

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I firstly present the asset-based approach as theoretical framework within the broader overarching ethos of positive psychology. I focus on the asset-based approach as a window on different systems, asset-based community development, contextual dependencies as a potential challenge of the asset-based approach, and existing studies within the framework of the asset-based approach. Secondly, I present the assumptions underlying community psychology. I then discuss barriers and resources in communities. On the one hand, I look at socio-economic barriers prevalent in South African communities and on the other hand, I foreground resilient communities and schools as protective resources. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the changing roles of teachers. I specifically refer to teachers' pastoral role, stressors of teaching and teachers' resilience in dealing with stressors.

Figure 2.1 is a summarised outline of the literature review and theoretical assumptions. I view school-community conceptualisations through an asset-based lens within a bio-ecological framework. By understanding the dynamic interconnectedness between schools and communities, I assume that psychosocial support forms part of the educational landscape in South Africa. I view teachers and schools as potential protective resources for resilience and therefore situated for school-based psychosocial support in communities.

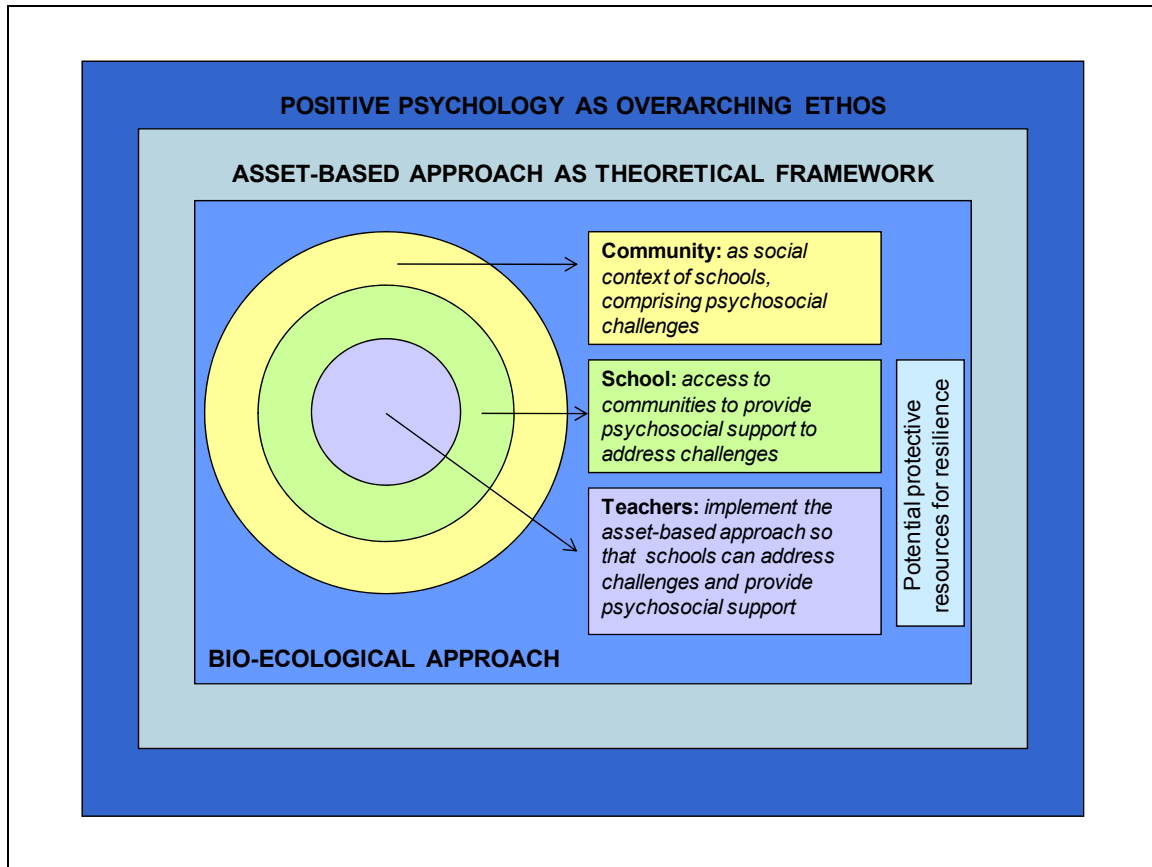


Figure 2.1 Summarised outline of literature review and theoretical assumptions.

2.2 ASSET-BASED APPROACH AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I present the asset-based approach (within a wider positive psychology paradigm) as theoretical framework of this study. I review current literature on systems and community development and support through the lens of an asset-based approach. I also discuss contextual dependencies as potential challenge within the context of the asset-based approach. Lastly, I present an overview of existing studies within the field of the asset-based approach.

2.2.1 Positive psychology as overarching ethos

Scientists, academics and scholars are increasingly questioning the appropriateness and significance of a needs-based approach. Currently there is a paradigm shift towards the notion of a more positive approach to psychology (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Cordes, 2002; Eloff, 2006b; Forster, 2003; Keyes & Haidt, 2003; McNulty, 2005; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Saylor *et al.*, 2006; Seligman *et al.*, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Turner & Pinkett, s.a.).

Seligman *et al.* (2005) describe positive psychology as an umbrella term for the “study of positive emotions, positive character traits and enabling institutions”. Keyes and Haidt (2003) confirm this definition, stating that positive psychology consists of three pillars: the first pillar is the study of positive emotion; the second the study of positive characteristics, skills and capabilities; and the third the study of positive organisations. The asset-based approach, as theoretical framework of the current study, is founded within the positive psychology paradigm. In comparing teachers’ implementation of the asset-based approach, I focused on all three pillars of positive psychology, namely to explore the assets, resources, capabilities and traits of four school-community contexts as a whole, but also of individuals within these contexts (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). I next elaborate on the background and origin of positive psychology and provide some critique related to this paradigm.

2.2.1.1 Background and origin of positive psychology

Positive psychology can be viewed as a movement within the field of psychology, rather than as an entirely separate science (Eloff, 2006b). Linley, Joseph, Harrington and Wood (2006) argue that positive psychology seeks to restore the inequity and imbalance in psychology practice and research. In order to understand positive psychology within the broader field of psychology, we have to go back and take a closer look at the roots of positive psychology. It then becomes clear that it is not a recent phenomenon. Positive psychology derived from pioneering work by Rogers (1951), Maslow (1954, 1962), and

Erikson (1963, 1982). According to Rathunde (2001), Abraham Maslow, William James and John Dewey started “experimental turns” in American psychology. They explored questions regarding life’s meaningfulness and challenged the positivistic approach in science. Rathunde (2001) argues that to establish a more integrated psychology of optimal human functioning, it is important to understand and appreciate both the benefits and the challenges of an experiential perspective.

Within the paradigm of positive psychology, scholars became more interested in the origin of people’s strength and psychological well-being. Antonovsky (1979) proposed the concept of “salutogenesis” (salus=health, genesis=origin), which refers to the study of the origins of positive health or wellness (Pretorius, 2004). Strümpfer (1993, 1995) initiated a paradigm shift and broadened the concept of salutogenesis by introducing a more holistic concept of “fortigenesis” (fortis=strength, genesis=origins), which refers to the origins of psychological strength in general. The fortigenic paradigm focuses on the fundamental question: “where does the strength come from?” (Pretorius, 2004). In this regard, Strümpfer (1999:89) argues: “two basic assumptions are that stressors and adversity are an integral part of the human condition, and that there are sources of strength through which this condition can be endured, even transcended, thus producing a strengthening and toughening of the individual”. Wissing and Van Eeden (2002) elaborate on the concept of fortigenesis and introduce the sub-discipline of “psychofortology” (as opposed to psychopathology), which focuses on the genesis and manifestation of psychological well-being.

Positive psychology is therefore not a new trend; and this movement is progressively growing and moving forward. The American Psychological Association devoted its millennium issue to the emerging science of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Recently, several articles on positive psychology have been published in the scholarly press (see Carter, 2006; Eloff, 2006b; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2003; Held, 2004; Lazarus, 2003; Schwarzer *et al.*, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, there are several newly published books (see Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Lopez &

Snyder, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002; Snyder & Lopez, 2002) on the topic of positive psychology, that review the empirical findings and methods of positive psychology used in the science.

2.2.1.2 Critique related to positive psychology

Many authors refer to this challenge of idealism and naivety in positive psychology (Eloff, 2006b; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2003; Forster, 2003; Held, 2004; Kowalski, 2002; Lazarus, 2003). Critiques are of the opinion that reality is sometimes misrepresented, when only focusing on assets and ignoring the needs. Kowalski (2002) argues that positive psychology is so focused on what is positive about human nature that it neglects to study the redeeming features of apparently aversive behaviour. I agree with Eloff's (1996b:13) reaction on this critique, when she states that "it is naïve to believe that a science of the soul can only continue to grow by growing in one direction". Eloff (1996b) argues that this fresh search for knowledge on strengths and capacities is filling a clear knowledge gap in psychology and will lead to significant and extensive theoretical innovations. Seligman *et al.* (2005:410) argue this challenge as follows: "Research findings from positive psychology are intended to supplement, not remotely to replace, what is known as human suffering, weakness and disorder". The asset-based approach, within the positive psychology paradigm, does not deny problems, but rather deals with problems in a positive manner. Kretzmann (1992) supports this statement when he states, "... while problems and needs in many neighbourhoods are very real indeed, they describe only a part of the community's reality. The other reality is the neighbourhood's strengths". I next discuss existing literature on both the asset-based approach and resilience as related knowledge fields in the realm of positive psychology.

2.2.2 Asset-based approach

The current study is located within the STAR research intervention (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming), which is theoretically grounded in the asset-based approach. When STAR was conceptualised, Ebersöhn and Ferreira (forthcoming) conjectured that teachers could

facilitate psychosocial support through the asset-based approach. STAR is a school-based intervention aimed at capacity building to promote resilience and support in vulnerable school-community contexts (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming). Within the framework of the current study, I compared teachers' implementation of the asset-based approach via STAR. The asset-based approach was implemented in terms of the STAR intervention to enable teachers to focus on the assets, strengths, capacities and resources available within schools and communities that could lead to psychosocial support.

The asset-based approach is presented as an alternative to the needs-based approach. The needs-based approach focuses on deficiencies, needs and problems, which prevents communities from recognising their strengths, capacities, assets and resources. This one-dimensional image has generated an industry of social-service providers who see a community in terms of the extent of its problems and needs. Communities in these circumstances may become consumers of services instead of producers of solutions. The needs-based approach encourages the community to highlight their deficiencies rather than to consider the possibility of their accessible assets and resources in order to improve their own well-being (Cordes, 2002; McNulty, 2005; Saylor *et al.*, 2006; Turner & Pinkett, s.a.).

The point of departure of the asset-based approach, also referred to as the half-full glass, is the belief in the presence of assets in every individual and resources in every system. The asset-based approach is based on three fundamental principles, namely a focus on the positive, considering people as possessing the necessary inner strength for taking charge of their own lives and building relationships and networks (Bouwer, 2005; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming; Eloff, 2006a). The focus is on assets, strengths, capacities and resources that are available, but have not necessarily been utilised yet. This approach addresses a variety of contexts using assets and capacities. Working with what is present and emphasising the establishment of networks and relationship building, this approach aims to create a sense of enablement and self-determination. The asset-based process identifies individual assets and community resources (asset identification), and connects these assets to one another in ways that

improve their power and effectiveness (asset mobilisation) (Ammerman & Parks, 1998; Cordes, 2002; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1997, 1999; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002).

Scholars generally agree on the potential of the asset-based approach, which involves community members to actively establish and maintain relationships between local residents, associations and organisations (Cordes, 2002; Gebre-Egziabher, s.a; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002; McNulty, 2005; Odell, 2002; Pinkett, 2000; Siegel, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Tibaijuka, 2003). I next discuss the three underlying stages of the asset-based approach, namely asset identification, asset mobilisation and asset management (Beaulieu, 2002; Eloff, 2006a; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Saidi, Rosenzweig & Karuri, 2003).

2.2.2.1 Asset identification

When working within the context of the asset-based approach, one needs to focus on assets and resources. This positive awareness makes it much easier to identify assets and resources within a specific system. The asset-based approach is in essence a paradigm shift towards a new way of thinking and conceptualising the world (Eloff, 2006a).

Within the field of community psychology, Roos and Temane (2007) refer to community strengths as a unique compilation of community resources that could develop and increase both communal and individual well-being. Kretzmann (1992) agrees that once we start to reconsider our communities as a compilation of unique assets, resources and strengths, it opens the door to an internally focused asset-focused approach in developing powerful communities.

Categorising assets and resources within a community can be done in several different ways. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) identified five key assets: individual skills, attributes and capacities; associations or groups of people who volunteer to come together for a shared purpose; community relationships and networks; the potential for economic

growth; land and other related physical resources. Tibaijuka (2003) categorises community assets and resources into five categories: individuals, local associations, local institutions, physical resources and local economy (including local business resources and local expenditures). Donald *et al.* (2002) define assets and resources in a community as the available sources that people can access. It includes the following: economic resources; physical and material resources (e.g. sanitation, buildings and equipment) and human resources (people with different expertise and strengths).

Literature (Green & Haines, 2002; Roos & Temane, 2007) expands the definition of community assets to include five types of capital:

- human capital: individuals' abilities, skills and competencies in order to be productive;
- social capital: social relationships and group cohesion that facilitates collaboration and shared community action;
- physical capital: infrastructure and buildings within communities;
- environmental or natural capital: natural resources and environmental facilities within a community;
- institutional capital: private and public institutional structures and mechanisms in communities, including financial capital.

Although I kept all these asset categories in mind, I preferred not to enter the current study with a predetermined set of categories. I preferred to adopt my view of assets on that of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). They define assets as the “undiscovered gifts and treasures” within a community. Together with the teachers in each community, I explored, discovered and mobilised unutilised assets and resources within each specific school-community context.

Asset mapping or capacity inventory creation takes place when all the identified and available assets and resources are visually represented. This process assists one to understand the system as a whole more thoroughly, to become more familiar with the interrelationships between the various subsystems and to obtain a closer view of the

potential of the assets and resources within the system (Eloff, 2006a). Cook and Du Toit (2005) refer to the asset mapping phase as a key step in planning for the implementation phase. I agree with these authors and regard asset mapping as similar to the phase in the current study where teachers identified assets. Identifying and mapping assets was an interrelated and continuing process, where talents, strengths, capacities, gifts and abilities of individuals as well as resources in organisations and associations within school-community contexts were identified and sited (Beaulieu, 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

The rationale behind a visual representation of assets and resources is that it acts as initiator of the asset mobilisation process (Eloff, 2006a). Similarly, Chambers (2008) refers to the powerful use of mapping assets, in the sense that it gives a graphic manifestation of reality. In this way, assets and resources are visually presented in a way that all can view and that opens up discussion for new opportunities. Therefore, the process of asset mapping acted as a valuable starting point for asset mobilisation in the current study. Within my reported study, we mapped individual assets and community resources. It was preceded by consultation with the community, in which community members could participate and share control of the development process itself. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:8) state “the key to neighbourhood regeneration is to locate all of the available local assets, to begin connecting them with one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness”.

2.2.2.2 Asset mobilisation

Asset mobilisation can be defined as the utilisation of available assets and resources that have not yet been fully utilised or deployed (Eloff, 2006a). In the current study, I attempted to expand leadership and build relationships between the sited assets and resources. I aimed at facilitating the process, where the participating teachers determined in which ways identified assets and resources could be mobilised in order to improve school-community conditions. Thereafter, the participating teachers employed community members to work actively at creating a mutual vision and action plan for

mobilising assets. I attempted to motivate participating teachers to build and maintain networks with external resources, to be of assistance in the process of asset mobilisation (Beaulieu, 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). In this regard, scholars argue that when communities become active partners for transformation, instead of recipients of aid, they assume ownership over the development process. It promotes community commitment and creates a sense of empowerment (Beaulieu, 2002; Cordes, 2002; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993, 1999; Kretzmann, McKnight & Puntenney, 1999; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, 2003; Nares, Robson-Haddow, Gosse, 2001; Parker, Dalrymple & Durden, 1998; Richter, Manegold, & Pather, 2004b; Thompson, 2005; Tibaijuka, 2003).

As I compared the process of asset mobilisation in four different school-community contexts in South Africa, I needed to keep the significance of a specific context in mind. What worked in one specific context might not necessarily be valuable and useful in another context (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2006; Eloff, 2006a; Viljoen, 2005).

2.2.2.3 Asset management

Asset management refers to the responsibility of individuals and communities for taking ownership in sustaining their initiated actions, by means of assessing processes and constantly revising strategies. It is a fundamental concept of the asset-based approach and has the potential of enhancing the commitment, capacity and empowerment of individuals and communities (Bender, 2004; Cook, 1998; Ferreira, 2006; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Kretzmann *et al.*, 1999; Minkler & Hancock, 2003; Snow, 2001a, 2001b; Visser, 2007).

Bender (2004) refers to fundamental areas of maintaining community development: creating leadership that encourages empowerment and commitment; building shared partnerships; building on community competencies and assets; reviewing and adjusting strategies for community development and open communication structures. She emphasises the important role that open communication structures could play in creating

awareness of community development, encouraging participation and empowering community members to contribute their competencies and skills.

2.2.3 Asset-based approach as window on different systems

The asset-based approach offers a window for viewing different systems as primary constructs in which assets may be located (Eloff, 2006a). Different levels of the social context can be viewed as systems, where the “functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between all parts. In every unique community, there is a constant and dynamic interaction between and within different systems and subsystems. What happens in one subsystem of a community will influence all the other subsystems” (Donald *et al.*, 2002:47).

The bio-ecological approach (Donald *et al.*, 2002; Lazarus, 2007), built on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), views people within their social context, in order to obtain a better understanding of the relationship between individuals, communities and their social settings (Lazarus, 2007). This framework focuses on the dynamic, interacting and interdependent relationships and interplay within and between different systems. It also serves as a map for identifying assets and reflects the fundamental nature of thinking in terms of capacities (Eloff, 2006a). In the current study teachers within the school system acted as potential agents for change towards community support and care. A partnership between the school and community formed the basis for community initiatives. Donald *et al.* (2002) argue that the principle of system change is valuable in comprehending how actions within these systemic shared relationships are recurring patterns that need to be observed because of changes within and between systems. Within the context of the current study, the interdependence and interrelationship between individual community members, teachers, the school and community can thus not be ignored.

2.2.4 Asset-based community development (ABCD)

Asset-based community development has become an innovative strategy for community-driven development and support in communities. There is a shift towards local solutions for local problems, with the result of enhanced community liveability and involvement in the development process (Saylor *et al.*, 2006; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002; McNulty, 2005). Asset-based community development advocates for the encouragement of community members to take confident charge of their own capacities, and resources that would otherwise have been unrecognised or ignored. Similarly, STAR (ABCD-informed) focuses on the potential power of local teachers to steer and direct the process of community support and to leverage further development and support. Community members have the advantage of understanding the environmental and social position of their own community, and are therefore perceived as experts of their own lives. These associations help to identify assets and to connect the assets to one another in ways that improve their strength and effectiveness (Cordes, 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002).

An asset-based approach to community development is driven from the bottom up to instil a sense of empowerment and self-sufficiency. Likewise, STAR is based on the belief that the recognition of individual assets and community resources is more likely to encourage positive action for change than a restricted focus on needs and deficiencies. As such, STAR aims to facilitate community contexts to become stronger and more self-reliant by discovering, mapping and mobilising local assets. Working with and promoting these foundations of strength could increase resilience and protect the welfare of a community (Greene, 2000; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002; McNulty, 2005; Saylor *et al.*, 2006; Thompson, 2005; Tibaijuka, 2003).

Community-driven development is founded on community level and is conducive to building active participation in, and a sense of responsibility for the success of the larger community. As a result, STAR attempts to facilitate active community involvement and inspire communities to identify and recognise that every individual has something

significant and valuable to contribute to the good of their community. These contributions can be mobilised along with the resources of community groups and organisations to realise the common vision. Involving a community in its own development is essential for sustainability (Cordes, 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, 2003; Nares *et al.*, 2001; Tibaijuka, 2003).

2.2.5 Contextual dependencies as potential challenge of the asset-based approach

Norem and Chang (2002) warn that as the positive psychology movement grows, it becomes progressively more essential to ensure that the complexity of individuals, processes and contexts do not get lost in a one-size-fits-all approach. Studies (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; De Wet, 2004; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2006; Viljoen, 2005) have shown the importance of acknowledging contextual dependencies in the use of the asset-based approach. What works in one specific context is not necessarily relevant and useful in a different context. Although Mathie and Cunningham (2002) advocate asset-based community development as a promising approach for community development, they have identified several challenges to consider when it is applied in different contexts. I kept these challenges in mind when conducting research in different contexts and communities.

The first challenge that Mathie and Cunningham (2002) point out, is to develop an *endogenous process*. One of the fundamental principles of the asset-based approach to community development is that it should be a community-driven procedure. The role of the external agency should be facilitative. Therefore, the challenge of the outside agency is to avoid the level of participation and involvement that can induce dependency. I agree with the work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), where they emphasise the importance of a community-driven process. They offered ABCD as a way of counteracting the needs-based approach to development in urban America. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) challenged the needs-based approach and well-intentioned efforts of governments and other stakeholders with a problem-solving mission (see also Brock, Cornwall & Gaventa,

2001). These agencies and institutions have generated needs surveys, analysed deficiencies and identified solutions to meet problems. In this way, communities become further weakened by dependence on outside agencies to resolve their problems, and perversely, those institutions develop a vested interest in sustaining dependency (see also Fowler, 2000). In this way a one-side negative view is created, which has often compromised community capacity development. In consequence, the needs-based approach has reinforced the notion that “only outside experts can provide real help” to communities (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993:4).

Proponents of the asset-based approach to development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1997) do not suggest that communities do not need outside assistance or that they can achieve everything on their own. Rather, they emphasise that community involvement can be a powerful instrument of development and growth. It requires a strong internal focus that capitalises on building relations between local community members, institutions and associations. The role of the outside expert should only be facilitative and to provide guidance where necessary (McNulty, 2005). Mathie and Cunningham (2003:10) summarise it as follows: power “to” and power “with” are encouraged, while power “over” is challenged.

The second challenge noted by Mathie and Cunningham (2002) is to promote *inclusive participation*. I agree that asset-based community development is an inclusive process, in which the assistance and contributions of all are respected and valued. This could become challenging in communities where social hierarchy excludes or marginalises some groups. According to Mathie and Cunningham (2002), ABCD does not directly confront the concern of imbalanced authority and power; instead, it attempts to explore and develop the strengths, talents and capacities of those who might otherwise be less valued. The way in which ABCD unfolds in different situations will therefore depend on how compatible existing beliefs and cultural customs are with the principles of ABCD.

The third challenge (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002) is to encourage *community leadership*. ABCD is driven and motivated by the community, and therefore internal

leadership is an essential and fundamental component of maintaining an asset-based approach. The role of the external agency is only to facilitate community-based development. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) found that community leadership played a fundamental role in the success of community initiatives. A thorough understanding of the nature of leadership in each unique setting is therefore immensely valuable. For the purpose of my research study, I selected ten participating teachers in each community to act as agents and facilitators in the process of school-based community support.

The last challenge is to manage the *fluidity of associations*. Owing to social and political transformations, the structure and roles of associations and networks might change. It is therefore valuable to be familiar with how these patterns have developed over time and to understand the influence that the ABCD process has on social relationships and patterns of different associations and systems. I acknowledge the significance of these contextual dependencies in the use of the asset-based approach and have attempted to address them within each unique community context (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002).

2.2.6 Reviewing studies conducted within the framework of the asset-based approach

In this section, I review existing studies conducted in the field of the asset-based approach. I firstly provide a general overview of existing literature focusing on community support, enablement and development within the framework of the asset-based approach. Secondly, I elaborate on current trends and specific foci in this knowledge base. Thirdly, I refer to the implementation of the asset-based approach in different fields of inquiry, namely medical, financial, community technology and career education.

2.2.6.1 Overview of existing literature focused on community support and development within the framework of the asset-based approach

In an attempt to narrow down my search for existing studies that applied the asset-based approach within the context of schools and communities, I discovered that existing literature predominantly focused on applying the asset-based approach for community change, support, enablement and development. The focus of these studies is on developing, mobilising and coordinating assets and resources in communities to generate positive change in communities. One of the central arguments presented in these studies are that community members are able to facilitate and steer community-based interventions through the mobilisation of assets, resources, skills, capabilities and talents within communities. Many of these studies were conducted in the United States (Cordes, 2002; Dubb, 2005; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, 1997; LaPoint & Jackson, 2004; Onyx & Leonard, 2000; Nares *et al.*, 2001; Odell, 2002; Saylor *et al.*, 2006; Siegel, 2005; Turner & Pinkett, s.a.) and in Canada (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002, 2003). Other asset-based community developments studies were conducted in Australia (Flowers & Waddell, 2004; Thompson, 2005). Flowers and Waddell (2004) explored community leadership development and Thompson's study (2005) aimed at fostering community engagement and participation through local skills audits. In developing countries, asset-based intervention projects were introduced for community development and support (Ashford & Patkar, 2001; McNulty, 2005; Tibaijuka, 2003). I also came across various asset-based studies conducted in African countries (Child Protection Society of Zimbabwe, 1999; Cook, 1998; Lucas, 2004; Mott, Thuo, Robbins and Bryant, 2009).

Similar research projects and initiatives in South-Africa are on the increase and focus on ways in which the asset-based approach can be translated into educational psychological theory and practice (Bouwer, 2005; Briedenhann, 2003; De Wet, 2004; Ferreira-Prevost, 2005; Kriek, 2002; Smuts, 2004). Many research studies have focused on asset mobilisation in the context of community-based support (Bender, 2004; Campbell *et al.*, 2007; Diale & Fritz, 2007; Louw, 2008; Roos & Temane, 2007; Swanepoel, 2005; Viljoen, 2005) and other studies focused on the school as basis for community support

(Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Ferreira, 2006, 2008; Fourie, 2006; Loots, 2005; Olivier, 2009).

2.2.6.2 Focus areas and trends in existing literature on asset-based community support, enablement and development

Within the context of the studies reviewed on asset-based community development and support, as indicated above, I identified certain focus areas and trends in current literature. These focus areas include addressing HIV/AIDS and poverty as psychosocial challenges through the utilisation of the asset-based approach, and building asset-based community support networks.

a) Addressing HIV/AIDS as psychosocial challenge

On an international level, Hunter and Williamson's study (2000) aimed to identify better intervention strategies for dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Within the framework of the asset-based approach, these intervention strategies focused on strengthening and mobilising assets and resources within different systems in the community. Similarly, Karnpisit (2000) conducted a bottom-up approach in Thailand for integrating HIV/AIDS strategies in the country's National Development Planning.

Due to the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Africa, many studies in Africa have been aimed at addressing HIV/AIDS-related challenges in communities through the asset-based approach. The *Child Protection Society of Zimbabwe* (1999) aimed at mobilising communities in Zimbabwe to support AIDS orphans. Their findings suggest the valuable role that community members and organisations can play in building networks to support AIDS orphans. Similarly, Lucas (2004) steered a community-based intervention programme in Zambia, focusing on the facilitation of community action and building upon existing individual and community resources to support community members affected by HIV/AIDS. Cook (1998) implemented the asset-based approach to establish community care for orphaned children in Malawi.

Locally, Campbell *et al.* (2007) conducted a study in a rural South African community for facilitating contextual changes that strengthen HIV/AIDS management and develop AIDS-competent communities. Another local study aimed at addressing HIV/AIDS through the asset-based approach is that of Ferreira (2006, 2008) on facilitating asset-based coping as one possible way of coping with HIV and AIDS. Louw (2008) assessed the needs of families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to make recommendations for asset-based support. Mohangi (2008a, 2008b) focused on children's positive emotions and feelings of well-being in contrast with the adversities associated with HIV/AIDS. Kelly *et al.* (2002) also focused on asset-based youth development in the context of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

b) Addressing poverty as psychosocial challenge

In my review of the literature on the asset-based approach, many studies aimed at empowering communities to alleviate poverty by utilising the asset-based approach. Through asset mobilisation, Hallberg (2009) and Holmer and Drescher (2005) facilitated the establishment of vegetable gardens in communities. In a similar way, Choksi (2004) mobilised under-utilised facilities and buildings to alleviate poverty, for example using an abandoned building to run a soup kitchen. Gebre-Egziabher (s.a.) also proposed the asset-based approach in rural Ethiopia for reducing poverty. Siegel (2005) applied the asset-based approach to identify drivers of sustainable rural growth and poverty reduction in Central America.

c) Building asset-based community support networks

Many studies (Bennell, Hyde & Swainson, 2002; Choksi, 2004) focused on building supporting community relations with the aim of establishing *community support systems*. For example, Cook and Du Toit (2005) introduced a "Circle of Care" project, to establish support structures for vulnerable community members through community partnerships and networks. With the aim of building support structures for youth as caregivers, Mott *et al.*, (2009) implemented an asset-based initiative in Kenya to empower youth caregivers as head of homes in Africa. They found that youth caregivers' sense of self, sense of

belonging and collective ownership were enhanced in the process.

2.2.6.3 Asset-based approach applied in different fields of inquiry

Although I compared teachers' implementation of the asset-based approach in schools, I also came across various studies implementing the asset-based approach in different fields of inquiry. It therefore seems as if the asset-based approach has proved to be valuable in various contexts and research inquiries.

Within the medical field, Pan, Littlefield, Valladolid, Tapping and West (2005) described how paediatricians could apply ABCD to influence the social environment of communities and improve the health of children. These authors found that ABCD provides paediatricians with a framework for increasing social capital for children and families and mobilising communities to create improved social environments, which result in enhanced health. Kim, Koh, Yu, Jeon, Kim and Kim (2009) conducted a study to assess community capacity building ability of health promotion workers in public sectors.

Within the financial sector, Dubb (2005) explored the role that the asset-based approach plays in addressing social and economic problems in the United States of America. The team at the University of Maryland found that the utilisation of a large range of innovative asset-based strategies could result in increased economic and social stability and development.

Pinkett (2000) applied the asset-based approach to the field of community technology. The author argues that an asset-based approach to community technology and community building can be effective for creating a social and cultural resonance with community needs. He argues that community members can be seen as active producers of community information and content rather than passive recipients. Ebersöhn and Mbetse (2003) explored community strategies for career education in terms of the asset-based approach. They found that asset-based characteristics were evident in the participating community's undertakings to develop career education.

In this section, I presented the asset-based approach as theoretical framework of the current study. I discussed the three underlying stages of the asset-based approach, explained the asset-based approach as window on different systems and discussed how STAR uses ABCD strategies for community care and support. Furthermore, I highlighted contextual dependencies as potential challenges of the asset-based approach. Lastly, I reviewed existing studies within the asset-based approach. I next discuss the assumptions underpinning community psychology, barriers and resources in communities, and changing roles of teachers. I argue that knowledge about the systemic interrelatedness of schools and communities is fundamental for understanding teachers' psychosocial support in the educational landscape.

2.3 ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY RELEVANT TO THE CURRENT STUDY

The theoretical roots of community psychology were originally outlined in the work of Kurt Lewin (cited in Yen, 2007). He attempted to theorise behaviour as a function of the person as well as the social situation or context. The roots of community psychology in South Africa lie in various approaches that emerged through an engagement with psychosocial challenges (Yen, 2007). Community psychology, as a subdiscipline of psychology, attempts to conceptualise the interaction and relationship between individuals and their social context. Individuals and communities are therefore understood within the framework of their social and historical contexts. The aim is to obtain an understanding of this interactive relationship in order to promote and support the well-being of individuals within a community or society (Lazarus, 2007; Yen, 2007). Lazarus (2007) highlights the underlying values and assumptions of community psychology. Two of these values correlate with the underlying aims of the current study, namely personal and social enablement and social capital.

The first assumption underlying community psychology is personal and social enablement, which refers to the development of a sense of control over one's life on a

personal and social level (Lazarus, 2007). I argue that the value of community enablement is related to community well-being and individual agency. As indicated above, communities are often confronted with many psychosocial challenges. To cope effectively with challenges, community members strive towards mutual goals, shared ownership, enablement and community well-being (Ferreira, 2008). This relates to the resilience of communities in their ability to learn, develop and change when confronted with adversity, stressors and barriers (Boyd & Eckert, 2002). To my mind, community well-being within the asset-based approach lies in the ability of communities to be resilient in mobilising individual assets and community resources to address challenges. In my review of the literature, I found two interrelated concepts that constitute community well-being, namely *community competence* (Roos & Temane, 2007) and *empowering communities* (Maton & Salem, 1995), which relate to the asset-based approach (Ebersöhn, 2006c; Eloff, 2006a) as the conceptual framework of the current study.

Roos and Temane (2007:281) refer to the concept of community competence, which entails mobilising the unique repertoire of assets and resources in communities to facilitate both collective and individual well-being. Community competence constitutes seven key features, namely commitment of community members, participation of community members, awareness of their collective identity, effective communication, conflict management, management of positive relationships, and facilitation of member interaction and decision-making (Roos & Temane, 2007).

Although empowerment is often referred to as a key guiding construct in the context of community psychology, relatively little research has been conducted on the characteristics of empowering community settings (Maton & Salem, 1995). Maton and Salem (1995:631) define psychological empowerment as the “active, participatory process of gaining resources or competencies needed to increase control over one’s life and accomplish important life goals”. Maton and Salem (1995) conducted a study to generate key organisational characteristics of empowering community settings, including believing in assets and strengths, which inspires growth; employing accessible and

multifunctional role structures; reflecting a community-based support system; and practicing an inspiring and shared leadership. These characteristics are in line with the fundamental characteristics of the asset-based approach.

The second assumption that relates to the current study is a psychological sense of community that is also referred to as social cohesion or social capital (Lazarus, 2007). My premise is that there is value in viewing community support within the framework of social capital. Social capital has become a focus for many community-based development programmes, and was one of the aimed outcomes in the current study (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Pan *et al.*, 2005). Community development aims to address social-related problems on a local level, through community participation. The field of community development and community psychology are closely linked to the theory of social capital (Lazarus, 2007; Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2004). Therefore, social capital can be seen as one of the indicators for successful community support. Pan *et al.* (2005) make a case for the asset-based community development approach as a powerful framework to increase social capital and in the process build empowered communities. They argue that social capital influences community health, by increasing psychosocial support.

Despite ongoing ambiguity around the concept social capital, there is a general agreement in literature that social capital is present in the networks, norms and social trust inherent in associations whose members work together in shared action. Social capital can be seen as networks accompanied by mutual norms, values and understandings that facilitate collaboration within and among groups (Crawford, 2005; De Gruchy, 2002; Frankenburger & Garrett, 1998; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002; Nares *et al.*, 2001; Thompson, 2005; Woolcott & Narayan, 2000).

Perkins *et al.*, (2002) warn that the concept of social capital is not restricted to social structures, but also include individual members of these networks. The individuals in the current study could benefit from social support, participation, sense of community and group cohesion. Secondly, social capital can be viewed as a characteristic of networks,

communities and societies. Perkins *et al.* (2002) caution against an over-dependence on external networks that may unfavourably influence community cohesion. This correlates with one of the fundamental principles of the asset-based approach to community development, namely that community initiatives are to be community-driven. The role of the external agency in the current study was only facilitative in nature. The challenge is that the outside agency has to avoid the level of participation and involvement that can lead to dependency (Brock *et al.*, 2001; Fowler, 2000; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2002).

Social capital and its importance for community cohesion have caused ongoing debate and research. Several research studies have shown the positive impact of community-based interaction and cohesion as well as the importance of community involvement and empowerment on overall community wellbeing (Catell, 2001; Chanan, 2004; Cote & Healy, 2001; Crawford, 2005; Perkins *et al.*, 2002; Thompson, 2005). Onyx and Leonard (2000) explored the relationship between social capital and other forms of capital in community case studies. They found that communities structure themselves in original ways and that local growth has its origin in individual efforts and active community networks.

2.4 BARRIERS AND RESOURCES IN COMMUNITIES

In this section, I discuss communities as social contexts of schools. I refer to the socio-economic barriers as examples of cumulative risk evident in many South African communities. I then discuss resilient communities and schools as protective resources for community resilience.

2.4.1 Socio-economic barriers prevalent in South African communities

As indicated above, each community consists of a unique compilation of assets and influences. Although the asset-based approach focuses on assets and resources, it does not ignore needs; rather it utilises assets to address barriers, risks and needs. Agaibi (cited

in Agaibi & Wilson, 2005) refers to *distal* risk factors and *proximal* risk factors. Distal risk factors are seen as independent variables and are based on indirect stressors, such as social-economic class and poverty, which in the end result in proximal risk factors. Proximal risk factors are directly experienced, such as family trauma, child abuse and neglect. I next discuss HIV/AIDS, poverty and unemployment together with child abuse and neglect, as only a few of the most prevalent cumulative risk barriers in South African communities (Coetzee, 2010; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming).

2.4.1.1 HIV/AIDS

South-African communities increasingly have to deal with HIV/AIDS (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Ferreira, 2006; Freeman, 2004; Loots, 2005, 2008; Smart, 2001, 2003; Van Dyk, 2001a; Zachariah, Ford, Phillips, Lynch, Massaquoid, Janssens & Harries, 2009). Giese *et al.* (2003a) found that HIV/AIDS is associated with a wide range of psychosocial stressors, including the loss of loved ones, stigma, secrecy, discrimination and social isolation. Furthermore, caregivers' reluctance to speak to children about HIV/AIDS and death often increases the psychosocial effect on children. The psychosocial impact of HIV/AIDS is likely to intensify as children experience the loss of multiple caregivers, and as relatives become less able to support orphaned children.

Authors in existing literature emphasise the increasing numbers of orphans as a result of HIV/AIDS (Bennell, 2005a, 2005b; Bicego, Rutstein, & Johnson, 2003; Coombe, 2000; Giese *et al.*, 2003a; Kekae-Moletsane, 2008; Mbugua; 2004; Monasch & Boerma, 2004; Nyambedha, Wandibba & Aagaard-Hanse, 2003a, 2003b; Ogina, 2007; Safman, 2004; Van der Walt, Bowman, Frank, & Langa, 2007; Van Dyk, 2001a). Mbugua (2004) defines an AIDS orphan as a child who is either infected with HIV/AIDS; affected by HIV/AIDS through the loss of one or either parents or their siblings; or a child who may be at risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Meintjies (2009) found that the total number of orphans has increased significantly in the past five years with approximately 700 000 more orphaned children in 2007 than in 2002. Furthermore, there has been a noticeable increase in the percentage of children who have lost both parents over 2002 to 2006 from

2% (357 000 children) to 4% (660 000 children) (Meintjies *et al.*, 2009). However, statistics show that the number of children living in child-headed households did not increase. According to an analysis of the General Household Survey conducted in 2006, 0,67% of South African children live in child-headed households. This is equivalent to approximately 122 000 children out of 18,2 million children in South Africa (Meintjies *et al.*, 2009).

Literature also refers to the manifold challenges in the education sector because of HIV/AIDS (Bennell *et al.*, 2002; Coombe, 2002b; Giese, 2001; Kekae-Moletsane, 2008; Mohangi, 2008b; Monasch & Boerma, 2004; Mvulane, 2003; Nyammedha *et al.*, 2003a, 2003b; Ogina, 2007; Smit & Fritz, 2008; Theron *et al.*, 2008). More HIV/AIDS orphans are dropping out of school, as they are compelled to look after their siblings and take on the role of breadwinners. The death of their parents often leads to major changes in their lives. Furthermore, AIDS orphans often experience discrimination, stigmatisation and rejection at school (Coombe, 2002c; Giese, 2001; Kekae-Moletsane, 2008; Mohangi, 2008a, 2008b; Mvulane, 2003). Because they fear discrimination, HIV/AIDS orphans are usually silent about their parents' illness and grieve in silence (Foster & Williamson, 2001). According to Kekae-Moletsane (2008), psychosocial distress might comprise anxiety, loss of parental love and nurturing, emotional deprivation, depression, grief, and separation of siblings among different relatives to spread the economic load. She advocates the need for much greater psychosocial support to HIV/AIDS orphans and the family structures that continue to absorb HIV/AIDS orphans. In the current study, I aimed to help teachers to act as potential facilitators for psychosocial support.

HIV/AIDS stressors strain community relationships. It is vital to find ways of supporting communities to deal more effectively with daily HIV/AIDS stressors (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2008). In recent years, research related to HIV/AIDS has grown as researchers all around the world continue to seek insight and answers about the influence of the pandemic (Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming).

Within the context of HIV/AIDS and psychosocial support in education, many studies have been conducted in the South African context (see Eloff, 2008; Ferreira, 2006, 2008; Kekae-Moletsane, 2008; Loots, 2005, 2008; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Lubbe & Mampane, 2008; Macharwira, 2008; Mnguni, 2006; Mohangi, 2008a; Ogina, 2007; Swanepoel, 2008; Theron *et al.*, 2008). Ferreira (2006, 2008) facilitated asset-based coping in a community as one possible way of dealing with HIV/AIDS-related stressors, based on my discussion of how a selected informal settlement community was found to cope with the challenges of the pandemic by relying on existing assets and local resources. Theron *et al.* (2008) introduced a support programme for teachers as one possible way to promote resilience in teachers. Psychosocial support and care in the context of education included the use of the memory box-making technique for teachers (Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Mnguni, 2006) and community volunteers (Swanepoel, 2008).

The framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004) consists of five key strategies in which families, communities and children are seen as possible agents for change in the battle against the pandemic. The first key strategy is aimed at enhancing families' ability to provide care and support to orphans and vulnerable children by expanding the lives of parents and providing economic, psychosocial and other support. The second strategy refers to the mobilisation of assets and resources in communities. The third strategy is to make basic services such as health, education and social services available to vulnerable children and orphans. The fourth is to focus on governments to protect vulnerable children through altered policy and legislation and by channelling resources to these vulnerable families and communities. The last strategy entails creating awareness of a supportive environment for children and families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. However, it should be noted that the impact of HIV/AIDS on children varies considerably from one context to another. There is therefore no model or specific set of interventions that can be prescribed for all communities, countries and regions (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004).

2.4.1.2 Poverty and unemployment

Poverty and unemployment is a reality in many South-African communities (Coetzee, 2010). Pieterse (1999) defines poverty as inferior income and deprived access to essential resources in relation to other individuals or households. According to statistics, in 2007, 68% of South African children lived in households with a per capita income below R350 (value set in 2000) (Hall, 2009a; Hall, 2009b). Furthermore, the official unemployment rate in South Africa in 2007 was 23% (however, this percentage was based on a restricted definition that only included adults who had actively searched for, but failed to find a work in the four weeks preceding the survey) (Hall, 2009b). Mayekiso and Tshemese (2007) expand the general view of poverty by arguing that poverty does not only include the lack of essential material possessions and earnings, but also includes human capital factors such as a lack of opportunities and choices.

Socio-economic stressors such as poverty and unemployment often make individuals vulnerable to a lack of trust, safety and security. Amongst those most at risk in poverty-stricken communities are children, as their access to basic food, shelter and housing is often limited (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). In Dass-Brailsford's (2005) study, her participants, as socio-economically disadvantaged black youth, identified poverty and the associated physical living conditions and lack of resources as major stressors in their lives.

Poverty in communities may also influence schools. Smit and Fritz (2008) found that poverty is a challenging factor within many South-African school contexts. Bennell (2004) confirms that schools often experience financial pressure, especially those that are not fully compensated by government, which is viewed as a demotivating factor for many teachers. Similarly, Dass-Brailsford (2005) and Evans (2004) refer to many risk factors in educational settings because of poverty, such as less access to educational resources, lower quality education, lower academic performance and less communication between parents and schools. In addition, Evans (2004) refers to crowded surroundings, higher levels of crime, greater residential instability, lower social support, and less nutritional food intake as potential risk factors in poverty-stricken communities. In this regard,

Bhana *et al.* (2006) argue that there is a greater need for pastoral care and support in schools with fewer resources and at lower socio-economic levels.

The relationship between HIV/AIDS and poverty cannot be ignored (Frohlich, 2005; Lubbe & Mampane, 2008; Van der Walt, Bowman, Frank & Langa, 2007; Whiteside, 2002). Existing literature found a correlation between increasing HIV/AIDS and unemployment, a lack of education, violence, abuse and crime (Kalichman, Simbayi, Kagee, Toefy, Jooste, Calin & Cherry, 2006; May, 2000). Anabwani and Navario (2005) add that members of poor communities often suffer from malnutrition, which makes the body more vulnerable to infections, like the HI-virus.

Mayekiso and Tshemese (2007:159-160) list three strategies for addressing poverty. The first is *poverty alleviation*, which focuses on providing access to food, water, safety and shelter. In this regard, Hendricks and Bourne (2010) refer to the role that social grants could play in alleviating poverty in South Africa. The second strategy is *poverty reduction*, which refers to intentional actions to reduce the level of poverty. These interventions include providing access to education and employment. In this regard, Kibel (2010) emphasise the important role that families, schools and communities could play in alleviating poverty. The third strategy suggested by Mayekiso and Tshemese (2007) is *poverty eradication*, which aims to address the structural courses of poverty and includes political empowerment of the poor.

2.4.1.3 Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect is another psychosocial challenge and growing concern that is pointed out in both national (Coombe, 2002c; Du Preez, 2004; Lake & Reynolds, 2010; Richter, 2003b; Richter, Dawes & Higson-Smith, 2004a; Swart, 2007) and international literature (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2007). Agaibi and Wilson (2005) identified child abuse and neglect as a key risk factor for many children. However, it is difficult to estimate the number of child abuse cases, as cases are often not reported and accurate records are not always kept. Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse,

neglect, and negligent treatment as well as exploitation (Louw & Louw, 2007; WHO, 2006). Orphans and vulnerable children are at greater risk of abuse because of their vulnerable status in society (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004, Smart, 2001).

A fundamental preventative intervention strategy against child abuse is life skills training and awareness programmes (Coombe, 2002c; Dalton *et al.*, 2007; Swart, 2007). Community psychology could make a valuable contribution in addressing child abuse (Swart, 2007). Within the context of community psychology, Dalton *et al.* (2007) recommend strategies to address the needs of vulnerable groups, including raising awareness, motivating social action, facilitating community participation, establishing community collaboration and partnerships, liaising with community organisations and providing alternative settings in the form of shelters and places of safety.

2.4.2 Resilience in communities

In line with the asset-based approach as theoretical framework of the current study, studies in the field of resilience progressively focus on a resource-based approach in promoting resilience and moving away from the deficit model. In this sub-section I discuss the concept of resilience, protective resources within the context of resilience and resilient communities.

2.4.2.1 The concept of resilience

Scholars in current literature generally define resilience as the process and outcome of individuals, schools, families and communities to react positively and thrive, by means of learning, growing and changing, when adversity, stressors and risks occur in life (Boyd & Eckert, 2002; Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Luthar, 2006; Rutter, 1990). Resilience is therefore not a linear construct. Werner (1995) identified three areas of resilience, namely good developmental outcomes despite high risk, continued competence despite stress, and healing from trauma. It therefore seems that resilience is a two-dimensional concept

of adversity and positive adaptation (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). Olsson *et al.*, (2003) investigated resilience as an outcome and process of adaptation. Resilience as a dynamic process of adaptation to encountered adversities, involves interaction between various risks and protective resources. Ungar (2008:225) argues that resilience involves individuals' navigation towards resources, and their ability to negotiate for resources on their own terms. Resilience therefore includes two concepts, namely navigation and negotiation. *Navigation* refers to an individual's personal act of taking ownership by seeking support as well as the availability of the support sought. *Negotiation* refers to the provision of resources in a manner that is beneficial for an individual. Similarly, in the current study I assumed that resilience could be observed as both the process and outcome of how asset-based actions buoy resilience.

Moreover, the concept of resilience seems to be context-bound. I agree with Dass-Brailsford's (2005) argument that resilience is a subjective and complex concept that is not easy to define. Resilience in one context may not be the same in another context. Ungar (2008:228) argues that "aspects of resilience exert differing amounts of influence on a child's life depending on the specific culture and context in which resilience is realised". Similarly, Luthar (2006) argues that resilience is never a universal concept. According to Bonanno (2005), there appear to be multiple and sometimes unexpected ways of being resilient. In the current study, I viewed each school-community context as a unique case with unique compilations of assets (viewed as protective resources) and barriers (viewed as risk factors) from a resilience framework.

2.4.2.2. Protective resources within the context of resilience

Scholars within existing literature view resilience within various risk settings. They have investigated the influence of different protective resources, and classified resilient outcomes according to various criteria. Protective resources can be classified as internal and external protective resources (Howard & Johnson, 2000a, 2000b, 2004). Internal protective resources can be categorised in dispositional or personal characteristics, including self-efficacy, sense of own competence and sense of achievement, together

with internal locus of control, optimism, hopefulness, and flexibility (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Dent & Cameron, 2003; Hines, Merdinger & Wyatt, 2005; Howard *et al.*, 1999; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Winfield, 1994). Internal protective resources further consist of cognitive competencies such as planning, decision-making, problem-solving and goal-setting skills (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Spence, Burns, Boucher, Glover, Graetz, Kay, Patton & Sawyer, 2005; Winfield, 1994). Lastly, internal protective resources involve social competence such as effective communication skills, effective social behaviour, social responsiveness and social connectedness (Howard *et al.*, 1999; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Spence *et al.*, 2005; Winfield, 1994).

Although literature previously tended to focus more on resilience as residing in an individual, existing literature is progressively considering resilience as a dynamic interaction between protective resources within an individual and his/her context (Gilligan, 2001). These external protective resources include family or social characteristics such as belonging to a group and support within a group, support relationships and attachment to others (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Dent & Cameron, 2003; Hines *et al.*, 2005; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Olsson *et al.*, 2003; Simon, Murphy & Smith, 2005; Ungar, 2008; Winfield, 1994). Environmental characteristics are another facet of external protective resources and indicate involvement in one's community, access to health services, educational systems, foster care systems and supportive community members (Bell, 2001; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Dent & Cameron, 2003; Hines *et al.*, 2005; Luthar, 2003; Oliver *et al.*, 2006; Ungar, 2008). Mowbray *et al.* (2007) suggest a community resilience approach that focuses on mobilising community resources as protective resources. For the purpose of the current study, I focus on teachers as protective resources in school-community contexts.

2.4.2.3. Resilient communities

Despite socio-economic challenges that many communities face on a daily basis, some communities seem to remain resilient in dealing with these barriers and stressors. Healey

(2006:12) defines community resilience as the “capacity of a distinct cultural system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to retain key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness”.

Mowbray *et al.* (2007) argue that community resilience originates from resources that are rooted within or available to communities, and which can help a community to deal positively with barriers and risks. These authors suggest that resilient communities have the ability to identify and mobilise resources to address barriers and risks, which corresponds with the underlying principles of the asset-based approach. In line with the way in which community resources were mobilised in the current study, Mowbray *et al.* (2007) propose three types of community resources that could contribute to community resilience: social capital, institutional and economic resources. Social capital resources refer to protective influences that grow out of social relationships amongst community members. These relationships result in shared values, trust and collaboration, and support. Institutional resources include access to organisations, institutions and agencies within a community that could serve and support community members, for example educational, health, recreational, and social services. Economic resources encompass economic community strengths, for example employment opportunities, the income of families, land use, value of property, housing availability as well as investments in local infrastructure (Mowbray *et al.*, 2007:670). In the next section, I discuss the potential role of schools and teachers as protective resources for building resilient communities.

2.4.3 Schools and teachers as protective resources

Based on early work on resilience, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston (1979) demonstrated that schools could act as external protective resources. Their research shows that vulnerable children demonstrated higher resilience by attending supporting schools and caring teachers. Werner and Smith’s study (1988) also pointed to the important role that teachers could play in promoting resilient children and schools. Despite many barriers and risk factors in community contexts, school-based interventions

could promote resilient schools and children (Rutter *et al.*, 1979). Similarly, many studies on both international and local level identified teachers and schools as potential key protective resources in promoting resilience (Lewis, 1999; Mampane, 2010; Morrison & Allen, 2007; Reis *et al.*, 2005; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994).

Literature in the United Kingdom identified supportive schools, teachers and caring communities as protective resources that could act as buffers against barriers, stressors and risks. Dent and Cameron (2003) acknowledge the valuable role that teachers could play in building resilient children and schools. They generated strategies that could help teachers to identify and enhance resilience factors in the lives of vulnerable children.

In Australia, many studies have been conducted on implementing interventions in educational settings to promote resilience in children and schools. Some of these interventions include counselling services at schools, peer support, parent-school relationship programmes, social skills training, and referral to community health/welfare agencies (Howard *et al.*, 1999). Stewart *et al.* (2004) implemented a whole-school approach in promoting resilience in children in school, family and community settings in urban Queensland, Australia. They found that the school environment makes a major contribution to the development of psychological resilience in children. These authors state that a school whose members care and support one another and who have a common goal, could provide an ideal setting for nurturing resilience in children.

Knight (2007) argues the important role that schools and teachers could play in enhancing resilience in young people. She presents a three-dimensional framework for resilience education that teachers can use in schools, which describes resilience as a state, a condition and practice. This framework motivates teachers to take on the challenge of implementing programmes designed to enhance resilience in young people. Resilience as a *state* refers to the qualities of an individual related to healthy development, which manifest through emotional competence, social competence and an orientation toward the future. Resilience as a condition refers to resilience that transcends personal qualities and emphasises the interactive relationship between an individual and the environment.

Therefore, protective resources such as positive relationships with significant others play a determining role in resilience. Resilience as a practice focuses on what different systems such as families, schools and communities could contribute to the promotion of resilience. It is concerned with applying knowledge about resilience to enhancing resilience by focusing more on protective resources within an individual's subsystems.

In a similar sense, Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2005) presented the Circle of Courage model, which is grounded in positive psychology and the strengths-based perspective. According to this model, positive growth results from opportunities to experience the four universal needs of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. These universal needs provide the basis for developing resilience (Brendtro *et al.*, 2005; Brendtro & Larson, 2004; Coetzee, 2005). According to Brendtro and Larson (2004), challenges and barriers could lead to renewed strengths and coping ability. Coetzee (2005) applied the Circle of Courage model to dealing with challenging behaviour in schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. Within the framework of the Circle of Courage model, Coetzee (2005) focused on encouraging teachers to reclaim environments, initiate a strength-based approach in dealing with challenging behaviour, and building their capacity to guarantee effective services and education for young people in distress. Coetzee (2005) posits that schools could serve as a setting to reclaim children at risk from destructive outcomes and establish resilience-based schools. Although the Circle of Courage approach focuses on reclaiming youth and promotes positive youth development, this holistic approach could be useful in promoting resilience in diverse contexts.

Looking at literature in the United States, Pianta and Walsh's study (1998) suggests that supportive teachers play a key role in enhancing resilience in children. However, these authors also advocate that teachers be trained to act as resources for resilience and offering hope to children. Similarly, Hines *et al.* (2005) and Schorr (1997) argue that teachers and educational systems play a key role in fostering resilience and hope in children. Winfield (1994) proposes school-based programmes that could foster resilience among African-American youth. Bosworth and Earthman (2002) report on a school-

based community initiative, which was designed to promote resilience in school settings. Within the context of this initiative, they focused on identifying assets within schools, families and communities. In Morrison and Allen's study (2007), they focused on possible strategies and actions that school personnel could take to promote resilience in children and families. These authors recommend that in order to identify and develop protective possibilities in schools, teachers need to adopt a resilience perspective as key feature in school change efforts. Doll and Lyon (1998) investigated the potential of school-based initiatives to build resilience and address risk factors and barriers. They argue that schools are well situated to foster resilience and build capacity amongst children. These authors recommend school-community partnerships and integrating resilience initiatives in different subsystems in which children are functioning.

South African literature also focuses on the valuable role that teachers could play in promoting resilience in children. Theron (2006) conducted a study on promoting resilience skills in adolescents with learning difficulties by means of a group intervention programme. The results obtained in her study suggest that adolescents with specific learning difficulties can acquire resilience skills despite adversity and the barriers they encounter. Theron *et al.* (2008) introduced Resilient Educators (REds), with the aim of empowering teachers to cope more resiliently with stressors and adversities (also see Theron, 2008b). Similarly, Dass-Brailsford (2005) identified relationships with teachers and other role models as potential protective resources in the context of resilience with regard to academic achievement amongst disadvantaged black youth in South Africa.

Ebersöhn and Ferreira (forthcoming) elucidate how teachers in schools function as protective resources to foster resilience despite the prevalence of HIV/AIDS adversities. Their findings highlight three themes: teachers utilising resources to support resilience in schools; teachers establishing partnerships and networks to foster resilience in schools; and vulnerable individuals utilising school-based support. Their findings suggest that teachers are well positioned to act as resources for building resilience in schools (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming). Similarly, Mampane (2010) found that schools could act as protective resources for influencing the resilience of middle-adolescent

learners in township schools by the establishment of a supportive and safe learning environment. However, Mampane (2010) adds that participating learners from the two township schools in her study differed in their acknowledgement of the school's influence on their resilience. It is therefore important to acknowledge that although teachers and schools are potential protective resources, these resources need to be optimally mobilised and utilised. In 2.5 I refer to the changing roles of teachers as protective resource for resilience and teachers' resilience in dealing with stressors to teaching.

2.4.4 School-based community support

Within the context of schools as potential protective resources, I next refer to school-community partnerships for promoting school-based community support and by implication resilience. Literature argues that schools are well positioned to provide protective interventions for support and care, as they have relatively easy access to communities (Condly, 2006; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Middlemiss, 2005; Wilson *et al.*, 2002). Schools are a compilation of resources and assets that could be mobilised as the main vehicle of school-based community support (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, forthcoming, Eloff, 2006a; Ferreira, 2006; Giese *et al.*, 2003a; Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2002; Kretzmann, 1992). Schorr (1997:289) agree on the key role that schools could play in providing support and care by stating, "Schools can become islands of hope in otherwise devastated neighbourhoods." Clonan, Chafouleas, McDougal and Riley-Tillman (2003) recommend that schools be utilised as an environment to promote individual strengths and enhance positive human development.

In Kretzmann's (1992) report, *Community-based development and local schools: A promising partnership*, he states that schools are central and essential contributors towards the process of community support. This view relates to the U.S. Department of Health's *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act that focuses on the development of partnerships between schools and communities (Bryan, 2005). Kretzmann (1992) argues

that schools are a collection of assets that could be mobilised to make a valuable contribution to community support and development. In line with the potential contribution of schools as active partners in community support, as stated by Kretzmann (1992), STAR aimed to empirically investigate if an asset-based approach intervention with teachers could lead to schools' functioning as nodes of care and support. Kretzmann (1992) found that schools could act as a facility where community groups meet and community activities are performed, so that the schools' equipment and materials could be utilised as resources for the community. Schools could buy various materials, products and services locally, to build, support and develop local community enterprises. Schools' employment practices could support the community by hiring local community members. Furthermore, schools could provide education and training opportunities for local community members. Schools often have access to government funds and other sponsors, which could act as a valuable financial resource for community development and support. School also have the potential to be a magnet for adult involvement, especially for parents. Learners could become active participants in community support and development. Teachers' skills and competencies could be valuable assets in sharing knowledge and assisting with community development activities (Kretzmann, 1992).

The existing literature therefore advocates the importance of enhanced collaboration and partnership between schools and surrounding communities (Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Bryan, 2005; Cagampang *et al.*, 2002; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Davies, 1996; LaPoint & Jackson, 2004; Middlemiss, 2005; Ostrom *et al.*, 1995; Thompson & Uyeda, 2004; Wilson *et al.*, 2002). Middlemiss (2005) proposes a resilience-based intervention approach in working collaboratively across schools, families and communities. In line with the asset-based approach, Middlemiss (2005) argues the importance of identifying and mobilising potential opportunities for joint ventures and networks of services for children that include the resources of schools, families and communities. Richter (2003a) concurs, stating that the power of social institutions, including families, schools and community organisations, are fundamental for psychosocial support. Partnerships between schools, parents and communities are potential sources of the protective resources that could foster resilience in children (Bryan, 2005).

Kretzmann (1992) states that shared values and goals are preconditions for a sound and lasting school-community partnership. The focus is on an atmosphere of trust and respect. Relationships form the basis of the asset-based approach. It implies a mutual sharing of assets, resources and skills. A partnership indicates a mutually constructive relationship between two parties that focus on and work together towards the same purpose and goal (Eloff, 2006a). This correlates with the purpose of the current study, in which I examined the extent to which teachers implemented an asset-based approach aimed at school-based psychosocial support, which included the building of networks and relationships.

The Department of Education (2000b) recommends a community-based approach to support, which implies accessing community resources to support education provision. The community-based approach to support therefore refers to a collaborative model of service delivery which is creative and optimally uses the resources and expertise of communities. Various strategies for the development of a community-based system of support could be applied, including school-based support teams, district support teams, special schools as resources, school-governing bodies, centres of learning, utilising community resources, school-based staff development programmes and learner-to-learner support (Muthukrishna, 2001). In the context of the current study, psychosocial support centred on school-based support teams as potential link between the school and other networks within the community. School-based support teams can address school-community needs such as the development of teachers, children, parents and community members (Bennell, 2005b; Department of Education, 1997; Donald *et al.*, 2002; Louw, Edwards & Orr, 2001; Swart & Pettipher, 2001).

Kilpatrick *et al.* (2002) explored the role that rural schools can play in contributing to community development. They focused on five rural schools in Australia and their findings suggest that school-community partnerships hold the promise of a variety of positive outcomes for both the school and community. These authors identified a number of indicators of successful school-community partnerships:

- The principal of a school is willing and committed to foster integration between the school and community; and portrays a transformational leadership style, which facilitates a shared vision.
- The school has vast knowledge of available community resources, it actively seeks opportunities to involve different community sectors and is actively aware of the value of school-community relationship.
- The school and community have access to and utilise internal and external networks; they share a vision for the future, are open to new ideas and flexible about creating opportunities in line with their vision. They play an active role in shared decision-making, value the contribution of individual skills and competencies, and view the school as a learning centre for the whole community.

2.5 CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHERS

Although schools are viewed as well positioned to be protective resources, teachers could be seen as the driving force behind providing support and care. Within the context of teachers as steering agents of support and care, I have consulted existing literature on teachers' changing roles. I firstly look at teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral role as stipulated by the Department of Education (2000a). On the one hand, I discuss some challenges with regard to teachers' pastoral role and on the other hand, I discuss teachers' positive response in adapting to this role. Secondly, I review additional stressors within the context of teaching and lastly, I present literature on teachers' resilience in dealing with stressors.

2.5.1 Community, citizenship and pastoral role

On an international level, scholars generally agree on teachers' multiple and changing roles in dealing with various factors in the school context (Adelman, 1996; Barth, 1990; Hall, 2004; Howard & Johnson, 2004). Epstein and Sanders (2006) explored the need to

prepare future teachers in the United States for partnerships with schools, families and communities. They suggest that tertiary institutions should actively teach future teachers about effective community involvement practices. Similarly, existing literature in South Africa is increasingly focusing on teachers' diverse and changing roles (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Giese *et al.*, 2003b; Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson & Pillay, 2000; Lambert, 1991; Louw *et al.*, 2001; Swart & Pettipher, 2001; Theron *et al.*, 2008; Wood, 2007).

In the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, the Department of Education (2000a) highlights South African teachers' seven roles. One of the roles is the community, citizenship and pastoral role. Ebersöhn, Ferreira and Mnguni (2008) state that pastoral support touches on psychosocial matters beyond the traditional role of teaching and learning. A key aspect of this role is that a teacher should build supportive relations with parents and other key individuals and organisations, based on a critical understanding of community development issues. Within the school context, teachers should be able to develop supportive relations with children and appropriately respond to their needs. Some of the *practical competencies* that were demonstrated by teachers in the current study (see Chapter 6) include being able to respond to social and educational barriers such as HIV/AIDS, violence, drug abuse, poverty and the abuse of children and women; working in partnership with professional services to deal with these issues; counselling children about social and learning problems; being caring and committed, and providing a mentoring support system to children and colleagues. *Foundational competencies* of this role include understanding key community problems, barriers to learning and the available structures and services that could be utilised. The *reflexive competency* that is required is to recognise and assess appropriate intervention strategies for helping learners to deal with barriers (Department of Education, 2000a; Jansen, 2001).

Teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral role therefore focuses strongly on psychosocial support by building supportive school-based community relationships. This role relates to one of the stipulated educational goals of teachers in the United States, namely promoting partnerships and networks to enhance support for children on a social, emotional and academic level (Adelman, 1996).

2.5.1.1 Challenges with regard to teachers' pastoral role

Although the National Education Policy (Department of Education, 2000a) stipulates the role of pastoral care, literature raises various concerns, which include the practical reality of these roles in a South African classroom (Harley *et al.*, 2000; Jansen, 2001), teachers' competency in fulfilling the roles (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Hall, 2004; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Ogina, 2007; Smit & Fritz, 2008), and the additional sacrifices and workload that accompany them (Bhana *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, the ways in which teachers provide pastoral care, and their readiness to take up a pastoral role, remain under-researched (Schierhout *et al.*, 2004). I next discuss some of the concerns raised in current literature.

Bhana *et al.* (2006) argue that although serious problems are referred to provincial departments, there are not enough counsellors and psychologists on provincial level to deal with the great number of psychosocial problems in schools. Along these lines, Giese *et al.* (2003a) found in their study on health and social services for the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in the context of HIV/AIDS, that social workers found it difficult and were not always able to adequately address and deal with vulnerable children's growing need for psychosocial support. Theron *et al.* (2008:79) refer to teachers in rural schools that often need to be "all things to all people". It therefore seems that the shortage of school counsellors and social workers in many South African schools and communities forces teachers to take on additional responsibilities in dealing with counselling issues on a daily basis.

Harley *et al.* (2000) argue that current policy documents refer to the occupational, professional and academic roles and capacities envisaged for South African teachers, which essentially imply a change to the teacher profession. These authors raise an important question, namely whether these roles and competencies are in line with the realities and practices in a South African classroom. Jansen (2001) and Sachs (2001) likewise argue that the policy image of teachers often conflicts with teachers' personal identities. According to Jansen (2001), teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral role (Department of Education, 2000a) is a picture of the ideal teacher for policy makers and

not always practical in a South African classroom. Matheson and Harley (2001) agree that the seven roles of teachers, as stipulated by the National Education Policy (Department of Education, 2000a) are out of line with teachers' professional, personal and cultural identities. Jansen and Christie (1999) found that teachers themselves found these seven roles overly ambitious, out of reach, complex and demanding. The emerging findings in this study suggest that the policy image of the ideal teacher does not resonate with how teachers living with HIV/AIDS see themselves (Jansen & Christie, 1999). Similarly, Machawira (2008) conducted a study on teachers' implementation of HIV/AIDS policy in Zimbabwean primary schools. Her findings suggest that the policy images of teachers often conflict with teachers' emotional identities. Machawira (2008) argues that those who are required to implement policies on a practical level have to buy into and accept such policies.

Loots and Mguni (2008) point out that teachers are often challenged to take on a pastoral role for which they are not always fully competent, trained and equipped. Existing literature also refers to the many daily challenges that South African teachers have to contend with (Smit & Fritz, 2008; Theron *et al.*, 2008). In this regard, Theron *et al.* (2008) state that there are minimal support structures for teachers. Smit and Fritz (2008) argue that teachers are not always equipped with or trained in the basic counselling skills needed for the many emotional problems that children bring into the classroom. Furthermore, they do not always have the opportunity to be debriefed on their own emotional experiences of the many challenges they encounter daily. Similarly, Bhana *et al.* (2006) and Hall (2004) agree that teachers often lack the skills to address children's problems and that they are often out of their depth in providing pastoral care. According to Machawira (2008), many studies on the implementation of school-based programmes view teachers as a weak link in the system, because they do not always possess the necessary competencies and training in this regard.

Similarly, international scholars argue that although it is widely recognised that teachers should be equipped, there is limited support available (Adelman, 1996; Hamlin, 1997; Lane *et al.*, 2003). Howard and Johnson (2004) report on feelings of personal inadequacy

amongst Australian teachers as a stressor of teaching. They argue that teachers often feel incompetent because of a lack of training and because they are required to teach outside their areas of competence and training. This relates to the high level of stress and burnout found in people in the helping professions, including teaching, in the sense that they tend to have idealistic goals of helping others that are often not met (Biggs, 1988; Gold & Roth, 2003). Therefore, if teachers do not have the necessary competencies to support others, their stress could be exacerbated.

Apart from teachers' lack of training and competencies in respect of pastoral care, existing literature also refers to additional challenges, such as administrative demands and lack of time to efficiently adapt to a pastoral role (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Smit & Fritz, 2008). Another challenge for teachers is the blurring of boundaries between academic requirements and pastoral care (Bhana *et al.*, 2006). This relates to teachers' experienced conflict with regard to the various roles that they are expected to play (Gold & Roth, 2003).

2.5.1.2 Teachers' positive response in adapting to their pastoral role

Despite the concerns about teachers' multiple roles, especially their pastoral role, South African teachers nevertheless have to deal with various psychosocial challenges. Existing literature argues that children's cognitive abilities cannot be isolated from emotional and social factors. These factors are interrelated and teachers need to be able to deal with children on an intellectual, emotional, and social level (Epstein, 2001; Louw *et al.*, 2001). As HIV/AIDS increases, teachers are often the only adults that could fulfil the emotional needs of HIV/AIDS orphans (Bhana *et al.*, 2006).

Furthermore, I came across literature arguing teachers' positive response to the valuable role that they could play in providing psychosocial support in the school context (Adelman, 1996; Ferreira, 2006; Giese *et al.*, 2003b; Lambert, 1991; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; McCallaghan, 2007; Mnguni, 2006; Richter, 2003a), which is in line with teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral role stipulated by the Department of Education (2000a). Existing literature refers to teachers as potential agents for change, as their

action could have a ripple effect in the learning context, school and community (Donald *et al.*, 2002; Ebersöhn, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Ferreira, 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2001).

Findings of existing studies emphasise teachers' role in negotiating collaboration and partnerships between schools and communities as starting point for support initiatives (Cagampang *et al.*, 2002; LaPoint & Jackson, 2004; Ostrom *et al.*, 1995; Thompson & Uyeda, 2004; Wilson *et al.*, 2002). Flowers and Wandell (2004) employed teachers as project participants and found that teachers were resourceful coordinators, who displayed the ability to build sustainable community structures. Swart and Pettipher (2001) refer to the importance of collaborative partnerships as a key to teachers' roles as agents for change, which include collaborative problem solving between role-players and peer coaching where teachers collaborate in acquiring new skills through sharing, observing and teaching one another.

Existing studies also argue teachers' potential role in supporting HIV/AIDS orphans. Taggart (2008) found that teachers acted as agents in supporting AIDS orphans in social, emotional and moral adjustment. Ogina (2007) investigated how teachers in South Africa identified and responded to the needs of orphaned children. She found that teachers viewed their roles in different and distinct ways. Some of the participating teachers in her study provided psychosocial support to orphans, while others argued it was the responsibility of other teachers. Her findings suggest that teachers' perception of their role tended to empower some teachers and disempower others. Ogina (2007) argues that the nature of the relationship between teachers and orphaned children influences the manner in which teachers identify and respond to orphans' needs. The degree of involvement appears to be a key determinant of how teachers perceive their role and what they do to respond to the needs of orphans (Ogina, 2007).

Studies found that despite the many challenges associated with teachers' community, citizenship and pastoral role, teachers stayed committed to providing pastoral care and support in their schools (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Ferreira, 2006; Fritz & Smit, 2008; Fullan, 1993; Giese *et al.*, 2003a). Fullan (1993) found in his study of a random sample of 20%

of 1,1000 student teachers in Toronto that the most frequent theme was that participants wanted to make a difference in children's lives. This moral purpose found in the teachers, reflected their aspiration to provide support that go beyond the traditional sense of teaching.

2.5.2 Additional stressors of teaching

Despite the stressors of teachers' pastoral role that have been highlighted, teachers also experience additional stressors in their everyday teaching. I next discuss the following additional stressors of teaching: workload and additional responsibilities; lack of parental involvement and communication; role conflict; stressors related to children; lack of support structures; and poor working conditions.

2.5.2.1 Workload and additional responsibilities

Teachers' workload and responsibilities additional to everyday teaching are a group of key stressors identified in international literature (Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999; Ho, 1996; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Travers & Cooper, 1996), literature in Africa (Kinsman, Nakiyingi, Kamali, Carpenter, Quigley, Pool & Whitworth, 2001; O'Donoghue, 1995) and also South-African literature (Bennell, 2004; Hayward, 2002; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Nagel & Brown; 2003; Olivier and Venter, 2003; Paulse, 2005). The additional responsibilities include administration work, preparation at home, meetings, extramural activities and other additional roles apart from teaching. Olivier and Venter (2003) found that teachers often experience that they do not have sufficient time for their own leisure activities and family life.

Literature refers to different types of additional responsibilities within the context of teaching. Wood's study (2007) reports that teachers do not always have sufficient time for participating in professional development in public schools for improving children's learning. O'Donoghue's research (1995) indicates that teachers often run out of teaching

time because of the problems caused by the incidence of HIV/AIDS in their schools. Teachers are often expected to take on additional responsibilities, which include HIV/AIDS education, counselling and support as well as community development (Bennell, 2004; Theron, 2007; Theron *et al.*, 2008). Likewise, in their study on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa, Bennell *et al.* (2002) found that school counsellors who had to teach as well, had limited time for their counselling role.

2.5.2.2 Lack of parental involvement and communication

Literature also refers to the lack of parental involvement and communication in school-related matters as a potential stressor of teaching (Oullette, Briscoe & Tyson, 2004; Smit & Fritz, 2008). It seems that the lack of parental involvement is not apparent in South African schools only, but worldwide as well. Kretzmann (1992) states that partnerships between schools and communities are weakening throughout the United States. He argues that often there was never a real partnership to begin with, or that schools have possibly become more professionalised and therefore have gradually become further removed from their local communities. As a result, many public and private schools in both urban and rural areas in the United States have lost their position as a powerful and influential resource for communities (Kretzmann, 1992). Similarly, Middlemiss (2005) refers to poor communication between schools and parents as one of the community-centred risks to multi-setting interventions. Goddard, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) report that parents often do not trust schools, causing negative relationships and a lack of communication between parents and schools.

I consulted South African literature for explanations for the low level of parental involvement that might be applied to the current study. One possible reason often mentioned is that parents are HIV-infected and sick at home or have passed away, potentially resulting in child-headed households (Mishra, Arnold, Otieno, Cross & Hong, 2005; Mohangi, 2008a; Nyambedha *et al.*, 2003a; Taggart, 2008). Single-parent status is also considered an explanation of limited parental involvement (Kohl, Lengua & McMahon, 2000). Another reason may be the long hours that parents often work,

resulting in them in lacking time to be involved in their children's school activities or to attend meetings at school (Ogina, 2007; Oullette *et al.*, 2004). Large distances and lack of transport are further contributing factors (Balfour *et al.*, 2008; Oullette *et al.*, 2004). Lubbe and Mampane (2008) indicate that the lack of parental involvement and supervision often results in insufficient adult support, protection and advocacy for children, which could lead to child abuse and threats to their safety. Lack of parental supervision and support might therefore also be a possible reason for child abuse. Furthermore, lack of parental involvement is generally associated with lower academic achievement (Kohl *et al.*, 2000; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996).

2.5.2.3 Role conflict

Literature reports on the public's unrealistic expectations and negative image of the teaching profession as another stressor for many teachers. Teachers often feel that they do not receive sufficient recognition for their work and achievements (Gold & Roth, 2003; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Jacobsson, Pousette & Thylefors, 2001).

Existing literature in the South African context also refers to stressors with regard to expectations of teachers' roles stipulated by the Department of Education (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Harley *et al.*, 2000; Jansen, 2001; Loots & Mguni, 2008; Ogina, 2007; Smit & Fritz, 2008). Paulse (2005) refers to teachers' experienced stress about the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Her findings indicate that less experienced teachers in inclusive education reported significantly higher stress levels than those with more experience (Paulse, 2005). Other studies refer to the Department of Education's expectation that teachers should act as preventative agents in the context of HIV/AIDS (Bhana *et al.*, 2006; Theron *et al.*, 2008). This expectation does not seem to be unique to South Africa (Hall, 2004; Howard & Johnson, 2004). Howard and Johnson (2004) refer to Australian teachers' stress with regard to the Department of Education's policies, which demand innovation and change from teachers and require them to take on new roles without appropriate training.

Currently, teachers in South Africa are at the receiving end of multiple changes in broader society as well as within the education system, which leads to many stressors in teaching (Swart & Pettipher, 2001). Marais (1992) has further found that political change and alleged corruption within state departments are areas of stress for many South African teachers. Within the context of change, existing literature refers to teachers' dissatisfaction about policy matters and the changing curriculum (Bennell, 2004; Travers & Cooper, 1996). It seems that the newly introduced curriculum and the implementation of outcomes-based education in South Africa have resulted in stress for teachers (Marais, 1992; Saptoe, 2000; Smit & Fritz, 2008).

2.5.2.4 Stressors related to children

Another stressor to teachers is related to the underperformance of children (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010; Olivier & Venter, 2003). Bush *et al.* (2010) conducted a study on managing teaching and learning in South African schools. They found poor or moderate matric results at seven of the eight participating schools. Another prominent stressor of teaching related to children is classroom discipline and management (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Friedman, 1995; Gold & Roth, 2003; Hayward, 2002; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Jacobsson *et al.*, 2001; Nagel & Brown, 2003; Olivier & Venter, 2003; Saptoe, 2000; Travers & Cooper, 1996). In her study of sources of occupational stress for teachers within an inclusive education model in the Western Cape, Paulse (2005) highlights student behaviour as one of the major sources of stress to teachers. In addition, Howards and Johnson (2004) report that children's lack of motivation and respect for teachers is a stressor for many teachers.

2.5.2.5 Lack of support structures

Shortage of support structures at their schools (Gold & Roth, 2003; Griffith *et al.*, 1999; Olivier & Venter, 2003; Paulse, 2005) as well as lack of community and personal support (Gold & Roth, 2003) is also identified by existing literature as potential stressors to teaching. In line with shortage of support networks, literature refers to teachers who reported unfulfilled relationships with colleagues, principles and school management as

stressors of teaching (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Nagel & Brown, 2003; Travers & Cooper, 1996). In this regard, teachers report that there is often a lack of trust and cooperation between colleagues (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Apart from work relations, Howard and Johnson (2004) report that teachers' personal lives and relationships could contribute to their stress at work.

2.5.2.6 Poor working conditions

Another prominent stressor to teaching in current literature relates to poor working conditions, for example a lack of work security and sufficient resources. Existing literature refers to lack of work security, including low salaries (Hayward, 2002; Olivier & Venter, 2003; Thomas, 2002; Taggart, 2008), retrenchments (Marais, 1992) and lack of promotional prospects (Travers & Cooper, 1996) as stressors in the teaching profession.

In South Africa, a shortage of classrooms and high teacher-to-child ratios are regarded as stressors and demotivational factors for teachers (Bennell, 2004; Bhana *et al.*, 2006; De Lannoy, 2009a; Hayward, 2002; Mwanwenda, 1996; Olivier & Venter, 2003; Saptoe, 2000; Trendall cited in Nagel & Brown, 2003). Naledi Pandor, former minister of education, supported this observation: “While class sizes may be too big in some schools ...” (Department of Education, 2008:1). De Lannoy (2009a) argues that teacher-to-child ratios have a direct influence on the quality of education. Howard and Johnson (2004) report similar stressors amongst Australian teachers, who state that class sizes are often too big, causing high levels of noise in their classrooms.

Hayward (2002) and Taggart (2008) refer to a shortage of physical resources at schools as a barrier to teaching. In Howard and Johnson’s study (2004) of stressors for Australian teachers, they found that the teachers reported that class sizes were often too large and that facilities and resources were inadequate.

2.5.3 Teachers' resilience in dealing with stressors

Patterson and Kelleher (2005) argue that stressors, risks and barriers are an unavoidable and significant part of every teacher's life. The question should perhaps rather be about how teachers deal with these stressors. Literature shows that teachers respond to stressors, challenges and barriers in many ways. Kyriacou (2001) refers to two ways in which teachers typically respond to stressors. The first category includes *palliative techniques*, which do not deal with the source of stress, but rather aim to reduce the effect of the stressor. Palliative techniques are often dysfunctional and include excessive drinking, smoking and avoidance behaviour. The second way of coping with the stresses of teaching is *direct action techniques*, which focus on eliminating the sources of stress. Howard and Johnson (2004) identify some direct techniques to deal with teaching stressors, namely controlling feelings, obtaining support from others, building significant relationships, managing time and work tasks, and becoming more competent.

An analysis of resilience may shed more light on the way in which teachers deal with stressors to teaching. Patterson and Kelleher (2005) argue that an individual's perspective generates resilience, which is a key ingredient of continued effectiveness and the ability to cope with stressors. The important role that teachers could play in developing resilient schools and children has been covered widely in literature. Other studies have examined teachers' own resilience and ability to cope in the face of the daily stressors associated with teaching (Fritz & Smit, 2008; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Patterson & Kelleher, 2005; Theron *et al.*, 2008). Research documents the strong psychological and physiological effects of an optimistic outlook when coping with barriers and stressors (see Carver & Scheier, 2005; Fritz & Smit, 2008; MacFarlane, 1998).

Within the context of hope and optimism, Fritz and Smit (2008) explored teachers' perseverance and what enabled them to teach with enthusiasm and passion despite the daily challenges they faced in education. These authors give a "sense of hope for the future" as one of the reasons for teachers' ability to cope with educational adversities (Fritz & Smit, 2008:166). Howard and Johnson (2004) studied primarily disadvantaged primary and secondary schools in Australia. Just like the cases participating in the current

study, many of the participating schools in Howard and Johnson's (2004) study have to contend with the effects of unemployment, poverty, broken families and interpersonal violence. These authors investigated why some teachers were able to cope successfully with stressors that appeared to defeat others. Their findings suggest that the teachers who could cope, firmly believed they had learnt the strategies and dispositions that made them resilient in dealing with adversities and stressors to teaching.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I consulted a variety of studies and analysed the existing knowledge base on the asset-based approach as underlying theory of the current study. I discussed some assumptions underpinning community psychology. I advocated the potential of partnerships between teachers, schools and communities for psychosocial support within the context of resilience. In Chapter 3, I discuss and argue my choice of research methodology and strategies applied in the current study.

----- ■■■ -----