. Time duration 50minutes
8 – 5 - 2006	Face to face interview with educator, School A- Selepe. Time duration 45 minutes.
12 – 5- 2006	Face to face interview with educator, School A - Khumalo at her house. Time duration 1 hour 15 minutes.
20 – 5 - 2006	Face to face interview with educator, School A -Chabalala at her house. 1 hour
26 – 5 - 2006	Face to face interview with educator, B- Malope, 45 Minutes
2 – 6 - 2006	Face to face interview with educator Mokoena, 50 Minutes
16 – 6 - 2006	Face to face interview with educator Dube, 1 Hour
5 – 10 - 2006	Member checking with educators in school A -1 hour 10 minutes.
12 – 10 - 2006	Member checking with educators in school B- 1 hour 20 minutes.

## APPENDIX F

### EXAMPLE OF CHOSEN DRAWING AND MEMO,

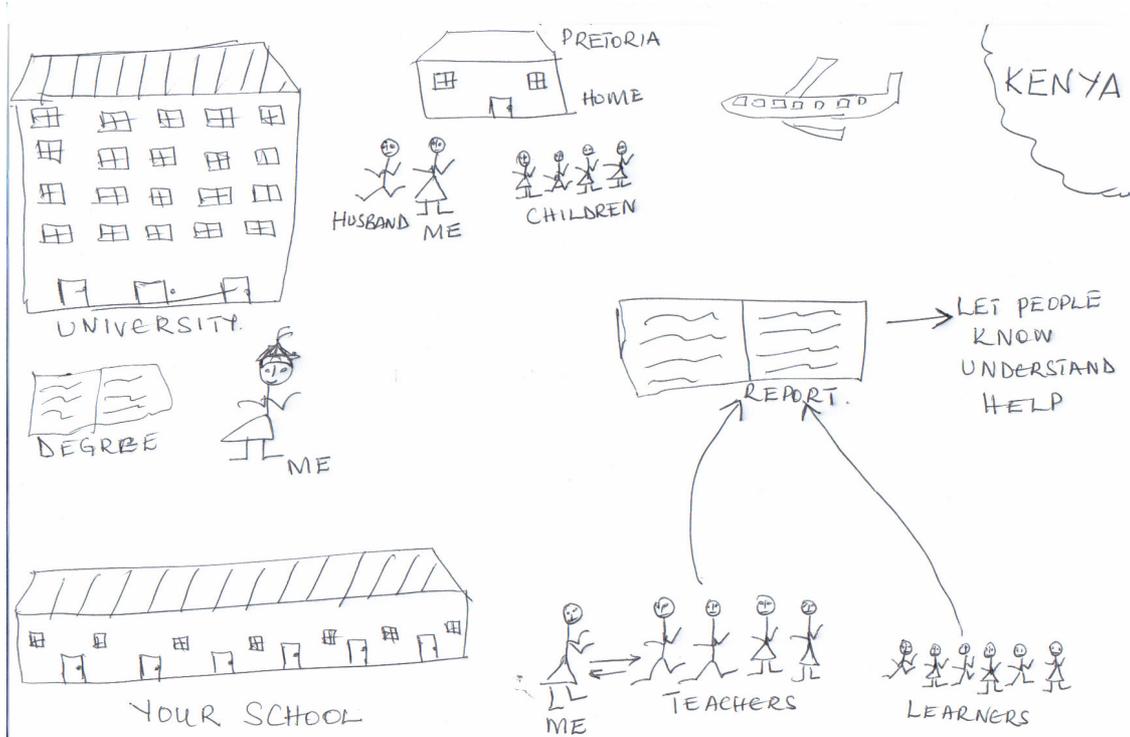


#### **Memo**

##### **Motivation for choosing the student**

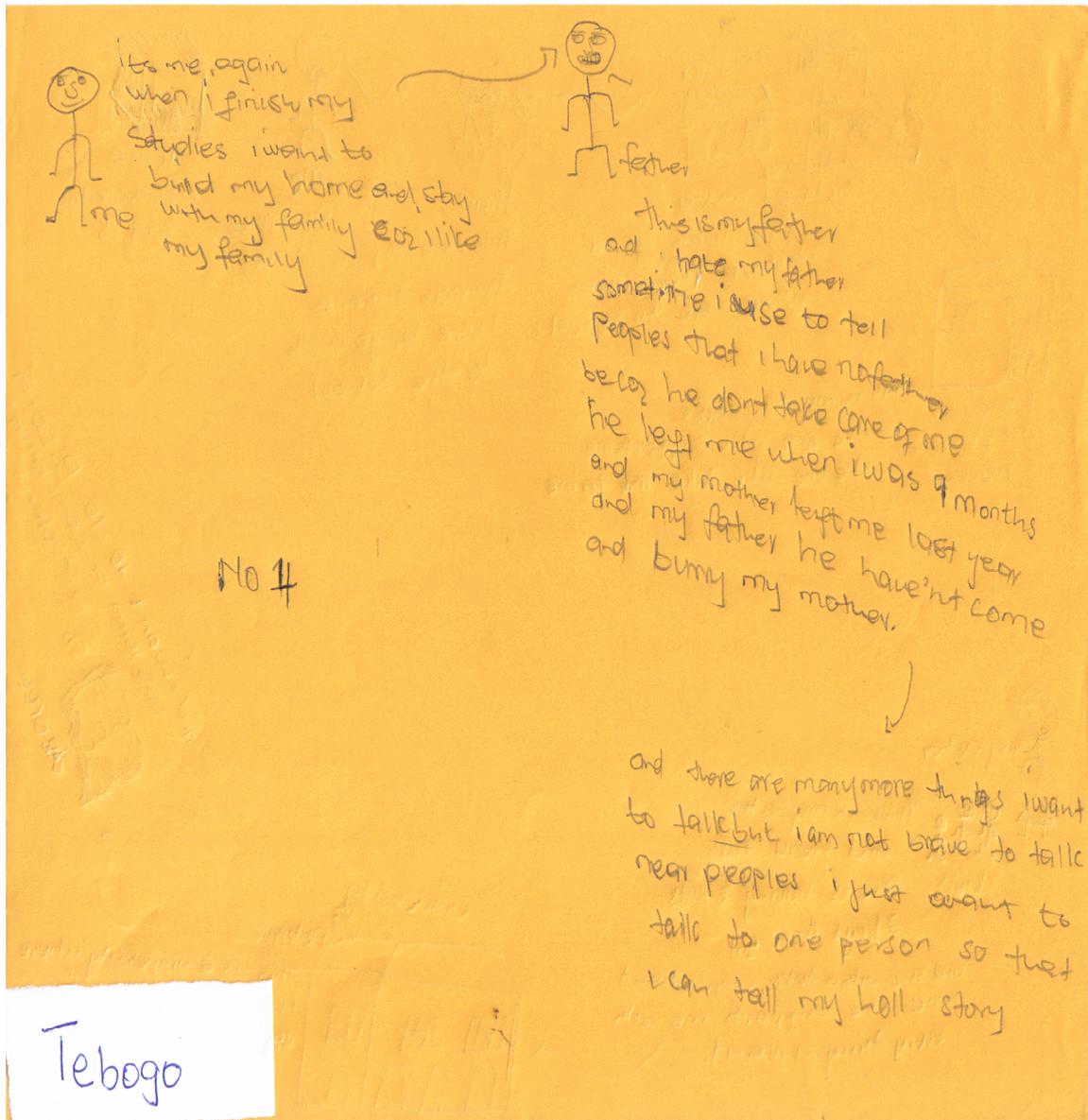
*L 4 has strong negative feeling about his father. There was an indication of outright hatred and even pretence that he does not have a father. What surprised me were the emotions that were rooted in the feeling of not being able to forgive his father for not burying his mother. L 4 draws the father as a man with an angry face. I am very curious to talk to him because he indicated that he wants to tell his story.*

**Appendix G**



## Appendix H

### School A: Learners (drawings) selected



my name is colani I am 16 years old  
I am in grade 9 I live in thembaletshu  
Section 16<sup>th</sup> when I grow up I want  
to become successful doctor the reason why  
I want to become a doctor I want to help people  
The day I want forget is the 11-04-2005 because  
is the day my mother past with I was love my mother  
and always I will love my mother I can't forget my mother  
because she was close to me I feel pain because I don't  
know my father I am suffering now maybe my father is  
still alive he enjoy live with other family I was always  
wondering one day I want to see my father with my eye

Tshupo



IF I am in collage I want to finish and after that I want to be a  
Police to help our community and each other if you see in the country  
the I see many crime and if I help our community I want to know  
whos gonna be care for me I want to know whose gonna be  
there for me and tell me something about the world

my mother died in 2002 but my father lost me  
when I was young and know I don't know my father  
because he lost me that is not make me happy



I am a person who like other people I don't like a person  
who hate me for nothing I am always be happy I am not  
always be so selfishness and tell some person  
you are so careless, and thing that I wish I wish  
to finish school and help my grandmother because when  
if ~~was~~ was not my granny were I was be know and  
I love my parents so much like my parents I was so crying

Lerato



**14 NELLY** all my parent a dead

> I'm a person whom like the people and  
who care about each other and like the  
other whom their parent daad with HIV  
/Aids I dont ~~me~~ hate the people  
that the has got the HIV /aids  
When I grow up I want to be the  
the pallot.

the are some people who  
they are every agn us How DO we  
feel and they must stop usk us  
because other people they have small  
hart and they lovely rawe have no parent.  
they think noting we Dont have any thing  
and because the have parent they thin  
g they are clever we must hold togeth  
er and how the people are HIV/aids also  
we must hold them to gether we are  
all the people of the life and In the  
Future

Lindiwe

Someone give a money for school fee is my uncle

Don't like people who ask me a question where is your mother and father if I me like that I want to cry because I don't know my mother their faces I know my father faces.

If I am in collage I want to be a bank manager I know at home we don't have a money.

I want at my home be a big house because now is a shack small house.

And I want something because I a transport because is long distances I am come late at school.

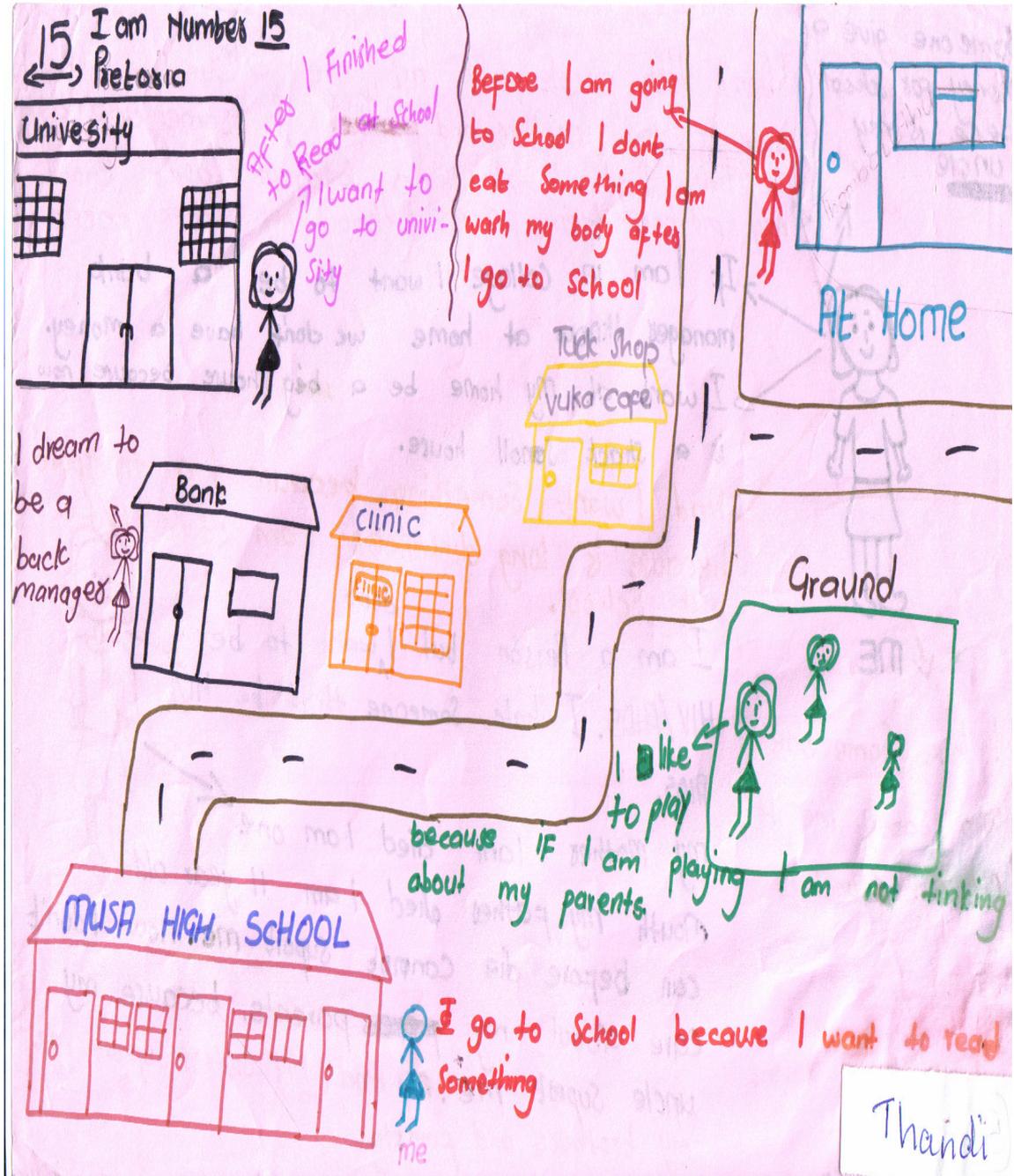
I am a person but I don't want to be HIV/AIDS. I hate someone that be HIV/AIDS.

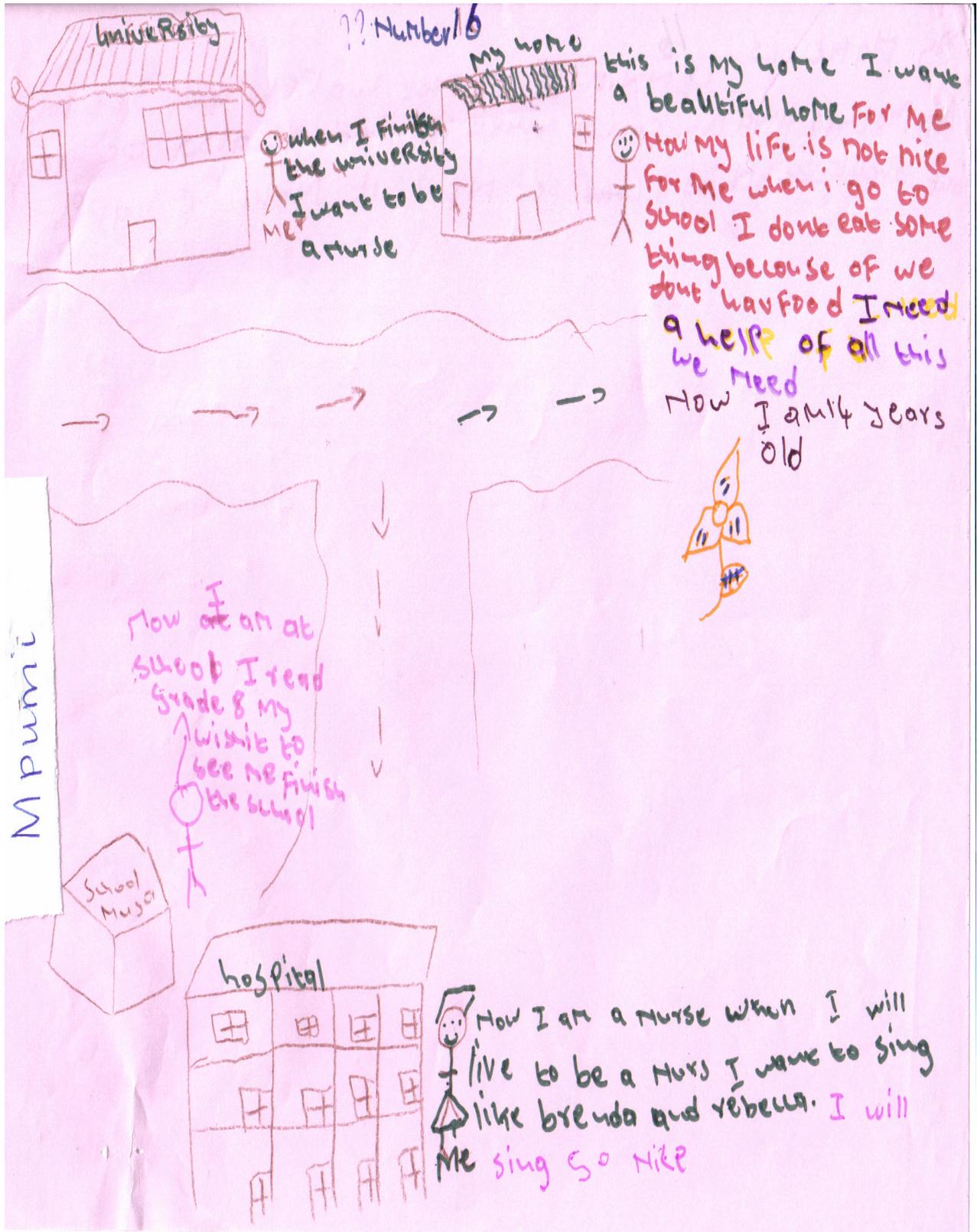
my mother I am died I am one month my father died I am 11 year old can before die cannot support me. Now I don't care about my parents. because my uncle support me. And My Sisters support me my brothers and familys.

I love some one who support me its my aunt & uncle

ME

Thandi





APPENDIX I

Drawings and Narrations of learners in School B:





Karabo

I am Mamo I live with my 2 sisters and my brother  
I stay good but sometimes they don't have  
a food to eat because I have a good sister  
they do something to eat I live in ADP they  
I 4 and 1 babie I was live with my Grandmother  
in Dennilton I was live with my Grandmother drink  
Alcohol and they came back home and they say  
weckup came and do the food I not hangry  
and to morrow was go to school I do have  
a time to do my homework



L3

Thato

