CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The growing number of socio-economic barriers (for example HIV/AIDS, poverty, unemployment and child abuse) in South Africa have devastating effects on individuals, families, schools and communities (Meintjes, 2009; Meintjes, Hall, Marera & Boulle, 2009; Smit & Fritz, 2008), forcing people to find ways in which to address these barriers (Ferreira, 2008). In the context of such socio-economic barriers in many South African communities and the need to deal with them, research indicates that schools and teachers could act as potential protective resources in providing school-based psychosocial support to vulnerable individuals (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming; Lewis, 1999; Mampane, 2010; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Reis, Colbert, & Hebert, 2005; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore & Ouston; 1979; Theron, 2006; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994).

The current study forms part of the STAR\(^1\) research intervention, which commenced in 2003 (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming). The focus of STAR is on teachers’ role in promoting resilience in schools through psychosocial support from an asset-based approach (Ferreira, Ebersöhn, Loots, McCallaghan, Mnguni & Odendaal, 2009). This ongoing research intervention initially started with ten participating teachers from a primary school in the Eastern Cape (Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ferreira, 2006, 2008; Ferreira et al., 2009), which involved several interrelated research studies and researchers (Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ferreira, 2006, 2008; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; McCallaghan, 2007; Mnguni, 2006; Odendaal, 2006; Olivier, 2009). In 2005, additional schools in Gauteng and Mpumalanga were included in STAR (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming). In 2007, as part of dissemination research, teachers from the

\(^1\) STAR is an acronym for Supportive Teachers, Assets and Resilience.
current study were trained as STAR facilitators to disseminate STAR to an additional six schools (two schools per province) to determine fidelity of implementation.

The current study is a theme within the context of STAR, comparing the way in which teachers in the four initial participating schools implemented the asset-based approach (subsequent to participation in STAR) aimed at school-based psychosocial support. The following primary research question guided the comparison: How do teachers in four schools implement the asset-based approach aimed at school-based psychosocial support? In order to answer the primary research question, I addressed several secondary research questions. Each secondary question was addressed in a separate theme during data analysis and interpretation. The four secondary questions of the current study are:

- How do teachers implement the underlying processes of the asset-based approach for psychosocial support? (see theme 1, Chapter 4).
- Which barriers are evident in school-community contexts? (see theme 2, Chapter 5).
- In which ways could barriers in school-community contexts be addressed? (see theme 2, Chapter 5).
- Which competencies do teachers demonstrate during the implementation of the asset-based approach? (see theme 3, Chapter 6).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to compare the way in which teachers in four resource scarce South African schools implement the asset-based approach (subsequent to their participation in STAR) to promote psychosocial support. I aimed to explain teachers’ implementation of the underlying processes of the asset-based approach through teacher-driven psychosocial support initiatives. In addition, I sought to obtain insight into teachers’ experience of typical barriers evident in the four participating school-community contexts. Simultaneously, I explored the potential of teachers to act as protective resources in implementing the asset-based approach to ameliorate the impact of identified barriers. Furthermore, I aimed to identify and describe teachers’
competencies (if any) demonstrated during the process of implementing the asset-based approach.

### 1.3. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

I next elaborate on the rationale of the current study by explaining why I selected teachers as participants; psychosocial support for resilience in schools; the asset-based approach as theoretical framework of the current study as well as comparative case study research design with participatory rural appraisal (PRA²) principles as research design.

#### 1.3.1 Why teachers?

Many national and international studies state that schools and teachers can act as protective resources for care and support (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Dent & Cameron, 2003; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Lewis, 1999; Mampane, 2010; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Reis et al., 2005; Stewart, Sun, Patterson, Lemerle & Hardie, 2004; Theron, Geyer, Strydom & Delport, 2008; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). STAR therefore partnered with teachers as protective resources of school-based psychosocial support initiatives in their school-community contexts to explore resilience in schools.

Several studies focus on collaboration and partnership between schools and communities (Cagampang, Brindis, Peterson, Berglas & Barenbaum, 2002; LaPoint & Jackson, 2004; Ostrom, Lerner & Freel, 1995; Thompson & Uyeda, 2004; Wilson, Giese, Meintjies, Croke & Chamberlain, 2002). However, few of these research studies have focused on South African teachers as potential facilitators for psychosocial support (see Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2006; Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2005; Mnguni, 2006; Odendaal, 2006; Olivier, 2009). Flowers and Waddell (2004) used teachers as

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² PRA is a method that utilises individuals’ expertise of their own lives and circumstances, together with external assistance, to enhance social development (see 3.2.2).
project participants in their study in Australia. These authors found that teachers were able to act as supporters, motivators and mentors, and as resourceful coordinators and inventive strategic thinkers, who were able to build sustainable community structures.

However, many studies raise concerns about teachers’ competencies, time constraints and conflicting identities when they are required to act as protective resources towards psychosocial support (Bhana, Morrell, Epstein & Molesane, 2006; Hall, 2004; Jansen, 2001; Jansen & Christie, 1999; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Matheson & Harley, 2001; Machawira, 2008; Ogina, 2007; Sachs, 2001; Smit & Fritz, 2008). It therefore seems that teachers’ potential for acting as protective resources for psychosocial support remains a controversial issue. The ways in which teachers provide pastoral care, as well as their readiness to take up a pastoral role, remain under-researched (Schierhout, Kinghorn, Govender, Mungani & Morely, 2004).

Furthermore, within the field of asset-based intervention research, different studies utilised different individuals as community facilitators for community change. In many studies, researchers acted as facilitators in communities, while participants were community members from various sectors in the community (Flowers & Waddell, 2004; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, 2003; Turner & Pinkett, s.a.). Several authors refer to the value of involving respected community members as research partners who are credible and well integrated in their community (Bailey, 1992; Israel, Schultz, Parker & Becker, 1998).

Teachers are faced with stressors related to teaching and socio-economic barriers in school-community contexts. Smit and Fritz (2008) advocate for more studies on what enables or Disable teachers to deal with trauma and related challenges on a daily basis. The current study aimed to answer this question by generating a better understanding of why teachers are able to address daily stressors to teaching. On a practical level, STAR aimed at enabling teachers with asset-based knowledge, as one way of dealing with barriers encountered. I aimed at addressing existing literature’s calls for the growing need to understand the knowledge and competencies teachers need for acting as protective.
resources in promoting psychosocial support and resilience (Adelman, 1996; Bhana et al., 2006; Hall, 2004; Hamlin, 1997; Lane, Lacefield-Parachini & Isken, 2003; Loots & Mguni, 2008; Machawira, 2008; Smit & Fritz, 2008; Theron et al., 2008).

1.3.2 Why psychosocial support?

Existing literature argues that intervention programmes tend to pay more attention to noticeable and observable problems and less to their psychosocial effects on individuals (Grainger, Webb & Elliot, 2001; Hunter & Williamson, 2000; Wakhweya, Kateregga, Konde-Lule, Mukyala, Sabin, Williams & Heggenhougen, 2002). Giese, Meintjies, Croke & Chamberlain (2003a) found a noticeable absence of psychosocial support for children on the part of home- and community-based care and support organisations that took part in their study.

In addition, existing literature indicates limited research on psychosocial support (Giese et al., 2003a; Wild, 2001). Many researchers point out that there is a need for psychosocial support in the context of HIV/AIDS. Mohangi (2008a) identified a scarcity of empirical literature on emotional responses and related support to children living within an HIV/AIDS context. In this regard, Bhana et al. (2006) refer to three fundamental challenges related to HIV/AIDS that teachers should address. The first challenge is to raise HIV/AIDS awareness and prevent HIV infection; the second, to assist those that are affected and infected, and the last challenge is to deal with the trauma of illness and death of significant others. Most current research focuses on the first challenge, while the last two challenges are not always adequately addressed in literature (Bhana et al., 2006). These challenges have significant implications for teachers’ role in providing psychosocial support. Teachers often need to address HIV/AIDS-related challenges in their classrooms by providing support and care to individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
The current study specifically focused on school-based psychosocial support for resilience in schools. I found many studies conducted on community-based development and support for addressing psychosocial challenges (Bender, 2004; Campbell, Nair & Maimane, 2007; Diale & Fritz, 2007; Kelly, Ntlabati, Oyosi, van der Riet & Parker, 2002; Louw, 2008; Roos & Temane, 2007; Swanepoel, 2005; Viljoen, 2005), with some South African studies focused on schools as central in psychosocial support (Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Ferreira, 2006, 2008; Giese, Meintjes, Croke & Chamberlain, 2003b; Loots, 2005; Olivier, 2009; Theron, 2006).

Giese et al. (2003b) found that schools have the potential for acting as powerful vehicles through which psychosocial support could be provided to children. On the other hand, it was apparent from their research that schools often lacked the human resource capacity to undertake additional responsibilities without significant support and mutual partnerships with relevant service providers. The current study therefore aimed at empirically comparing teachers’ implementation of the asset-based approach as a mechanism to mobilise teachers in schools to promote psychosocial support.

1.3.3 Why the asset-based approach?

The asset-based approach, as opposed to the needs-based approach, focuses on assets, strengths, resources, capacities and skills. Eloff (2006a) argues that challenges are progressively being addressed by focusing on available assets and resources that could enable people to deal more efficiently with challenges. Needs and barriers could therefore be addressed by mobilising individual assets and resources in systems (Eloff, 2006a; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1997, 1999). In line with psychosocial support, the fundamental principles of the asset-based approach include joint ownership and responsibility, practical solutions, a caring and supportive environment, building individuals’ strengths, and ennoblement, together with collaboration and establishment of partnerships and networks (Eloff, 2006a).
Within the context of the asset-based approach, the starting point in STAR is that each of the participating teachers possesses assets and that each school-community context has resources. Based on the belief in the presence of assets and resources in individuals and systems, participating teachers in the STAR intervention became familiar with the asset-based approach. Subsequent to STAR, the teachers implemented the asset-based approach to psychosocial support by identifying, mobilising and managing assets and resources.

1.3.4 Why a comparative case study design, with participatory rural appraisal (PRA) principles?

My review of existing studies found limited comparative research on the differences and similarities of asset-based interventions in different school-community contexts. Although Odell (2002) implemented PRA approaches to facilitate enablement and rural community development in rural contexts, he did not apply a formal comparison of the differences and similarities in participating contexts. He focused on researching the development, evaluation and revision of participatory research techniques in order to promote positive action in communities.

In line with the conception of schools’ role as potential vehicles for resilience in the current study, Kilpatrick, Johns, Mulford & Falk (2002) conducted a study to examine the extent and nature of the contribution of rural schools to their communities’ development beyond traditional education. Although their study comprised case studies of five rural communities in Australia, they did not apply a comparative case study research design, as was the focus of the current study. Furthermore, although they focused on resources in schools and communities, they did not utilise the asset-based approach as conceptual framework of their study per se. To date, I have not found any comparative case study on the implementation of the asset-based approach in both urban and rural South African communities. The current study therefore aimed to expand on the knowledge base of similar as well as different ways in which teachers in four school-community contexts
implemented the asset-based approach for psychosocial support and the promotion of resilience.

1.4 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF STAR

The following theoretical assumptions underpin STAR (and thus the current study):

- Each school-community context functions as a system, consisting of various subsystems that are interconnected and dynamically influence each other.
- Both assets and barriers are present in each of the four systems of school-community contexts.
- The identification of existing assets and barriers could enable teachers to mobilise identified assets for psychosocial support.
- Teachers would be able to provide psychosocial support following an asset-based intervention.

In Chapter 7, I revisit these theoretical assumptions in relation to the current study’s findings.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

I next clarify key concepts of the current study, namely the asset-based approach, psychosocial support and resilience, and school-community context.

1.5.1 Asset-based approach

The asset-based approach was informed and enriched within the movement of positive psychology (Eloff, 2006a; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Saylor, Graves & Cochran, 2006; Seligman & Czikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). The asset-based approach focuses on assets and resources and comprises three underlying
processes, namely identifying, mobilising and managing assets and resources support 
(Eloff, 2006a; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1997, 1999). Within the framework of the 
asset-based approach, I clarify the following concepts:

- **Assets** refer to inherent strengths, skills, talents and capacities within a person (Eloff, 
  2006a).

- **Resources** refer to whatever has the capability of supporting the process of asset 
  mobilisation and building relationships within a system (Eloff, 2006a).

- **Asset-based initiative** refers to an initiative that strengthens a system’s ability to 
  flourish. An asset-based initiative focuses on both assets and resources (Eloff, 2006a).

- **Asset identification** refers to the framework of discovering and focusing on assets and 
  resources, with the aim of asset mobilisation. The process of making a visual 
  representation of identified assets is referred to as **asset mapping** (Eloff, 2006a).

- **Asset mobilisation** refers to the utilisation of available assets and resources that have 
  not yet been fully utilised in an individual or system (Eloff, 2006a).

- **Asset management** refers to the responsibility to maintain and sustain initiated actions 
  (asset identification and asset mobilisation), by means of re-evaluation, revision and 
  effective management (Bender, 2004; Ferreira, 2006, 2008; Kretzmann & McKnight, 
  1993).

1.5.2 **Psychosocial support and resilience**

Psychosocial generally refers to the psychological, emotional and social aspects of life 
(Mohangi, 2008a). For the purpose of the current study, I therefore refer to psychosocial 
support as actions that are aimed at facilitating psychological, emotional and social well-
being amongst vulnerable individuals (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming). The current 
study investigated and compared different actions (by teachers) within the context of the 
asset-based approach to provide psychosocial support and promote resilience in school-
community contexts.
Literature in the fields of psychology and education reflects a growing shift from risk (needs and barriers) to resilience (assets) (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999; Mowbray, Woolley, Grogan-Kaylor, Gant, Gilster & Williams Shanks, 2007; Oliver, Collin, Burns & Nicholas, 2006; Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick & Sawyer, 2003; Pianta & Walsh, 1998; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). Winfield (1994) identifies three characteristics of the process of resilience building. Firstly, resilience building is long-term and developmental. Secondly, it views individuals as having strengths rather than deficits and risks. Thirdly, it develops and nurtures protective processes with the aim of enabling individuals to succeed, by changing systems, structures, and beliefs within schools and communities. These characteristics relate to the fundamental processes of the asset-based approach, namely to identify, mobilise and manage strengths, assets and resources. Furthermore, in line with the bio-ecological approach, Howard et al. (1999) advocate a theoretical and practical ecological approach in viewing and researching resilience. In the current study, I therefore foreground the importance of identifying assets and protective resources in different subsystems, specifically in schools, for providing psychosocial support.

1.5.3 School-community context

Although different definitions exist for community, the most widely used and shared definition of a community is a group of people who share a defined physical or geographical area. The group has some degree of common identity, traits, concerns or a sense of common belonging, which shape it into a distinctive social entity (Bender, 2004; Crawford, 2005; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002; Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, s.a.). I used this description as a working definition for the concept of community within the current study.

Mbiti (cited in Van Dyk, 2001a:124) explains the traditional importance of the community in Africa as follows: “When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his
neighbour and his relatives whether dead or living. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual.” The WHO (1993) and Schwarzer, Starke and Buchwald (2003) affirm this view, by emphasising that community members have to be involved in their communities. In this way, people with a social support network cope more actively than those without a support network.

Communities do not exist in a vacuum. The physical, social and geographic environment plays an integral part in the way a community functions, how locality is governed, how services, assets and resources are available and utilised, and how security and a sense of safety in a community are perceived. Therefore, a community is subject to influences that play an integral role in the opportunities and choices available to communities (Crawford, 2005; Donald et al., 2002; De Gruchy, 2002). As stated earlier, from an asset-based approach, Kretzmann (1992) argues for reconsidering communities as a compilation of assets, strengths, resources and capabilities. Only then does the opportunity arise to develop an internally focused, strength-driven approach to creating strong communities. Schools can be viewed as a subsystem and potential resource within communities that influence communities and are influenced by communities (Condly, 2006; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Wilson et al., 2002). This dynamic interaction between schools and communities as well as the potential for school-based community support is discussed in Chapter 2 (see 2.4.5).

In the current study, I dealt with four unique school-community contexts, each consisting of unique assets and subject to their own dynamic influences. I thus viewed each school-community as a unique entity, but was also aware of the environment that influences each community’s functioning. McNulty (2005:1) emphasises it as follows: “...tailoring development projects to the specific realities of each community’s unique identity and condition”.

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1.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The contribution of the current study encompasses empirical evidence that broadens the existing literature and knowledge base in the fields of the asset-based approach, resilience and school-based psychosocial support. Within the field of the asset-based approach, the study indicates that the implementation of the asset-based approach could result in social capital in the context of school-community contexts. In addition, asset-based competencies are introduced, and the relationship between asset-based competencies and fundamental psychological needs (competence, relatedness and autonomy) as signified in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2002) is highlighted. Furthermore, the study provides new insight into the relationship between the asset-based approach and sense of coherence. The findings of the study signify that the implementation of the asset-based approach could result in enhanced eustress (Simmons & Nelson, 2005) and sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987, 1993) when faced with and addressing barriers.

The study also contributed to the existing knowledge base within the field of resilience in schools and school-based psychosocial support. The findings provide empirical evidence that teacher-driven psychosocial support initiatives could promote resilience in schools. The study highlights teachers’ viewpoints on potential assets and resources that could potentially be mobilised in school-community contexts to provide psychosocial support, and the possible barriers that teachers could come across in school-community contexts. Insight is presented into potential ways in which teachers can address barriers on an intrapersonal and interpersonal level and by deploying management skills. The findings show that teachers are capable of mobilising identified assets and resources to promote psychosocial support and resilience in their schools and communities. They also indicate what sort of psychosocial support could be expected from similar school-based interventions.

In addition to the theoretical contribution of the study, the study also highlights key implications for development and intervention strategies. The study suggests that teachers
are well positioned to act as protective resources in providing psychosocial support and promoting resilience in schools. STAR is one way in which teachers could facilitate the implementation of the asset-based approach in their school-community contexts to promote psychosocial support and resilience. The practical contribution of the study lies in the potential of STAR being extended to teachers on a broader scale, which could result in similar outcomes than reported in this study. Teacher training programmes and training for in-service teachers could focus more on making both prospective and in-service teachers aware of potential barriers and assets that could be expected in school-community contexts. Teachers could be trained to implement the asset-based approach by mobilising assets to address barriers, to promote psychosocial support and resilience.

1.7 SUMMARY OF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Table 1.1 presents a summarised framework of the research process that I followed in the current study. In this table I provide an outline of relevant trends in the current literature as background to the study; the research questions formulated as focus for the study; and the research methodology and strategies applied to address my research questions. I also present an outline of quality criteria, strategies applied to ensure quality criteria and the ethical considerations of the study. Lastly, I refer to the emerged themes and insight related to each of the identified themes.
Table 1.1: Framework of the research process that was followed in the current study.

| LITERATURE REVIEW AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY (Chapter 2) |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Asset-based approach as theoretical framework | Assumptions underpinning community psychology | Barriers and resources in communities | Changing roles of teachers |

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main research question

- How do teachers in four schools implement the asset-based approach aimed at school-based psychosocial support?

Secondary research questions

- How do teachers implement the underlying processes of the asset-based approach for psychosocial support?
- Which barriers are evident in school-community contexts?
- In which ways could barriers in school-community contexts be addressed?
- Which competencies do teachers demonstrate during the implementation of the asset-based approach?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGIES (Chapter 3)

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<th>Research design and sampling</th>
<th>Data collection techniques</th>
<th>Data documentation techniques</th>
<th>Data analysis and interpretation</th>
<th>Quality criteria</th>
<th>Strategies applied to ensure quality criteria</th>
<th>Ethical considerations</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Comparative case study</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Verbatim transcripts</td>
<td>Constructivist grounded thematic analysis and interpretation (Charmaz, 2000)</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Member checking</td>
<td>Expertise of the researcher</td>
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<td>Interpretivism</td>
<td>Convenience sampling of cases</td>
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<td>Transferability</td>
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<td>Purposeful sampling of participants</td>
<td>Intervention artefacts</td>
<td>Research journal</td>
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<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Prolonged engagement in the research field</td>
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<td>Visual data</td>
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<td>Authenticity</td>
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### Results of the Current Study (Chapters 4-6)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Emerged themes and authentication of results</th>
<th>Locate results within current literature</th>
<th>Insight related to each of the identified themes</th>
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| ▪ Theme 1: Teachers using an asset-based approach for psychosocial support  
  ▪ Theme 2: Addressing barriers resourcefully as teachers  
  ▪ Theme 3: Teachers’ demonstrated asset-based competencies | ▪ Congruent results  
  ▪ Contradictory results  
  ▪ Silences | ▪ Insight in the way teachers using an asset-based approach for psychosocial support  
  ▪ Insight in the way teachers address barriers resourcefully  
  ▪ Insight in teachers’ asset-based competencies |

### Conclusions and Recommendations (Chapter 7)
1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introducing the study
Chapter 1 provides background on the rationale and purpose of the current study. I presented the theoretical assumptions underlying the study and clarified its key concepts. Lastly, I provided an outline of the framework of the research process followed in the study, which will be elaborated upon in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature review as background to the study
In Chapter 2, I present a review of existing literature relevant to the focus of the current study. I present the asset-based approach as theoretical framework. The assumptions underlying community psychology are discussed. In addition, I foreground barriers and resources in communities. This chapter concludes with literature on the changing roles of teachers in the South African context.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and strategies
Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology and strategies that I utilised in the current study to answer my research question. Interpretivism as metatheory and qualitative research as methodological paradigm are justified. The choice of research design, selection of cases and participants, data collection and documentation techniques, as well as data analysis and interpretation, are explained. In addition, I elaborate on the different phases of the current study. I conclude this chapter by referring to the quality criteria and ethical considerations of the current study.

Chapter 4: Teachers using an asset-based approach for psychosocial support
In Chapter 4, I present the first theme that emerged during the data analysis and interpretation phase of the current study. This theme focuses on addressing the secondary research question, namely: How do teachers in four schools implement the underlying processes of the asset-based approach for psychosocial support? I discuss inclusion and exclusion indicators for subthemes and categories and authenticate the results of the study.
Chapter 5: Teachers addressing barriers resourcefully

Chapter 5 presents the second theme, which resulted from data analysis and interpretation. This theme addresses the following two secondary research questions:

- Which barriers are evident in school-community contexts?
- In which ways could barriers in school-community contexts be addressed?

I present the results of this study by means of inclusion and exclusion indicators for subthemes and categories that emerged during the thematic analysis and interpretation phase of the current study. I enrich the results of this study through participating teachers’ verbatim quotations, visual data and extracts from my research journal. I consider the results of this study by expanding on similar as well as contradictory findings and silences in existing literature. This chapter concludes with insight in the way teachers addressed barriers resourcefully in relation to the theory of sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987, 1993) and eustress (Nelson & Simmons, 2001; Simmons & Nelson, 2005).

Chapter 6: Teachers’ demonstrated asset-based competencies

In Chapter 6, I focus on the third theme, which addresses the secondary question: Which asset-based competencies are demonstrated when teachers implement the asset-based approach for psychosocial support? In line with the two preceding chapters, I use participants’ verbatim quotations, visual data and extracts from my research journal to support the results of this study. I reflect on the emerged themes in terms of existing literature in order to present the findings of the current study in line with my research purpose. I conclude this chapter by presenting insight in positive psychological states as building blocks for positive identity formation and present the interaction between asset-based competencies within self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2002).
Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 7 provides a summary of the current study’s findings and conclusions. I relate my initial theoretical assumptions to empirical findings, highlight possible contributions of the current study, and discuss the limitations of the current study. I conclude this chapter with recommendations for future research studies, practice, training and development.