AN EXPLORATION OF DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED NORTHERN AREA SCHOOLS IN PORT ELIZABETH

by

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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PORT ELIZABETH JANUARY 2009
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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to any other university or for any other qualification.

SIGNATURE:

DATE: DECEMBER 2008
This research study is dedicated to my family:

My wife, Vanita, and my children, Amy and Loren
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God, for giving me the strength and courage to persevere to complete this research.

I would like to thank the following people, who were instrumental in the completion of this study:

- My supervisor, Prof. Lesley Wood, for her guidance, patience, encouragement and assistance throughout this study. Your high standards have led me to believe in myself.

- The Education Faculty staff of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, for their unwavering support, encouragement and constructive advice.

- Ms Marthie Nel, language editor, for improving the quality of this dissertation.

- Ms Martie Gummow, for her expertise and professional typing.

- Ms Loretta Free for her encouragement and advice and being a pillar of strength and dependability.

- My fellow students and colleagues, Lizette, Ghauderen, Charlotte, Virginia, Allan and Beverley, for their consistent support, encouragement and advice throughout my study.

- My sponsors, the Eastern Cape Education Department in Bisho, for providing financial assistance.

- My wife and daughters for their patience, assistance and support.

- My friends and colleagues, for their inspiration and encouragement.
ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH

The study analysed the management of disciplinary approaches to classroom management in selected Northern Areas schools in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The South African education system has historically promoted corporal punishment as a means of maintaining discipline. As a result corporal punishment was an integral part of schooling for most educators and learners in twentieth century South African schools (Morrel, 2001b:292). Since 1994, however, the South African government has implemented principles of equity, redress and social empowerment in broader society and education. Consequently, corporal punishment was banned in schools and new methods of managing discipline were introduced.

The study followed a qualitative investigation, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual, using interviews with educators and questionnaires with learners to collect data at selected schools. The study’s aim was to investigate and explore the perceptions and experiences of learners and educators regarding discipline and to make recommendations regarding proactive, positive disciplinary approaches so as to guide educators to facilitate learners towards self-discipline. However, it was discovered that educators were unable to facilitate self-discipline or guide learners as they themselves had not learnt to practise and demonstrate the values and principles of self-discipline. This study thus has as its intention to challenge educators to review and refocus their ways, motives and expected outcomes as they demonstrate and exercise discipline.

Key terms

Classroom management
Corporal punishment
Disciplinary approaches
Punishment
Self-discipline of learners
OPSOMMING VAN NAVORSING


Die studie volg 'n kwalitatiewe ondersoek wat onderzoekend, beskrywend en konteksueel van aard is. Daar is gebruik gemaak van onderhoude met opvoeders en vraelyste met leerders om data by die geselekteerde skole in te samel. Die doel van die studie was om die persepsies en ondervindings van leerders en opvoeders waar te neem en te verken en om aanbevelings te maak betreffende, positiewe dissiplinêre benaderings om leiding te verleen aan opvoeders oor die ontwikkeling van selfdissipline in leerders. Daar is egter ontdek dat opvoeders self-dissipline nie kon faciliteer of leerders nie kon lei nie, want hulle het self nie die waardes en beginsels van selfdissipline aangeleer nie. Die studie het dus ten doel om opvoeders uit te daag om hulle benaderings, motiewe en verwagte uitkomste te hersien en te wysig terwyl hulle dissipline demonstreer en handhaaf.

Sleutelwoorde

Dissiplinêre benaderings
Klaskamer bestuur
Lyfstraf
Selfdissipline van leerders
Straf
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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to introduce the focus of this research. It provides a brief historical perspective on the post-apartheid South African education system, with the primary emphasis placed on the management of discipline in selected Northern Areas Schools in the Port Elizabeth area of Nelson Mandela Bay. A historical perspective is provided to shed light on current educational policy and practice. The chapter also includes a description of and rationale for the formulation of the research problem, the aims of the research, the research methodology and ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Following the advent of democracy in 1994, South African society has undergone a dramatic transformation, economically, socially and politically. This occurred in pursuit of a more democratic and humane nation. One change in the educational arena was the banning of corporal punishment in all schools in terms of the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). This ban has since been challenged in the Constitutional Court, but the appeal was dismissed (Boshof & Morkel, 2003:2A-12). In passing judgement in one such case, Justice Langa (S v Williams & Others, 1995 (3) SA 632(CC)) stated that corporal punishment was a practice that debased everyone involved in it. Therefore, corporal punishment no longer had any place in South African schools.

This ban was greeted with mixed reactions from both educators and parents. Since the abolition of corporal punishment, cases have been reported in the
media where teachers had failed to comply with the law in this regard. Teachers have been charged with assault on learners; teachers have used sticks to hit learners (Naong, 2007:288); teachers have been taken to court by parents for subjecting their children to corporal punishment (Govender, 2005:9) – these and other cases have been widely published in the media. As evidenced by these cases, failure to comply with this prohibition could result in charges of assault against the offending educators.

Schools are thus left with the responsibility of identifying and implementing alternative disciplinary practices and procedures. In a society like South Africa’s, which is characterised by a long history of violence and the abuse of human rights, it is not easy to make the transition to peace, tolerance and respect for human rights. According to Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2001:6), research increasingly points to a direct link between corporal punishment and the levels of violence in society. Communities around the world have began to regard the scrapping of corporal punishment in schools as an important step in the creation of a more peaceful and tolerant society. Corporal punishment has been banned in most European countries, North America, Australia, Japan and in many other countries (Department of Education, 2000a:5).

Prior to 1994, education in South Africa was seen as the exclusive domain of the school, with the result that parental involvement in education was limited (Porteus, Vally & Ruth, 2001:5). As parents and educators became more involved in school affairs, a shift in power and authority has occurred. Parental involvement in their children’s schooling can greatly enhance learners’ learning and behaviour (Department of Education, 1999:9). A former South African Minister of Education, Mr Kadar Asmal (1999:9) stated that it must not be forgotten that parental involvement in children’s education was a novel concept, especially in poor and rural communities, and that millions of South Africans were illiterate. This may be a contributing factor in the prevailing parental apathy and lack of involvement in school related matters. Participatory processes involving parents ensure that parents know and understand the rules, requirements and expectations that pertain to their children (Porteus et al.
2001:60). These authors further state that if parents develop such understanding, they will give consistent messages to their children at home and support the disciplinary decisions made by educators.

Since 1994, several legislative initiatives have proposed to outlaw the physical and psychological abuse of learners within schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996b:10(1)(2); Republic of South Africa,1998:Chapter 5 Section 17(1)(b)). Many people regard this as a victory for human rights, while others feel that the decision was taken in haste and does not reflect the realities of South African schools. However, regardless of which perspective prevails, current policy makes it clear that alternative means of discipline must be practised in schools.

Punishment is based on the belief that if children are made to suffer for wrongdoing, they will probably not repeat their inappropriate behaviour. This approach has been blamed for causing feelings of alienation, entrenching anti-social behaviour and even resulting in acts of violence among many children (Department of Education, 2000b:1). However, many South African educators and parents have come to believe deeply in the effectiveness of corporal punishment. The practice of corporal punishment is woven deeply into the fabric of South African society (Porteus et al. 2001:5). The reality of the situation is that many educators face a daily struggle with disciplinary issues in their school environment. Educators are confused about the appropriate course of action, in the absence of corporal punishment. It appears that few are comfortable with the abolishment of corporal punishment and that even fewer have managed to identify and implement effective alternative strategies. Most are battling to find effective alternatives to corporal punishment in the classroom (Department of Education, 2000b:1).

A critical task facing all educators is the management of the behaviour of the learners that they teach. Classroom management is essential for the maintenance of an environment conducive to teaching and learning, to enable the implementation of the curriculum as well as social learning. Methods will have to be found to increase behaviours that support listening to instructions,
working cooperatively and sharing equipment (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:36). Learners initially need to be taught to increase their social and emotional competencies. Positive discipline can be defined as disciplinary methods that do not damage but rather build learners’ self-esteem. Positive discipline also makes learners feel valued and encourages them to participate and cooperate in the classroom. Positive discipline gradually enables learners to learn the various skills involved in assuming responsibility for what happens to them and helps them to take the initiative, relate successfully to others, and solve problems. Ultimately, it promotes the development of self-discipline (Eric Digest, 2003). Learners need to practise these new ways of interacting to achieve an initial sense of heightened efficacy and self-worth (Roffey & O’Reirdan, 2003:7).

In line with the above approach to discipline, the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b:11) provides for greater participation by learners to ensure the democratic functioning of schools. This also underlines the fundamental constitutional principles of cooperative governance and participatory management (Republic South Africa, 1996b). Learners are now placed in leadership positions and are required to help maintain and improve school discipline. The goal of strategies for management and discipline is the empowerment of learners to develop self-direction and self-control.

In my own school, which is situated in the Northern Areas, where I am presently teaching as Deputy Principal, I find myself engaged in disciplinary matters on a daily basis. Educators will play an important role in this research, as they carry first-hand knowledge of the disciplinary procedures and problems at school, because they are academically, professionally and personally involved in these situations on a daily basis. These educators’ struggles to maintain discipline will thus be explored in this study.

The question most educators now ask themselves is what the alternatives to corporal punishment are (Asmal, 1999).
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African educational system has historically promoted corporal punishment as a means of maintaining discipline. Corporal punishment was an integral part of schooling for most educators and learners in twentieth century South African schools (Morrel, 2001b:292). In many South African schools, corporal punishment was, and still is, a popular means of disciplining pupils (Morrel, 2001b:292). Some parents and educators strongly believe that using corporal punishment is the most effective way to instill and sustain moral standards. Many educators believe that corporal punishment should have been retained, as they maintain that it is an effective way of disciplining learners. However, others concur that a culture of violence may be encouraged by corporal punishment. The core issue is that South African educators are currently battling to find alternatives to corporal punishment that will be successful and effective over the longer term. Against this background, it becomes clear that it is necessary to further explore the reasons why schools are struggling to implement non-violent and pro-active ways of approaching classroom discipline before any effective intervention to promote positive alternative means of discipline can be developed.

1.3.1 Formulation of research question

Mouton (2001:48) refers to the fact that the research problem should be a clear and unambiguous statement of the objective of the study. Researchers need questions to guide them in their research. A “grand tour” question (Creswell, 2005:96; Mouton, 1986:2) is a question that is very general, but serves the purpose of controlling the extent of the enquiry. Based on the rationale for the research, the “grand tour” question that will guide this study is as follows:

*What are the perceptions of educators and learners regarding the management of discipline in the indigent Northern Areas schools in Port Elizabeth?*

In line with the problem statement, the following sub-question was formulated:
How can learners and educators in these schools be guided towards the adoption of measures that foster more pro-active and self-regulated disciplinary approaches?

1.4 PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

1.4.1 Goals of research

Based on the problem formulation, the primary goal of this research is:

To investigate and explore the perceptions and experience of learners and educators regarding the management of disciplinary processes in selected Northern Areas schools in Port Elizabeth.

The secondary goal is:

To make recommendations as to how to develop and apply pro-active disciplinary approaches intended to facilitate self-discipline in learners.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Northern Areas

The term ‘Northern Areas’ refers to the residential suburbs in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa. The Northern Areas is a product of apartheid: the northern part of Port Elizabeth was geographically reserved for people of colour to successfully execute separate development. Politically, it was demarcated in terms of the Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950, for people who were classified as Cape Coloureds. The Group Areas Act established residential and business sectors in urban areas for each race and strengthened the existing pass laws, which required Non-whites to carry identification papers on their person at all times. Other laws forbade social
contact between persons of European and so-called Non-white descent, whilst others authorised public facilities segregated on the basis of race. The Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth were created as a result of various Group Areas Acts, passed by the South African National Government in the 1950’s and the 1960’s (George & Hendricks, 2003:9). This series of acts progressively removed the rights of the Non-white population groups to live in areas designated for “Whites only”. People who had previously lived harmoniously together; respecting each other’s cultures, languages and way of life, were forcibly removed to specific designated areas with respect to ownership, occupancy and trading rights (George & Hendricks, 2003:9). The Non-white areas were “distant, desolate, cold and isolated” (George & Hendricks, 2003:9) and the so-called Coloured populations were scattered to land north of the city centre, where they founded suburbs such as Arcadia, West End, Salt Lake, Gelvandale and Bethelsdorp.

Right from their inception, these suburbs have been economically underprivileged areas, because of the racially discriminatory policies implemented by the erstwhile apartheid regime (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008). The area of focus of this research is the indigent communities that reside in these areas, and the surrounding schools. These suburbs had little infrastructure or public transport and no police stations. Crime quickly became a serious problem and the anti-social phenomenon of gangsterism became a feature of life in these underresourced areas (George & Hendricks, 2003:25). Unemployment and its associated array of social problems, such as substance abuse, domestic violence and women and child abuse, flourished under the inequalities spawned by apartheid and inevitably had a negative impact on learners’ ability to succeed at school (Johnson, Monk & Hodges, 2000:183). Education in the Northern Areas under the apartheid laws suffered, as schools were poorly equipped, teachers received inferior training, and university access for so-called Non-white students was limited to specific Non-white universities (George & Hendricks, 2003:57).
1.5.2 **Discipline**

Discipline is the practice of care and respect for others and self. It entails safeguarding the rights of people who are exposed to uncooperative, aggressive or blocking responses by others (Humphrey, 1998:10). In support of this, Oosthuizen, Roux and Van der Walt (2003) are of the opinion that the application of discipline should not be construed as solely a clamp-down on unruly, mischievous and disruptive behaviour, but as a means of entering into a loving, caring and guiding relationship with learners. Positive, constructive discipline should promote the development of self-discipline.

Discipline in education is a complex phenomenon and a difficult concept to define. The general use of the term is synonymous with the word control. For the purpose of this research, discipline will refer to order or an absence of behavioural problems. Discipline ultimately means that learners must develop a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour. School discipline is a form of discipline appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools.

1.5.3 **Classroom management**

Porteus *et al.* (2001:59) refer to classroom management as a democratic process in which rules are made with special emphasis on the importance of participation and involvement in the thinking and decision-making processes within a classroom. Educators facilitate a participative process with learners and parents to establish the "rules" and the consequences of good and bad behaviour. The aforementioned authors further state that children, like most people, are more likely to understand, respect and follow principles that they helped to create. Through this process of participation, they build their own capacity for decision-making, community building and responsibility.
The management of discipline therefore requires that educators make learners feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe so that learners can develop intrinsic discipline and accountability for their actions (Charles, 2002:13).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31), the research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. They maintain that the design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained. In other words, design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and which methods of data collection are used. Conrad and Serlin (2006:377) argue that the design will depend on the philosophical assumptions underlying how the inquiry about the phenomenon being studied can best be pursued. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:35) concur that the purpose of the research design is to provide the most valid, accurate answers possible to the research questions. They argue that since there are many types of research questions and many types of designs, it is important to match the design with the question.

1.6.1 Qualitative approach

As researcher, I have chosen to employ a qualitative, phenomenological approach, since the main objective of the study is the gaining of knowledge, understanding and guided awareness of what educators and learners feel, experience and learn from their interaction with disciplinary realities towards the facilitation of positive discipline (Conrad & Serlin, 2006:408). As described by Krefting (1991:214), the qualitative research approach is practical for an empirical understanding of the world and reality from the point of view of the subjects themselves. This approach takes into consideration that human behaviour is both internally and externally motivated and is influenced by the physical and socio-cultural dynamics of situations. Hoberg (1999:76) suggests that qualitative research is mainly concerned with understanding the problem
from the participants’ perspectives. In keeping with the qualitative, interpretive, design, this research will follow an explorative, descriptive and contextual approach. This research paradigm seeks to understand human and social behaviour from the insider’s perspective, that is, as it is lived by the participants in a particular social setting. It is an intensely personal kind of research, one that freely acknowledges and admits “the subjective bias of both participants and researcher into the research frame” (Ary, Jacobs & Razavich, 2002:445). I particularly chose this paradigm because it rejects the viewpoint of a detached, objective observer and supports the view that the researcher must understand the subjects’ frames of reference. Data will be gathered through engaging with the research subjects and getting their perspectives on their current practices.

It then follows that the design is determined by the nature of the research question and is merely a tool to find the answer to the research question. As dictated by the main issue of concern and objective of this study, the qualitative research method has been chosen because:

* It is person orientated.
* It is centered on the interviewee’s life world and aims at seeking and understanding the meaning of phenomena in his or her life-world.
* It is both descriptive and specific and focuses on certain aspects.
* It provides for in-depth investigation and direct observation.
* It attempts to enter unfamiliar settings without generalising from own experiences (Merriam, 2006:6).

1.6.2 Phenomenological approach

Phenomenology, according to Babbie (2001:259), is a philosophical term that refers to a consideration of all perceived phenomena, which include the subjective and objective. Babbie suggests that qualitative researchers aim at discovering subjects’ experiences and how they make sense of these experiences. Phenomenology seeks to describe the structures of experience as
they present themselves to consciousness, without prior recourse to theory, deduction or assumptions from other disciplines (Myers, 2000).

1.6.3 Role of researcher

Qualitative researchers become “immersed in a situation, present or past and the phenomenon being studied” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:15). A methodological issue that I have been very much aware of and have had to engage with, emanates from the tension of simultaneously being a researcher and an educator at one of the schools under study and a colleague and educator of the participants in the study. As researcher, I have to deal with the issue of ‘insider-outsider’ dialogue, which relates to the tension between description (inside perspective) and interpretation (outsider) (Babbie, 2001:279).

I have to not only understand, but also actively interpret the voices of the participants, who are my colleagues and learners. As Deputy Principal, I am actively involved with the management of discipline at my school. I am well aware that I might consciously or unconsciously bring my own “baggage” to the process. As researcher, I intend to enter the field as a ‘learner’, in an attempt not to impose my own opinions and perspective on the research. Participants will be allowed to speak freely and tell everything from their own frames of reference. Throughout the process, I as researcher will attempt to suspend any preconceived ideas. Moustakas (1994:116) explains this step as follows: “prior to the interview the primary investigator engages in the *epoche* process (bracketing) .... so that to a significant degree, past associations, understandings, facts, biases are set aside and do not colour or direct the interview”. Whilst I do realise that this could be extremely difficult for one who has experienced the phenomenon first hand, I will make every attempt to do so.

1.6.4 Research methodology

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:396), qualitative techniques are based on a constructive philosophy that assumes reality as multilayered,
interactive and a shared social experience interpreted by individuals. There is an in-depth verbal description of phenomena. While different qualitative techniques can be used to provide descriptions, the goal of each is to capture the richness and complexity of behaviour that occurs in natural settings from participants’ perspectives. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:14) regard qualitative research as research that presents facts in a narrative with words. Qualitative researchers become ‘immersed’ in the situation, present or past, and the phenomenon being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:15). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) describe qualitative research as an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their setting. People’s individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and actions are analyzed and described through qualitative research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:395). Creswell and Clark (2007:29) state that researchers interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them and that qualitative research is first concerned with understanding social phenomena from the participants’ perspectives. Qualitative research is thus concerned with the meaning individuals give to phenomena inductively through words and images, whilst being aware of the researcher’s personal stance and then using validity procedures that rely on the participants, the researcher or the reader (Creswell & Clark, 2007:29). It is hoped that this study will yield meaningful insights into educators and learners’ experiences, beliefs and judgements about the management of discipline in their own context of learning and teaching.

**Sampling**

The purpose of sampling is to identify parameters for data collection. In qualitative research, the information that is collected, should be “rich in description” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport 2002:253) to best reflect the characteristics that are to be researched. The sampling method best suited to selecting participants who are representative of the population or most likely to be exposed to the phenomena in question, is *purposive* sampling (De Vos *et al*, 2002:198).
The sample population on which the research focused, comprises three primary schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. I purposively chose three schools, as they shared similar characteristics in terms of their socio-economic conditions, the population groups, and class size. I also selected the schools based on their willingness to participate in this research. These schools were dual-medium schools, accommodating both English and Afrikaans. Another reason for my choice of schools related to the cost and labour of doing the research. Babbie (2001:174) states that sometimes it is appropriate to select a sample based on the researcher’s knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of one’s research aims.

Educators will play an important role as participants in this research, as they carry first-hand knowledge of the disciplinary procedures and problems at the schools, because they are academically, professionally and personally involved in these situations almost on a daily basis. Learners at the schools will also be part of this study, as their opinions and experiences will contribute vital information. I have accordingly decided to also interview groups of learners. I have chosen these categories, as each group will be in a position to give a better understanding and assessment of the problem from their point of view. The sample size will depend on the information yielded during data collection and will only stop once a saturation point has been reached (Strauss & Corbin, 2008:292).

- Data collection

The researcher decided to use in-depth interviews to obtain data of participant meaning and establish how the participants make sense of important events in their life (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:443). Individual interviews will be used so as to acquire a lived experience from the selected participants. Phenomenological interviews will permit an explicit focus on the researcher’s personal experience, which will be combined with the experiences of the interviewees (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:445). A combination of individual
and focus group interviews was originally intended to be used. Individual interviews help the interviewer convey genuine interest in what the interviewee is saying about the problem, topic or issue being investigated (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:207).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40-42) maintain that qualitative techniques collect data in the form of words rather than numbers. There is an in-depth verbal description of phenomena. While different qualitative techniques can be used to provide verbal descriptions, the goal of each is to capture the richness and complexity of behaviour that occurs in natural settings from the participants’ perspectives. It is important for the researcher to determine which data collection techniques are best suited to obtain the information required. The choice of technique should elicit the data needed to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question. Phenomenological individual interviews are in-depth, unstructured interviews with a carefully selected sample of participants, all of whom have a direct experience with the research study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:154).

Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:250) contend that nonverbal as well as verbal behaviour can be noted in face-to-face interviews and that the interviewer has the opportunity to motivate the respondent. They argue that interviews result in a much higher response rate than questionnaires, especially where the topics concern personal qualities or negative feelings. Phenomenological interviews can take the form of individual or focus group interviews.

Flick (2002:121) contends that focus groups generate discussion and thus reveal both the meanings that people read into the discussion topic and how they negotiate those meanings. He further maintains that focus groups generate diversity and difference, either within or between groups. Babbie (2001:226) states that the group dynamics that occur in focus groups frequently bring out aspects of the topic that would not have been anticipated by the researcher and would not have emerged from individual interviews. Johnson and Christensen
affirm that a focus group is generally composed of six to twelve participants who are purposively selected because they can provide information of interest to the researcher. A focus group usually comprises similar kinds of people, because the use of homogeneous groups promotes discussion. The phenomenological question that will be put to individuals and interviewees is:

“What is your experience of and thoughts of discipline at this school?”

Complementary to the interviews, additional data will be collected through observation and reflected in field notes. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Flick (2002:176) states that the interpretation of data is at the core of qualitative research. He mentions content analysis as one of the classical procedures for analysing textual material. An essential feature is the use of categories that are brought to the empirical material. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:479) refer to data analysis as primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories. The process of data analysis in qualitative research is not prescribed; various approaches can be implemented (Creswell, 2005:153).

Data analysis is of vital importance and will consequently be discussed in depth in Chapter Three. At this stage, a brief outline will be given of the proposed data analysis methods. Data will be recorded by means of an audiotape. The interview tapes will be transcribed verbatim and then read through several times to obtain an overview of the content. The tapes will then be played again, simultaneously with reading the transcripts and field notes, in order to get some idea of nuances of tone, pauses, hesitancies and other para-verbal behaviour. The content will be coded, following Tesch’s steps, as provided in Creswell (1994:156), in order to identify evident themes and categories. An independent re-coder will be used to establish if these themes and categories can be
confirmed. Once the themes and categories have been decided, narratives will be written to report the findings, using direct quotations, and these will be discussed in relation to relevant literature. The researcher will thus be able to identify and analyse the explicit and dominating points of view, categories, topics or trends of emphasis from the collected data (Creswell, 1994:153-154).

1.6.5 Literature control

Creswell (1994:24) is of the opinion that even though qualitative researchers should enter the field with no preconceived ideas, this does not mean that the research results cannot be confirmed by literature. In this study, literature was used to substantiate the orientation to and rationale for the research. A scrutiny of various books, journals, official or informed reports, both published and unpublished, and all forms of discussion papers on disciplinary methods and approaches was conducted. This was done with the objective of providing the researcher with a grounded and open-minded understanding of or perspective on the topic to be investigated. The literature will also be used to compare, contrast and confirm the themes generated by the interviews.

1.6.6 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

I concede that as a researcher involved in the investigated phenomenon and as educator present in the research situation and having social relations with the participants as colleagues, I need to be aware of my own biases and possible pre-judgements and presuppositions.

The concern here is to ascertain that the outcomes claimed by this research can be trusted as valid and credible. The following, based on Schurink, Schurink and Poggenpoel (1998:331), Krefting (1991:212-217), Marshall and Rossman (1999:145) and Lincoln and Guba (2000:300), is a brief indication of how the researcher will strive to attain trustworthiness in this study.
• **Credibility**

*Credibility* is the criterion to check how true the findings are for the subjects in the context of the research. In this study, the criteria applied to ensure credibility consisted of triangulation of the investigator (an observer and a re-coder will be used); triangulation of sources (interview data, field notes and literature); and piloting of the interview questions.

• **Consistency**

The consistency of the research refers to the question of how much of the data would be replicated if it were to be repeated in similar circumstances or with the same subjects. *Dependability* is the criterion for determining how consistent the results are. The methods envisaged for use in this study to attain dependability are the preservation of raw material; applying a uniform research procedure throughout; and the use of the code/re-code procedure.

• **Applicability**

Applicability is established by asking the question whether the findings can be applied to other settings or populations. The criterion for obtaining applicability is *transferability*. In this research, transferability will be attained by providing data that is rich in description, so that comparisons to other research can be made. The literature control will also serve to improve applicability.

• **Neutrality**

Poggenpoel (1998:350) defines neutrality as the “freedom from bias in research procedures and results”. In qualitative research, as the researcher may have prolonged contact with the participants and is an integral part of the process, it is arguable whether he or she can be free from bias. Therefore, the neutrality of the data is emphasised over the neutrality of the investigator. *Confirmability* is the criterion used to determine neutrality. In other words, how far is the data
confirmed by people other than the researcher? In order to increase confirmability in this study, the following steps will be taken: the data will be re-coded to compare the re-coder’s findings to those of the researcher; a literature control will be undertaken to compare findings to other research; and the summary of the data analysis will be checked out with one or more participants (Mason, 2002:420).

1.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to Babbie (2001:25), it is essential to keep ethical considerations in mind, as they affect decisions at all levels of the social research process. Babbie emphasises the foremost rule of social research, namely that no harm, however unintentional, should be brought upon the research subjects. The trust of the participants should not be betrayed and their confidence should not be taken for granted.

This includes the fact that there shall be no intended physical, emotional, personal or psychological harm to any participant. Mouton (2001:243) refers to the right to privacy (including the right to refuse to participate in the research), as well as the right to anonymity and confidentiality. He also argues for the right to full disclosure about the research (informed consent). The “vulnerable” groups, such as children, may have additional specific rights, of which cognisance will be taken.
1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The division of chapters constituting this study is as follows:

**Chapter One: Overview and Rationale of Study**

This chapter serves to introduce the focus of this research. It provides a brief historical perspective of the post-apartheid South African educational system. The management of discipline in South African schools is briefly reviewed. This chapter also presents the formulation of the problem, the aims of the research and the research methodology.

**Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter contains a review of the relevant literature. The prevailing theories and studies on the management of discipline are examined.

**Chapter Three: Research Design and Method**

This chapter presents the research methodology and the procedures followed in this study. It discusses how the study is designed and conducted. The chapter describes the selection of participants and the data collection and data analysis procedures used in this study, as well as measures to promote trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

**Chapter Four: Discussion of Themes**

The findings of the investigation are presented in this chapter. The major themes and categories that emerged from the data analysis are discussed. Related literature is cited as a control mechanism to mirror or refute the perceptions that participants have of the management of discipline.
Chapter Five: Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations of Study

This chapter contains a synopsis of the research findings, followed by conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations on ways in which the findings can be used to improve the management of discipline at South African schools. The limitations of this study are put into perspective and the need for further research is promulgated.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents an outline of the overview and rationale for the study; the problem statement; the goals and objectives of the study; the research approach; methodology; measures to ensure trustworthiness; and ethical considerations. The following chapter provides an overview of the literature, which will provide a theoretical framework for the management of school discipline.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will present an in-depth review of the literature concerning discipline and punishment at school. To many educators and learners, discipline and punishment mean one and the same thing, and these words are often used loosely as synonymous. Many educators, parents, education officials and learners are deeply concerned about the fact that classrooms are frequently plagued by some or other type of misbehaviour that disrupts the learning process. It is a known fact that effective learning and teaching can only take place in a positive school climate, which enhances academic performance (Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Du Toit, 2003:476). Numerous schools in South Africa are, however, experiencing increasing incidents of poor discipline, which impact negatively on the academic performance of learners, while some of these incidents even have a life-threatening character (Masitsa, 2006:1).

At the same time, however, there are schools which, regardless of their size, socio-economic status, learner composition or geographic position, have succeeded in establishing safe and orderly classrooms (Wolhuter & Steyn, 2003:536). It is against this background that I intend to investigate the disciplinary practices followed at South African schools.

Since 1994, democracy has affected all institutions and spheres of society in South Africa. Education has been a key domain of transformation. The changes in the educational situation in South Africa have been drastic, predominantly as a result of the paradigm shift underlying the most recent educational policy (Department of Education, 2000a:44). A paradigm shift is a drastic change that influences the pattern or model of people’s thoughts and actions (Kuhn,
1970:206). The new educational policies require schools to introduce new approaches to classroom management.

The new policy and the implementation of discipline in the classroom are causing problems for all the roleplayers in education, namely parents, educators and learners. The situation that has been created, forms the background to my investigation.

I will now discuss some of the theoretical approaches to discipline, in accordance with literature.

2.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO DISCIPLINE

2.2.1 Behaviourism

Watson (1919) is credited with founding behaviourism as a movement. To Watson, the study of consciousness became irrelevant in predicting the behaviour of animals and even humans. In his manifesto, “Psychology as the Behaviourist Views It,” Watson (1919:39-40) claimed that introspective psychology was unscientific, because it did not deal with objective states. He rejected all subjective states such as sensation, imagery and thought unless they could be observed by others. Behaviourism, was based on stimulus-response psychology, dealing only with the reactions of muscles and glands to stimulus situations (American Psychological Association, 1999:1). Skinner (1938a) represents another branch of behaviourism; his research was concerned with the experimental analysis of behaviour. Skinner’s most significant contribution to conditioning was his work on partial reinforcement, i.e. he worked with “schedules of reinforcement” to study and manipulate behaviour. He believed that one could predict behaviour by controlling the process of learning and shaping behaviour as one wished. Skinner formulated the concept of operant conditioning, through which behaviour could be shaped by reinforcement or the lack of it.
2.2.1.1 Punitive disciplinary measures

Punitive disciplinary measures can be described as those measures adopted by a school and/or an educator in the classroom to punish or curb the misconduct of a learner. Behaviourists believe that when a learner is punished for undesirable behaviour, the behaviour would decrease (Mayer, 2003:247). Mayer also implies that, by the same token, behaviours that are rewarded, will increase.

FIGURE 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Reinforcement</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Rewarding stimulus</td>
<td>Tendency to repeat behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Reinforcement</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Punitive measures</td>
<td>Tendency to repeat decreases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Watson (1912:158)

Positive reinforcement in the table is indicative of the presentation of a stimulus that is positive, for example, praise, and the resultant reinforcement of the behaviour, which leads to a repetition of the behaviour. Negative reinforcement indicates the removal of the aversive behaviour (punishment), with a resultant decrease in the unwanted behaviour.

Behaviorism was a movement in psychology and philosophy that emphasised the outward behavioural aspects of thought and dismissed the inward experiential and sometimes the inner procedural aspects as well; a movement harking back to the methodological proposals of Watson, who coined the name. Watson's Manifesto (1912) proposed abandoning introspectionist attempts to make consciousness a subject of experimental investigation in favour of a focus on the behavioural manifestations of intelligence. Skinner later hardened behaviourist structures to exclude inner physiological processes along with
inward experiences as items of legitimate psychological concern. Consequently, the successful "cognitive revolution" of the 1960’s styled itself in revolt against behaviourism, even though the computational processes cognitivism hypothesised would be public and objective, not the sort of private subjective processes banned by Watson.

2.2.1.2 Application of behaviourism in classroom

In the teaching environment, behaviourism would suggest that teaching is the arrangement of contingencies of reinforcement under which learners learn. The educators arrange special contingencies that expedite learning, hastening the appearance of behaviour that would otherwise be acquired slowly or making the appearance of behaviour which would otherwise never occur (Skinner, 1968:64). For example, a classlist could be put up at the back of the classroom and every time a pupil does well, a gold star could be affixed next to his or her name. Behaviourism suggests a system that will modify children to comply with prescribed norms, which implies that learner autonomy will be restricted. In the behaviourist classroom, the learners who are doing their work as instructed by the educator should receive positive reinforcement to encourage or condition them for the future. Negative reinforcements are used to deter certain behaviours; these negative reinforcements seem to dominate in South African classrooms today.

Learners see right through these incentives, but they still work, because both the educators and the learners obtain satisfaction from the physical behaviours (Kohn, 1999). In behavioural learning, it is not required of the learner to put the acquired skills or knowledge to use in a ‘real’ situation. Knowledge, according to the behaviourist educator, is a matter of remembering rather than acquiring or constructing information.

Behaviourists believe that the only behaviours worthy of study are those that can be directly observed. In assuming that all behaviours are learnt, they also hold that all behaviours can be unlearnt. Behaviourist techniques have been
employed in education to promote behaviour that is desirable, and discourage that which is not.

2.2.1.3 Critique of behaviourist theories

The behaviourist theories were clearly overly simplistic and inadequate, particularly when applied to human beings (Fodor, 2000:1). Psychologists sought something more to explain the complexity of human conduct. The main limitation of behaviour modification is that it treats only the outward symptoms of problems, not their underlying causes. Bandura (1969:29) concurs that behaviourism was too simplistic for the phenomenon that he was observing, namely aggression in adolescents. He contends that the environment causes behaviour, but that behaviour also creates the environment, which he labels as reciprocal determinism. Bandura (1969:29) believes that learning can also be cognitive. For example: A student watches his father as he mows the lawn. He watches how his father goes through the required steps to start the mower and how his father mows the yard. Without any environmental feedback, the boy is able to start the mower and mow the lawn, which is vicarious learning.

According to Kohn (1999), parents and teachers who wish to help students learn, should do everything possible to help them forget that grades exist. Even praise can become a verbal bribe that gets kids hooked on approval. Kohn points out that rewards and punishments are just two sides of the same coin – and that the coin does not buy very much. Kohn (1999) asserts that promising goodies to children for good behavior will never produce anything more than temporary obedience.

2.2.2 Social learning theories

Ormrod (1999:1) explains Bandura’s social learning theory as learning that occurs within a social context. It submits that people learn from one another and includes concepts such as observational learning, imitation and modeling. Bandura mentions four conditions that are necessary before successful
modeling can occur, namely attention, which means the person must pay attention to the model; retention, which means that the observer must be able to remember the behaviour that has been observed; motor reproduction, which is the ability to replicate the behaviour; and motivation, which is the need to want to demonstrate what one has learnt.

People learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes and the outcomes of those behaviours. “Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling from observing others” (Bandura, 1977:199). Accordingly, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed. On later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action. The social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences (Bandura & Walters, 1963).

Bandura (1997) maintains that social cognition represents a social constructivist view of human learning and development. Bandura’s work on adolescent aggression implies that environmental conditions of frustration produce an aggressive drive (Bandura & Walters, 1963). He demonstrated that children could imitate others, but that this imitation varied considerably, depending on whom the models were and how they performed. The importance of these results was that it presumed that people were capable of learning rules that generated and regulated their actions without going through an arduous trial and error process. Bandura established that this phenomenon, *vicarious learning*, was instrumental in human learning. The social learning theory also emphasises the difference between learning and performance. Bandura further contends that modeling and imitation alone are not sufficient to explain learning and development, focusing increasingly on cognitive constructs (memory, language, evaluation, anticipation) that allow the individual to integrate and mentally represent experiences. Bandura’s theoretical perspective includes a focus on self-regulation, self-perceptions, self-reflective thought, and the power of belief in human functioning.
2.2.2.1 Application of Social Learning Theory in Classroom

An example of Bandura’s (1969:29) theory within the classroom would be that learners who are actively engaged, will perform better and be less distracted if the behaviour being modeled, is attention getting. The models should be respected and should be shown to be successful. Bandura states that the learners do not always have to be actively engaged, as an attention-getting model will produce learning and behaviour. Another example of this theory: A learner displays exemplary behaviour. The educator notices this and compliments and praises the learner. This action is observed by other learners, who model this behaviour, as it has positive consequences. The imitated behaviour leads to reinforcing results. The consequences of the model’s behaviour affect the observers vicariously. This is explained as vicarious reinforcement, in terms of which the model, in this case the exemplary learner, is reinforced for a response, and the observer then shows an increase in the same response. Bandura’s social learning theory posits that people learn from one another via observation, imitation and modeling. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories, because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation. Later, Bandura (1973) also considered personality as an interaction between three components: the environment, behaviour, and one’s psychological processes (one’s ability to entertain images in one’s mind and language).

According to Patterson (1975), the need for a positive learning environment is based on the social learning theory. Patterson (1975) maintains that children thrive when adults take an interest in what they do, praise good and pro-social behaviour, encourage participation in the household, allow choices, and are aware of their developmental needs and emotional reactions to stress. The converse of these features, viz. frequent reprimands, inconsistent responses to undesired behaviour, a lack of recognition of the child’s developmental and emotional needs, and the absence of routines, will or could lead to antisocial behaviour. It is further argued by Solnick, Rincover and Peterson (1977) that it is essential to teach and model desired behaviours so that the benefits of
positive reinforcement are well established. These authors contend that when parents notice desired behaviour and then praise the child, such behaviour will be reinforced. The social learning theory suggests that physical punishment is the most questionable technique for reducing undesirable behaviour. Moreover, the use of physical punishment teaches children that violence is a solution to interpersonal conflict. This could lead to aggressive behaviour in children (Solnick, Rincover & Peterson, 1977). This implies that educators should be wary of reinforcing violent behaviour through actions such as corporal and other forms of punishment and should model only appropriate non-violent behaviours. Rogers (1997:65) contends that educators who use punishment and scare tactics to gain control over and make learners accept their authority are the fundamental cause of violence and disruptive behaviour in many schools.

2.2.3 Social emotional learning approach

Developed from the social learning theory (Bandura, 1997), the social emotional learning approach emphasises the satisfaction of learners’ basic needs for belonging, power, freedom and fun. One proponent of this approach is Vitto (2003:ix), who advocates relationship-driven, pro-active classrooms in which educators strive to establish a milieu characterised by positive and personal relationships, emotional safety, trust, mutual respect and cooperation (Vitto, 2003:190).

A relationship-driven classroom enhances relationships and social emotional skills and focuses on pro-active and behaviour management strategies that enhance learner-educator connections. Vitto (2003:ix) argues that these factors have tremendous power to increase the academic performance and build the resilience of learners. He asserts that discipline and management styles, combined with an overreliance on common disciplinary strategies such as punishment, harsh comments, nagging, yelling and power struggles, weaken these relationships. Vitto (2003:x) contends that the most important difference to this approach to classroom management is the high priority placed on preserving and enhancing educator-learner relationships.
According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), an organisation based at the University of Illinois, Chicago, which was formed to advance the science and practice of social and emotional learning, social and emotional learning programmes assist learners in developing skills to recognise and manage their emotions. Learners develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions and establish positive relationships (Weissberg, Resnik, Payton & O’Brien, 2003:46). CASEL maintains that social and emotional learning builds the foundation for the acceptance of responsibility, the management of emotions, the acceptance of diversity, the prevention of violence, substance abuse and related problems, and will therefore result in academic success. Elias, Tobias and Friedlander (2002:14) propose that schools become “caring communities of learners” by implementing initiatives such as class meetings in which learners and their educators can discuss issues, plan and make decisions that affect the classroom climate, find solutions to common social problems and foster a school wide atmosphere of trust. Elias et al. (2002) further emphasise family involvement activities which provide opportunities for families to learn what learners are learning at school academically, socially and ethically.

According to Devaney, O’Brien, Resnik, Keister and Weissberg (2006:10), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) addresses the development of five key areas:

- **Self-awareness**, which entails the identification and recognition of one’s own emotions, strengths and weak points, which help to facilitate a sense of self-efficacy.

- **Self-management**, which involves impulse control, stress management, persistence, goal setting and motivation.

- **Social awareness**, which relates to empathy, respect for others and the ability to see different perspectives on the same issue.
• Relationship skills, which entail cooperation, the willingness to seek and provide help, and communication.

• Responsible decision making, which involves evaluation, reflection and personal and ethical responsibilities.

Devaney et al. (2006:12) state that caring and moral behaviour must be modeled and that educators should understand that for a student to reach social, emotional and academic goals, the school, the parents and the community must act collectively in positive ways, thereby creating safe havens for children. Devaney et al. (2006:12) propose that SEL should commence with:

• Creating, organising and unifying themes, values and visions for the school.

• Involving learners in integrative service-related projects that entail equipping them with the skills needed to participate in these projects and then integrating these projects with academic subject areas.

• Implementing skills-building curricula that are linked to existing school subject areas.

• Introducing SEL into existing academic subjects using collaborative strategies to involve learners in improving school and classroom climates.

The purpose of discipline extends beyond merely controlling the classroom and responding to misbehaviour. The most fundamental purpose of discipline and management in the classroom is the promotion of self-control. Self-control is seen as one of the most important outcomes of education and one of the basic prerequisites of a democratic society (Savage, 1999:7). Humphrey (1998:10) expresses the opinion that discipline is the practice of care and respect for self
and others. He contends that it is about safeguarding the rights of people who are exposed to uncooperative, aggressive or blocking responses by others. Oosthuizen, Roux and Van der Walt (2003:460) suggest that the application of discipline should not be construed as solely a clampdown on unruly, mischievous and disruptive behaviour, but as means of entering into a loving, caring and guiding relationship with learners. Oosthuizen et al. (2003:466) remark that positive discipline should promote the development of self-discipline, which can be achieved if educators model true discipleship for the learners to emulate. The word ‘discipline’ is derived from the Latin *disciplina* (teaching), which in turn is derived from *disciples* (followers). Du Plessis and Loock (2006: 521) contend that the term discipline refers to a code of conduct prescribed for the highest welfare of the individual and the society in which the individual lives and is a personal system of organised behaviour designed to promote self-interest, while also contributing to the welfare of others.

### 2.2.3.1 Positive influence of educators on learners

Vitto (2003:5) states that having positive and caring relationships at school increases resilience in and protects children from academic failure. He argues that the goal of a relationship-driven classroom is not only to prevent misbehaviour, but also to learn the skills that thwart personal and social destructive behaviours, such as violence, substance abuse, poor self-control, early onset of aggressive behaviour, academic failure and cognitive barriers to learning. He differentiates between external and internal protective factors that can prevent the learner from developing harmful, destructive and ineffective behaviours. Vitto (2003:6) defines external protective factors as those that involve family and the school environment. Examples of these include care and support, the setting of high expectations, and being given meaningful responsibilities at home and of school. Internal protective factors or social emotional skills are defined as social skills (such as self-awareness, empathy, communication and conflict-resolution skills), problem-solving skills, optimism and hope for the future, and a sense of self-efficacy. Educators can also help to increase the social emotional learning of learners. Bandura (1997:3) explains
self-efficacy as the belief that one can accomplish a given task and that one possesses the power to exert a positive influence over one’s life. He further states that self-efficacy is the ability to learn new skills and information and is influenced by an individual’s feelings of self-efficacy. Persuasion and verbal support, along with the student’s physiological state, also contribute to feelings of self-efficacy. Unlike self-esteem, self-efficacy can differ greatly from one subject or performance area to another. Someone may have high self-efficacy concerning learning how to draw, and low self-efficacy concerning science. In terms of Bandura’s (1969:29) theory, the two most powerful sources of self-efficacy are learners’ previous experiences with similar tasks, and observations.

To improve self-efficacy in learners entails three empowering perceptions: “I am capable”; “I have the power to make choices that influence what happens to me”; and “I contribute in meaningful ways and I am genuinely needed” (Nelsen, Lott & Glen, 2000:97). Educators can therefore improve self-efficacy in learners by providing them with meaningful roles. This may include engaging a learner in running errands, taking attendance, passing out papers, timing and checking work, problem solving or serving as the educator’s aide, and peer and cross-age tutoring.

Another effective way to improve self-efficacy is to structure learners’ academic success. This could include setting (realistic) high expectations for the learner, which may or may not correlate with the course of study or curricular goals, teaching the skills necessary to perform the task and engaging in self-evaluation of his/her performance (Nelson et al. 2000:97). Vitto (2003:96) states that learners with poor self-efficacy tend to have an external locus of control, which means that they believe that events outside their control determine their success. Such learners do not believe that they can influence events. In her table on the attributes of self-efficacy, Wood (2004:169) mentions that an internal locus of control is one of the essential criteria for self-efficacy and involves the following related criteria:

- Belief in personal competency
• Control of outcomes
• Confidence in own abilities
• Persistence in the face of failure
• Acceptance of personal responsibility for actions
• Cognitive, social and behavioural skills organised to attain goals

These are some of the important attributes and beliefs that can be developed in learners to improve their perceptions and feelings of self-efficacy.

Vitto (2003:10) emphasises the importance of caring relationships as a basis for healthy development and learning. He states that the person who conveys an attitude of compassion provides unconditional regard and does not take the behaviour of learners as being personally directed at him or her, but rather takes the social and emotional circumstances of the learner into consideration.

Elias, Zins, Weisberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes et al (1997), as cited by Vitto (2003:8), state that positive educator-learner relationships are a significant contributing factor in academic achievement and motivation. An important attribute of a relationship-driven educator is that he/she should strive to be an effective human being and develop social-emotional skills (i.e. social skills, problem solving skills, self-control, self-efficacy and optimism) in order to model these skills on a daily basis (Vitto, 2003:21). In contrast, classroom management practices that involve a high degree of emotional or physical threat, ultimatums and inconsistency hurt the development of trust, security and respect, which are critical to the development of caring relationships (Vitto, 2003:11).

2.2.3.2 Positive educator-learner relationships

In a study, Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris, Jones, et al. (1997) have established that positive relationships with educators are more important than class size, amount of educator training, classroom rules and school policy in
protecting learners from destructive behaviours. Positive educator-learner relationships are also cited as a significant contributor to academic achievement and motivation. It may therefore be deduced that educators can have a significant impact on the resilience development of their learners (Vitto, 2003:8). Vitto proposes that educators should move beyond external security measures such as cameras, metal detectors, guards and zero-tolerance policies and rather focus on positive relationships and resilience to gain success in classroom relationships.
According to Vitto (2003:4), copious evidence exists that educators have a tremendous impact on the quality of life of learners. It is his belief that a relationship-driven classroom does not only prevent learner misbehaviour in the short term, but also helps learners learn skills that prevent the development of more serious personal and socially destructive behaviours. He asserts that although educators are unable to control these risk factors, protective factors, as previously mentioned, can contribute to learners' resilience. Resilient individuals are able to manage and rise above adversity and stress in their lives (Vitto, 2003:4). Some longitudinal studies, several following individuals over the course of a lifespan, have documented that between a half and two-thirds of children growing up in families with mentally ill, alcoholic, abusive or criminally involved parents or in poverty-stricken or war-torn communities do overcome the odds and turn a life trajectory of risk into one that manifests "resilience," the term used to describe a set of qualities that fosters a process of successful adaptation and transformation despite risk and adversity (Wang, Waxman & Freiberg, 1996). According to Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1997:119-140), resilience research validates prior research and theory in human development that have clearly established the biological imperative for growth and development that exists in the human organism and that unfolds naturally in the presence of certain environmental characteristics. We are all born with an innate capacity for resilience, through which we are able to develop social competence, problem-solving skills, a critical consciousness, autonomy, and a sense of purpose (Benard, 1991).

According to Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1994:50), educational resilience is a potentially powerful construct for fostering resilience and the educational success of children and youth who are enduring stressful life circumstances. Devaney et al (2006) have identified a compelling set of protective factors within the child, family, classroom, school and community that mitigate against failure and promote healthy development. The family, school, and community environments are overlapping contexts in which the events and conditions that
influence one context also influence the others. Resilience is promoted when the resources in these contexts are united and dedicated to the healthy development and academic success of children. The likelihood of successful educational outcomes further increases when the values and norms expressed in these three contexts are congruent (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1994:72).

2.3 CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE

According to Knott-Craig (2007:6), schools today compete with fashionable pastimes and trends such as television, computer games, different cultures, gangs, crime, politics, home and religious cultures. These influences are brought into the classroom. All South African schools and even the best teachers struggle with discipline. Each school has to establish its own culture, ethos or climate. The culture of each school is dependent on what it finds acceptable or unacceptable and what it will tolerate and not tolerate. South African schools need to establish a culture of respect. Rogers (1998:18) suggests that respect is a commitment to action. Respect is not about how we feel, but rather about how we behave. To develop learners who are socially well adjusted and able to function healthily in society, we have to teach them respect for self and others. This suggests that learners must feel better about themselves before they can do better. Schools should be places of safety where learners can develop healthy self-esteem and learn appropriate forms of emotional expression. Schools thus prepare learners for life. The punitive approach must be replaced with constructive forms of discipline that will teach the learner how to do better in the future.

As stated by Skiba and Peterson (2003:66), discipline is associated with the notion of bringing children in line with accepted norms of decency, which invokes the long-standing association of not sparing the rod. Marshall (2005:51) warns that when educators take on the role of disciplining learners, they deprive them of the opportunity to become responsible people. However, Oosthuizen, Rossouw and De Wet (2004:66) maintain that an educator is obliged to maintain discipline at school by virtue of his/her profession and in accordance
with his/her legal role (*in loco parentis*), which is the right to maintain authority and the obligation to exercise caring supervision over the learner.

### 2.3.1 Paradigm shift regarding discipline in South African schools

The *South African Schools Act* (Act 84 of 1996) has resulted in a paradigm shift in the manner in which discipline is dealt with in schools. Prior to 1996, the South African education system supported corporal punishment and the promotion of an inhumane retributive ideology, based on behavioural principles (Naong, 2007:284). Naong (2007:284) further elaborates that the dilemma facing the South African educator is that the education system advocates the establishment of health-promoting schools and defines these as institutions that engage in social, educational and political action that enhances public awareness of health and fosters healthy lifestyles. He states that this will require sustained support from the authorities, which until now has been sorely lacking. Naong (2007:284) argues that this lack of support for educators is not unique to the South African situation, as schools in Scotland have also reported a lack of support from parents, support agencies and the education department and a resultant increase in disruptive behaviour at the time of the abolition of corporal punishment. The teaching profession is suffering from change fatigue: numerous changes have come to bear on educators’ personal as well as professional well-being, which includes their work ethic, job satisfaction and morale. Naong (2007:285) lists some of these changes as rightsizing, redeployment and even retrenchment threats, the challenges posed by a new curriculum, the abolition of corporal punishment, and the alleged escalation of lack of discipline in schools.

The aim of school discipline or classroom management is to create a safe and happy environment conducive to learning and teaching. According to Gootman (2001:5), discipline often poses a great challenge in today’s schools, because of the pressure society has imposed on individuals and families. The effects of drug abuse and neglect, community violence, poverty and single parenting echo in schools, especially in the indigent residential areas of the Northern Areas of
Port Elizabeth. Many of these learners bring their baggage of dysfunction straight into the classroom. They push educators to their limits and render discipline an all-consuming task that overshadows and threatens academic learning (Gootman, 2001:5). In my opinion, it is clear that discipline is a complex problem that has its origins not in the classroom, but in the home. The learner needs the guidance of mature and caring adults in order to achieve self-discipline.

Savage (1999:205) remarks that punishment is the undesirable, painful or discomforting effect that results from misbehaviour. Punishment is based on the belief that if children are made to suffer for wrong, they will not repeat their inappropriate behaviour (Department of Education, 2000a:1). Hence, in the school context, punishment is an action taken against an individual as a consequence of deviation from the school’s code of conduct. Punishment can be effective in stopping unwanted behaviour. However, research shows that the use of punishment may also have several undesirable side effects (Savage, 1999:205). According to Lakes (2004:571), controlling children in this manner hinders their development of self-esteem and self-identity. He further argues that controlling children may also reinforce the powerlessness they feel in adult environments and could stunt their growth toward equality, which could further escalate violence and anti-social behaviour in primary schools.

My interpretation and experience is that punishment is a controversial issue that demands the highest degree of professionalism and responsibility on the part of the educator. The educator must act on behalf of the parents, in the best interests of the child, who is being prepared to take up his/her place in society. Learners therefore need to learn that their freedom cannot be at the expense of others and that they will be held accountable for their actions.
2.4 DECLINE OF DISCIPLINE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:35) state that the present situation in South African schools is indicative of a lack of discipline, which has led to a continuation of unsuccessful learning and teaching. Poor learner discipline in public schools is ranked as one of the major concerns of all stakeholders in the education process in South Africa. Numerous attempts have been made to solve the problem and to re-establish a culture of effective learning and teaching in schools. As stated by Thomson (2002:2), a general breakdown in discipline is evident in primary and secondary public schools in South Africa. According to Van Wyk (2001:198), parents can contribute to the development of problem behaviour by failing to discipline learners and provide social skills and support and also by neglecting to model appropriate behaviour. He contends that in many schools, parental involvement in areas such as learner discipline has been sorely lacking. Consistent with this, Bisetty (2001:3) points to the emphasis on fundamental rights in the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996b), which has resulted in a general reluctance among parents to discipline their misbehaving children appropriately.

Parents’ failure to cooperate with schools is a major contributing factor in the high failure rate, late registration, poor discipline and poor safety in South African classrooms and schoolyards. Mokhele (2006:154) alleges that educators spend a disproportionate percentage of their time on dealing with learners’ misconduct. On a daily basis, educators have to deal with cases of ‘bunking’ of lessons, late arrivals for class, fighting in classrooms and overcrowded classrooms, which make exercising control over learners very difficult. He observes that many educators have difficulty in managing their classes; they encounter serious and persistent problems, which makes it virtually impossible for them to establish and maintain a relationship of mutual trust and respect in their classrooms. These educators generally still use authoritarian teaching strategies, making learners reliant on educators. The educators are largely reactive, waiting until misbehaviour occurs before taking action. In many classrooms the emphasis is still on punitive forms of discipline.
South African educators therefore need to be taught alternatives to punitive and corporal punishment.

According to Knott-Craig (2007:2), corporal punishment is still used by many South African educators. Schools in which corporal punishment is applied, experience the most serious disciplinary problems. Knott-Craig (2007:2) contends that the continued use of this practice sustains the false belief that it is acceptable to solve problems through violence. Many schools do not have formal disciplinary policies to guide them in handling disruptive behaviour. It is observed that there is a trend among educators to seek revenge in situations of conflict with their learners, as they (the educators) were brought up with corporal punishment and it is the only model they know. These educators believe that in order for learners to behave better in the future, the learners must feel worse and suffer in the present. The need for revenge in conflict situations tends to escalate the levels of anger in both the educator and learner, to the point that lashing out verbally or physically actually brings satisfaction. Knott-Craig (2007:3) contends that many South Africans allude to Scriptural condonation of corporal punishment, whilst others argue that it is entrenched in their culture. These beliefs preclude the possibility of change. Educators claim that violence in schools has increased since the abolition of corporal punishment (Knott-Craig, 2007:3).

The signing into law of the *South African Constitution* (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) and the *South African Schools Act* 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996a) has impacted radically on learner discipline (Van Staden & Alston, 2000:298). The administering of corporal punishment to learners in South African schools has been prohibited in terms of Section 10 of the latter Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Corporal punishment has become a very controversial and much debated issue in South Africa, as it has traditionally been a central element in maintaining discipline in South African schools. Although the practice has been outlawed, it still persists in many schools (Morrel, 2001b:292). Even learners look to the reintroduction of corporal punishment as a solution to the persistent current disciplinary problems within
schools (Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Du Toit, 2003:452). The banning of corporal punishment has been criticised by many educators, many of whom persist in its illegal use, in the belief that it is necessary for the creation of a climate conducive to teaching and learning. The government has attempted to fill the vacuum created in two ways. Firstly, it has introduced codes of conduct at school level and, secondly, parents have been given a substantial say in school affairs via representation on school governing bodies (Morrel, 2001:292).

2.5 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment was found to be incompatible with the constitutional right of learners not to be subjected to a degrading form of punishment. As indicated by Cameron and Sheppard (2006:17), while discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate, school discipline could unintentionally reinforce learner misbehaviour, especially in learners who do not like or have little interest in school. Such learners may be motivated to find ways to stay away from school, and suspension may have the unintended consequence of promoting these learners’ use of inappropriate behaviours to provoke disciplinary action that will allow them to stay out of school. In response to the educators’ concern about the banning of corporal punishment and their frustration at not finding an equally effective alternative, the Department of Education in 2000 issued guidelines on school discipline, in which detention and community service were proposed in place of corporal punishment. For serious misconduct, schools may apply to the Provincial Department for the limited suspension of a learner from all school activities. In the case of criminal acts such as assault, use of a dangerous weapon, rape, robbery and theft, the guidelines proposed an application to the Provincial Department for the expulsion or transfer of the learner (Ngubane, 2000:2).

Wilson (2002:28) states that many educators are dissatisfied and disillusioned with the aforementioned methods of punishment, believing that they are ineffective and inadequate – in short, a waste of time. Educators claim that the Department of Education has either trivialised or does not understand the
magnitude of the disciplinary problem in South African schools. Cameron and Sheppard (2006:17), in keeping with educators’ frustrations, state that the upsurge of learner misbehaviour in schools has led to the persistence of unacceptable and illegal methods of punishment. The South African Council of Educators reported that, between 1999 and 2003, twelve educators were removed from its roll for inflicting physical harm on learners (Star, 2003:1).

Fields and Boesser (2002:59) state that teachers are seen as the sowers of seeds of peace and harmony. They define discipline as moral and mental improvement, as well as self-control. However, they disagree with the view that control must be exercised by enforcing order based on submission to rules and authority and punishment intended to correct or train. They express the view that it is essential that the focus should be on teaching social skills and displaying caring attitudes, as the curriculum would never be covered if discipline were not taught appropriately. Most adults’ concept of discipline is based on their own experiences. People rarely reflect on and think about discipline in an analytical (rather than emotional) manner.

In its recommendations in “Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: the Learner Experience”, the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2000a:22) points to the following expectations that learners have of educators:

- They must conduct themselves in a professional way.
- They must not use abusive language or behave in an abusive way.
- They must follow the rules, procedures and code of conduct of the school, government and the South African Council of Educators.
- They must ensure regular communication with parents and encourage the learners’ participation in school affairs.

Article 3(7) of the guidelines suggests that educators possess the same rights as parents to control and discipline learners in accordance with the code of conduct. Article 7(5) of the guidelines verifies that educators are responsible for
the discipline at their schools at all times, which includes teaching time and at school functions or any school-related activities in which learners are engaged.

2.6 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) provides a broad framework within which other laws should be composed. The Constitution places great emphasis on human rights and human dignity, which implies that no citizen may be treated in a cruel or inhumane manner. It is for this reason that corporal punishment has been abolished in South African schools and other community institutions. The code of conduct and professional code of ethics to be drawn up by each school will give shape to a new framework for discipline so that problems will either be prevented or dealt with within the new dispensation.

2.6.1 Code of conduct

In accordance with Section 8 of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), the governing body of a public school must adopt a formal code of conduct. This code of conduct must aim at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning at that school (Boshoff & Morkel, 2003:2B-18). The code of conduct must be subject to the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) and provincial legislation. The Department of Education (2000a:20) states that the code of conduct must embrace the school’s values, ethos and mission and not merely comprise rules and regulations. It should therefore be a positive and inspirational document. When a school governing body draws up a code of conduct for learners, it is essential that learners, parents and educators at the school be involved. The process therefore has to be democratic, and all roleplayers must agree. The code of conduct must place emphasis on consultative processes involving all roleplayers. The code of conduct thus drawn up must play a central role in the school community, and all roleplayers must undertake to contribute to its success (Republic of South Africa, 1998).
2.6.2 Minister of Education

The fact that the Minister of Education carries overall responsibility for discipline at South African schools has already been mentioned. This responsibility extends to guidelines for school governing bodies for the establishment of codes of conduct. Such guidelines are stipulated by the Minister of Education in correlation with the members of the Executive Councils of the nine South African provinces. The Minister of Education is thus ultimately responsible for discipline in South African schools. The Minister provides a broad outline within which the members of the Executive Councils of Education and school governing bodies can act to maintain discipline within schools.

2.6.3 Member of the Executive Council

The members of the Executive Council (MEC) are responsible for education in each province. In accordance with Article 9(3)(4) of the *South African Schools Act* (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), MECs by notice in the Provincial Government Gazette determine the following guidelines to ensure discipline in schools:

- The type of behaviour of a learner in a public school that is regarded as misconduct.
- The disciplinary procedures that must be followed in cases of misconduct.
- Regulations regarding due process (legal steps to be followed) in the interest of the learner and any other party involved in the disciplinary process.

A learner thus expelled from school may appeal against the decision of the Head of Department to the MECs of Education (1996a:9.4).
The MECs are responsible for determining what constitutes misconduct for learners. The MECs should also make guidelines available for the drafting of disciplinary procedures to ensure that learners in public schools receive fair and reasonable trials. The MECs have to make the final decision where a learner or parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Head of Department.

2.6.4 Head of Department

Subject to Article 9(2)(5) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), Heads of Department have the following responsibilities regarding discipline in public schools:

“9(2) Subject to any applicable provincial law, a learner at a public school may expelled only – By the Head of Department; if the learner is found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing.

9(5) If a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of section 3(1) is expelled from a public school, the Head of Department must make an alternative arrangement for his or her placement at a public school.”

The Head of Department is responsible for the expulsion of learners who are found guilty of serious misconduct. The School Governing Body must make such a recommendation to the Head of Department after a fair and reasonable trial. If the learner is still subject to compulsory school attendance, it means that he or she has to improve his or her conduct at another school. A learner who is not subject to compulsory school attendance may no longer attend a public school if expelled by the Head of Department.

2.6.5 School Governing Body
The *South African Schools Act* 84 of 1996 deals broadly with the powers and responsibilities of school governing bodies. Article 8(1) of the *South African Schools Act* indicates that the governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners, after due consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. Article 20(1) of the same Act expounds on the duties of the governing body by emphasising its key role in supporting the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their duties.

### 2.6.6 Principal

The *Employment of Educators Act* 76 of 1998, Chapter A paragraph 4.2, points to the fact that the principal is generally in charge of the school and discipline. He/She should also assist the governing body in drawing up the code of conduct. He/She should ensure that the code of conduct is implemented by the learners as well as the educators. The principal should also assist in disciplinary hearings and ensure that these are fair and reasonable and that all prescribed procedures are followed.

According to the Guidelines (Article 7(5)), cases of serious misconduct must be dealt with by principals. Less serious offences may be dealt with by the educators. Article 13(2) of the Guidelines indicates that an offence by a learner that could lead to suspension or expulsion should be brought to the principal, who must listen to the witnesses and then decide which action should be taken.

### 2.6.7 Educator

The *Employment of Educators Act* 76 of 1998 indicates that it is the responsibility of educators to maintain discipline in the classroom. According to Act 31 of 2000 of the South African Council of Educators, the conduct of educators should always be focused on the well-being of learners. Learners may therefore not be exposed to any form of humiliation. Article 7(5) of the Guidelines establishes that educators are responsible for discipline at all hours.
of the school day. Educators are expected to act as reasonable parents. The school rules are applicable to all learners at all times and at all functions of the school.

Educators thus have the responsibility to correct inappropriate behaviour, wherever necessary. This responsibility implies that they should be actively engaged in the drawing up of the code of conduct of their school. It is also expected of educators to communicate with parents regarding the conduct of the learners.

2.6.8 Parent

The *South African Schools Act* purports that parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly and are punctual. They should ascertain that the school rules and codes of conduct are followed and obeyed.

Parents also have the democratic right to give input regarding the drafting of the code of conduct. Article 6 of the Guidelines compels parents to take responsibility for the conduct of their children. Parents also have the right to take legal steps if the constitutional rights of their children are infringed. Parents must explain the school rules to their children, thus taking responsibility for any misconduct committed by them.

2.6.9 Preventative disciplinary methods

Preventative disciplinary methods refer to methods designed to deter or avoid disciplinary problems.

2.6.10 Security measures

Lack of security is no minor problem at South African schools. This is evident from the recent empirical study by De Wet (2003), in which 73,35% of the
learner sample reported that they did not feel safe at school entrances; 69.44% did not feel safe in the school cloakrooms; and 79.86% did not feel safe on the school premises (De Wet, 2003:88). In the United States of America, a survey on violence in schools by the National Centre for Education Statistics established that schools had implemented the following measures regarding security:

- Some 2% of schools had stringent security measures, defined as a full-time guard and daily or random metal detector checks.

- Altogether 11% of schools had moderate security measures: a guard, restricted access to the school premises, or metal detectors.

- Altogether 84% of schools had low-level security-restricted access, but no guards or metal detectors.

- Only 3% of schools had no security measures.

These preventative measures are now considered for implementation at South African schools. Recently, legislation has also been adopted to allow random drug testing or searches.

2.6.11 Referrals to School Governing Body

Qualitative research in a project on learner discipline undertaken by the Faculty of Education Sciences (Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 2003) has indicated that apart from hearings for possible expulsions and suspensions, cases of misconduct are often referred to School Governing Bodies’ disciplinary committees for disciplinary action. In many cases, this seems to have a positive effect on learners.

2.6.12 Suspension
Suspension can be defined as the temporary refusal by a school or School Governing Body to admit a learner to the school and/or the school hostel (Oosthuizen, 2003:82). In terms of Section 9 of the *South African Schools Act* (1996b), a learner may be suspended for a maximum period of one week after a fair hearing.

### 2.6.13 Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the permanent refusal of admission of a learner to a particular school and/or school hostel (Oosthuizen, 2003:82). In terms of Section 9 of the *South African Schools Act* (South Africa, 1996b), suspension may be done only by the Head of Department in question, and only if the learner concerned has been found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing. Two kinds of expulsion are distinguished: school expulsion, where a learner is expelled from school; and class expulsion, where a learner is expelled from a specific class only, owing to his or her misconduct.

### 2.6.14 Detention

The *Oxford Dictionary* (2005:186) describes detention as the detaining of a person (i.e. the learner) in order to punish him or her. In essence, detention can be seen as a system in terms of which a learner has to sacrifice his/her free time due to misconduct or unruly behaviour on his/her side. Research reveals mixed opinions regarding the effectiveness of detention. In many cases, it is said that it does not modify the behaviour of learners and that it lays an extra administrative and supervisory burden on educators (Andrews & Taylor, 1998:4).

### 2.7 CRIMINALISATION

In some instances, learner misconduct is so serious that it takes the form of a criminal offence, such as physical assault, violence and rape (Rademeyer, 2002:6). When misconduct spirals out of control to this extent, it poses a threat
to an orderly school environment, which is essential for effective learning. Apart from these serious forms of misconduct, some other forms of deviant behaviour could also be classified as criminal offences.

Reports on learner discipline from Great Britain indicate a serious decline in learner respect towards parents and educators. Occurrences of swearing and spitting, or learners insulting their educators, are not uncommon (Jansen, 2002:10). Some forms of disrespectful behaviour towards another person, such as crimen injuria and criminal defamation, could constitute a criminal offence.

2.8 AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

Research undertaken by the Elton Commission of Investigation into school discipline in the United Kingdom has produced evidence of links between the appearance of school premises and the behaviour of learners (Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office, 1989:13). Evidence collected by the Commission indicated that where learners were provided with a pleasant environment, they respected it and contributed to it; they treated it as their own. This sense of ownership of the school was found to play an important part in the way learners behaved.

On the basis of its research, the Elton Commission recommended that headmasters and staff adopt comprehensive policies for the care of school premises (Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office, 1989:116). In schools situated in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, this could be especially important, as most of these schools are plagued by vandalism and theft. It is hoped that a sense of ownership and pride will alleviate this problem.

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a brief overview of the management of discipline in South African schools from a historical as well as a current perspective. The historical
perspective was given to sensitise the reader to the difficulties of transforming a management system from a historical base which has potentially contradictory elements to the system to which the country aspires. This is illustrated by the preference for corporal punishment among certain educators as a tried and tested way of managing discipline, as opposed to positive alternatives. Local and international literature was reviewed to gain a global perspective on the management of discipline in schools. The next chapter will deal with the research design and methodology.
CHAPTER THREE

EXPLICATION OF CHOSEN RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Two, a theoretical perspective was presented on the management of discipline in South African schools as well as schools abroad. Special attention was given to the historical legacy that influences how discipline is currently managed in South African schools.

Various approaches to classroom discipline were investigated, with specific emphasis on social-emotional learning and the relationship-driven classroom, and more pro-active ways of disciplining learners in the classroom. This approach places the responsibility for identifying and implementing positive alternative disciplinary measures squarely in the court of the school.

This chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the chosen research methodology and design. The techniques and methods employed by the researcher to address the research questions will be explained in detail.

3.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

3.2.1 Orientation and problem formulation

The South African educational system has historically promoted and condoned corporal punishment as a means of maintaining discipline. Corporal punishment was an integral part of schooling for most educators and learners at twentieth century South African schools (Morrel, 2001:292). In many South African schools, corporal punishment was and still is a popular means of disciplining pupils, despite the fact that it has been banned (Morrel, 2001:292). Some
parents and educators strongly believe that corporal punishment ensures that moral standards are maintained. Since the banning of corporal punishment in schools under the *South African Schools Act* (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 1996b:10), many educators have claimed that problematic behaviour among learners has increased in intensity and frequency. Many educators argue that corporal punishment must be retained as a tried and tested way of disciplining learners. Kubeka (2004:50) states that corporal punishment was an integral part of school life for most teachers and learners at twentieth century South African schools. According to Parker-Jenkins (1999:6-7), corporal punishment was used freely when mass education was introduced, because it was a cheap and quick disciplinary method. Findings by Tafa (2002:17) indicate that merciless beatings at the hands of educators were a common feature within the Botswana educational system.

Educators in the new educational era are battling to find alternatives to corporal punishment that have any hope of lasting success (Porteus, Vally & Ruth, 2001:6). Against this background, it is clear that it is necessary to further explore the reasons why schools are struggling to implement more pro-active ways of approaching classroom discipline before any effective intervention to promote positive alternative means of discipline can be developed.

My research question is therefore as follows:

*What are the perceptions of educators and learners regarding the management of discipline in the indigent Northern Areas schools?*

### 3.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

Creswell (2005:9) states that the purpose statement is a focused restatement of the problem and conveys the overall objective of intent of the study. He further alludes to the fact that the purpose statement explains the major focus of the study and who the participants are; and refers to the sites of inquiry. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:397) state that, historically, qualitative researchers
describe and explain or describe and explore by building rich descriptions of complex situations and by giving directions for future research.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate and explore the perceptions and experiences of learners and educators regarding the management of classroom disciplinary processes at selected schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. The secondary aim is to make recommendations as to how to develop and apply positive disciplinary measures intended to facilitate self-discipline in learners.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Introduction

Conrad and Serlin (2006:377) state that the research design chosen, will depend on the philosophical assumptions underlying how an inquiry into the phenomenon being studied can be pursued. The research questions and purposes should determine the selection of research design and methodology (Conrad & Serlin, 2006:337). McMillan and Schumacher (2001:31) are in agreement and state that the research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer the research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:35) state that an interactive qualitative inquiry is an in-depth study using face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings. Accordingly, the researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them and, as a qualitative researcher, builds a complex, holistic picture with detailed descriptions of informants’ perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:35). In other words, the research design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used. The purpose of the research design is to provide the most valid, accurate answers possible to the research questions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:35), there are many types of research questions and many types of designs; it is important to match the design to the question. Mouton (2001:55) likens the research design to a
plan or blueprint to guide the researcher in conducting the research. For the purpose of this research, a phenomenological, qualitative, naturalistic, inductive, descriptive and interpretive research design was employed.

3.4.2 Paradigm

A paradigm refers to “a pattern, model or example or the patterning of the thinking of a person”. It is the theory of knowledge that allows the researcher to decide how the research phenomenon will be studied (Groenewald, 2004:7).

The paradigm followed in this research study is interpretive and constructivist, as it focused on the importance of the participants’ views and how they constructed meaning as well as contextualizing the collection of data. These approaches emphasise the importance of participants’ views and draw attention to the meaning people hold about educational issues. The promotion of participatory and advocacy practices has also recently come to the fore in qualitative research (Creswell, 2005:558), introducing an element of social action into the research, where the findings can be used to advocate for change and to better the lives of the individuals concerned (Creswell, 2005:43).

Interpretivism and constructivism are related approaches to research that are characteristic of particular world views. According to Schwandt (1994:118), the proponents of these persuasions share the goal of understanding the complex world of experience from the point of view of those who live in it. Interpretivists reject the notions of theory-neutral observations and the idea of universal laws, such as those that exist in science. Miles and Huberman (1994:8) also claim that interpretivists of all types insist that researchers are no more detached from their objects of study than are their informants. Researchers have their own convictions, their own conceptual orientations, and they, too, are members of a particular culture at a specific historical moment.
3.4.3 Use of qualitative approach to research

According to Gay and Airasian (2003:163), qualitative research is useful for describing and answering questions about participants and contexts. These authors claim that qualitative research is exceptionally suited for exploration or for beginning to understand a group or phenomenon. Conrad and Serlin (2006:407) state that qualitative research is interpretive and focuses on meaning and understanding and building concepts and theories. They cite Miles and Huberman (1994), who affirm that this is done through the intuition of the researcher who works to become an insider.

Qualitative research’s underpinnings are rooted in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology and history; these disciplines rely heavily on rich, verbal, qualitative, interpretive descriptions (Gay & Airasian, 2003:163). The aforementioned authors add that qualitative disciplines strive to capture the human meanings of social life as it is lived, experienced and understood by the research participants, thereby capturing the social context; this is essential, as each context studied, is deemed to be unique. Qualitative research is thus investigative, inductive and rigorous in its nature and its data collection methods. Gay and Airasian (2003:163) describe qualitative research as useful for describing and answering questions about participants and contexts.

Accordingly, Conrad and Serlin (2006:407) state that qualitative researchers gather detail through multiple interactive methods, identifying and systematically reflecting on their role in the inquiry and acknowledging and accommodating personal biases, values and interests. Conrad and Serlin (2006:407) affirm that qualitative work is empathetic, concentrating on the frames of reference and values of those involved. Constructivists focus on how individuals construct their lives, arguing that reality is more relative and locally suited and constructed than a positivist would contend.

Gay and Airasian (2003:164) assert that qualitative research is useful for studying the perspectives of research participants. They further claim that
Qualitative research is well suited for exploring complex research areas and for capturing the human meanings of social life as it is lived, experienced and understood by the research participants. Qualitative research is investigative and inductive in nature and employs diverse research methods and data collection techniques, avoids bias to ensure data accuracy, and emphasises the voices and the settings of the research participants (Gay & Airasian, 2003:164).

Conrad and Serlin (2006:358) state that qualitative research can involve using five research traditions, viz. biography, ethnography, grounded theory, case study and phenomenology. These traditions can be used in combination or individually. They affirm that qualitative research is holistic, empirical, interpretive and empathetic: empirical, because it occurs in natural settings; interpretive, as it focuses on gaining meaning and understanding through the eyes of the participants; and empathetic, because it concentrates on the frames of reference, feelings and values of the participants (Conrad & Serlin, 2006:407).

Schwandt (2007:191) notes that qualitative studies point to a cornucopia of methods available to qualitative enquirers, but cautions that it is not simply an eclecticism of method. He asserts that no single method or set of methods, if adopted, renders a particular inquiry as precisely qualitative. Qualitative researchers endeavour to captivate human meanings of social life as lived and experienced by the research participants; they rely immensely on verbal description and are their own main instruments of data collection, interpretation and narratives (Gay & Airasian, 2003:187).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:396) state that qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy that assumes that reality is multilayered, interactive and a shared social experience as interpreted by individuals. Accordingly, qualitative researchers believe that reality is a social construction and that such research is first concerned with understanding social phenomena from the participants’ perspective. They argue that people form constructions in order to make sense of these entities and reorganise these constructions as
viewpoints, perceptions and a belief system (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:396). Qualitative researchers study participants, perspectives with interactive strategies (participant observation, direct observation, in-depth interviews, artifacts and supplementary techniques). These researchers become ‘immersed’ in the situation and the phenomena studied and assume interactive social roles in which they record observations and interactions with participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:396).

I selected a qualitative approach for data collection and analysis, as this study investigates the perceptions and experiences of learners and educators in the management of discipline at selected schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. This paradigm rejects a detached viewpoint and assumes that the researcher must understand the subjects’ frame of reference. Data was gathered through engaging with the research subjects and obtaining their perspectives on their current management practices. According to Creswell (1998:199), qualitative research aims to give meaning to people’s experiences and emphasises that the inquiry methods must be appropriate and aligned to the research aims and objectives.

3.4.4 Phenomenology

My study has a phenomenological orientation, as it focuses on the subjective meaning and explication of descriptions of lived world experiences. Conrad and Serlin (2006:408) cite Creswell (1998) in his biography as describing phenomenology as centering on understanding the essence of experiences about a phenomenon through long interviews, concentrating on describing the essence and meanings of the experiences. After reviewing literature on phenomenology, I found it to be consistent with my views and saw it as an appropriate tool to assist my research. Lichtman (2006:69) asserts that Husserl is the father of phenomenology and that it is both a philosophy and a method. According to Lichtman (2006:70), phenomenology as a method looks at the lived experiences of persons who have experienced a certain phenomenon. She maintains that the researcher is the interpreter of the data. Schwandt
(2007:190) defines Husserl's (1859-1938) phenomenology as metaphysics concerned with the essential structures of conscious experience.

Schwandt (2007:224) purports that the principal architect of phenomenology was Alfred Schutz (1899-1956), who expounded on the phenomenology of Husserl (1859-1938). He contends that Schutz aimed to explain how the lived world was actually produced and experienced by individuals and that to effectively study the everyday world, the social inquirer must bracket or suspend his/her ‘taken for granted’ attitude. He asserts that the inquirer must assume the attitude of a disinterested observer. Schwandt (2007:225) adds that phenomenologists insist on the careful description of the ordinary, conscious experiences of everyday life. He claims that phenomenological descriptions of phenomena can be accomplished only by a certain phenomenological reduction or epoché that entails ‘bracketing’ or suspending (what Husserl calls the “natural attitude”). Schwandt (2007:226) further defines phenomenology as aiming to identify and describe the subjective experiences of respondents and studying everyday experiences from the point of view of the subject.

Miles and Huberman (1994:8) state that phenomenologists often work with interview transcripts, but are careful, often dubious, about condensing this material. Phenomenologists assume that through continued readings of the source material and through vigilance over one’s presuppositions, one can reach the essence of an account. This refers to what is constant in a person’s life across its manifold variations.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:36) concur, stating that a phenomenological study describes meanings of lived experience; the aim of phenomenology being to transform lived experience into a description of its essence, in such a way that the effect of the text is reflexive, so that this type of study enables readers to feel that they understand more fully the concept relating to the particular experience.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.5.1 Sampling of participants

According to Gay and Airasian (2003:195), the qualitative researcher seeks to attain a deep understanding of relatively few participants in a single setting. Qualitative researchers typically deal with small, purposively selected samples. Their belief is that the key to sampling in qualitative research is to select participants who are able to provide insights and possess the desired articulations to attain the desired richness of qualitative data. In Creswell’s (2005:203) view, the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals and sites that can make a meaningful contribution to the research study. He asserts that purposive sampling ensures that only those that can provide useful and maximum information that can assist the researcher understanding the research problem, will be selected for the study.

The sample population on which this study focused, are primary schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. I purposively chose three schools that share similar characteristics in terms of their socio-economic conditions, population groups and class size. I also selected these schools on their willingness to participate in this research. These schools are dual and single-medium schools, accommodating the languages of English and Afrikaans. Another reason for the choice of schools relates to the cost and labour of doing the research.

3.5.2 Choice of schools

The research sites for this study focused on three specific primary schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. The reasoning behind the specified research was to investigate the implementation of alternative and/or positive methods of classroom discipline. All three schools are predominantly so-called Coloured schools, a legacy of the previous apartheid regime, with the overwhelming majority of learners being Coloured, English- and Afrikaans-speaking learners and only a very few IsiXhosa-speaking (Black) learners. I chose urban community schools that were reluctant to acknowledge the ruling
on corporal punishment, caught in limbo somewhere between the application of the new legislation and the tendency to still embrace the past, struggling to incorporate and embrace the new ideals of a fast developing democratic society.

I selected schools with which I was familiar and that were within easy reach. The communication with the participants involved was not difficult. However, I experienced resistance in terms of gaining timely access, although the principals and senior staff had initially agreed to specific times and dates. The letter of permission from the Department of Education stated clearly that the research project should not interfere with teaching-learning activities, to which the researcher adhered.

For the purpose of the research, I refer to the schools under study as schools A, B and C.

School A was situated in a poor socio-economic environment in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. This school had an average learner population of 741 learners and an educator complement of 21. This historically ‘coloured’ school had poor facilities in comparison with ex-model C schools. The buildings were kept intact by the valiant efforts of individual educators and one or two members of the community (retired artisans). The school had no fence at the back, which lent itself to learners leaving and entering at will and provides easy access for outsiders. There was only one field, which was in a fair condition and utilised as a rugby field. There were no other sporting facilities at the school. The ablution blocks were in a poor state of disrepair, with only a quarter of the blocks in a usable condition. There was a distinct lack of parental involvement, with only the parental component of the School Governing Body being active. Learners were marginally involved in the management of discipline, as prefects and class monitors. The absenteeism rate amongst learners was fairly high and there was an alarming lack of cooperation from parents in that regard. A high rate of unemployment was evident among the parents and guardians of learners,
resulting in more than 60% of the school fees not being paid. These conditions had a direct impact on the learning environment at the school.

**School B** was situated in a more middle-class residential area. However, 80% of the learners hailed from the adjacent poorer suburb, as well as from informal settlements. The school had an enrolment of 874 learners and an educator staff of 28. The buildings had not been maintained by the Department of Education and were in urgent need of repair. The school was completely fenced, and access to the school was controlled via a remote-controlled security gate, which was operated from the Secretary’s office. The sporting facilities were minimal and in a poor condition. Parental involvement was lacking and unemployment amongst parents was rife.

**School C** was situated in a middle-class area, with divergent income ranges among parents. The school had a learner population of 947 learners and an educator staff of 31. The school was completely fenced and experienced very few or only minor problems regarding access from outsiders. The parent component was actively involved in the school, the maintenance of the school buildings and the governance of the school. The money allocated in the school’s budget from the Department of Education was, however, not sufficient to maintain the very old and dilapidated school building. An application had been lodged by the school to the Department of Public Works for a new brick building to replace the old structure. Learners were actively involved in many disciplinary structures and a fair to good level of parental involvement was evident.
### TABLE 3.1: Characteristics of schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium of instruction</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>English/Afrikaans</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of learners</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of educators</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner population</td>
<td>1% black, 99% Coloured</td>
<td>0.05% black, 99.95% Coloured</td>
<td>1% Black, 99% Coloured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal disciplinary</td>
<td>Prefects, Class Monitors, Disciplinary Committee</td>
<td>Prefects, Class Monitors, Disciplinary Officers, Disciplinary Committee</td>
<td>Prefects, Class Monitors, Disciplinary Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic conditions</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>High income to average income to parents without any income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of conduct</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security at school</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Security guard in evenings (alarm system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Sports fields in good condition, other facilities poor or non-existent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of school</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.5.3 Choice of participants

The research is based on an exploration of disciplinary approaches to classroom management at the respective three schools. The primary participants of this study included:
• Grade 7 learners.
• Class teachers of various grades in the schools.
• Educators in charge of discipline.

Three focus groups of eight Grade 7 learners each were purposively selected from the schools identified. Eight class teachers or educators in charge of discipline were selected from each of the chosen schools for individual interviews.

3.5.4 Data collection strategies

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:154), phenomenological interviews rely on in-depth, unstructured and individual interviews with a carefully selected sample of participants, all of whom must have had a direct experience with the research study.

Leedy and Ormrod state that the researcher-participant involvement is equal to the researcher taking on the role of learner. At the same time, the researcher suspends any preconceived ideas or personal experiences that may unduly influence what the researcher “hears” that the participants are saying. However, it is also essential that the researcher gains an understanding of the “typical” experiences the participants may have had (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:153).

According to Creswell (2005:209), the researcher spends plenty of time at the site where people work, play or engage in the phenomenon he or she wants to study. He categorises the qualitative forms of data as:

• Observations
• Interviews
• Questionnaires
My main source of data collection was one-on-one individual interviews with educators from each of the respective schools under study, as they were considered to be particularly information rich and might have unique problems and experiences that they would not be able or willing to share with others present. The primary aim was to understand and describe how the learners and educators interviewed were managing discipline in their school communities from their own frames of reference. I chose to use focus group interviews to interview groups of learners, because participants would be influenced by and influence others, as happens in real life. Group interviews can be useful in bringing the researcher into the world of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:100). This idea had to be shelved when I discovered that the learners were not responsive to phenomenological open-ended questions. They had to be prodded through means of continual questions to evoke responses. Questionnaires were then given to the learners. Field notes were made during classroom observations.

3.5.4.1 Observations

Observation as a form of data collection has both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include the opportunity to record information as it occurs in a setting, to study the actual behaviour, and to study individuals who have difficulty verbalising their ideas. One disadvantage of observation is that the researcher may find it difficult to develop rapport with individuals (Creswell, 2005:211). Leedy and Ormrod (2001:158) claim that the primary advantage of conducting observations is flexibility, in that the researcher can easily change focus as new data comes to light. They allege that the major disadvantage is that the researcher’s presence could alter what people say and do, and influence how events unfold. It is essential that the researcher does not confuse his/her actual observations with interpretations of them, as the interpretation of what the researcher has seen and heard, is apt to change over the course of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:158). According to Conrad and Serlin (2006:381), observations made at formal meetings, during informal
conversations, and those of people performing routine functions can be important sources of information.

Conrad and Serlin (2006:381) argue that observations can be an important part of the empirical process of triangulating what people say compared to what they actually do. They add that participant observation allows the researcher to note the participants' behaviour in actual settings. As a participant observer, the researcher becomes part of the situation being observed and thereby contributes to it. Observations were recorded at the three schools visited, before during and after the interviews, in the form of field notes.

3.5.4.1.1 Field notes

Gay and Airasian (2003:223) assert that field notes describe what the observer has heard, seen, experienced and thought about during an observation. They emphasise that field notes should be detailed and descriptive, capturing the reality of the setting and participants, as they are the basis for data collection and analysis. They further advise that novice researchers should use a written protocol to guide and focus their observations. Lankshear and Knobel (2004:229) state that field notes are finely written detailed accounts of what was observed. They claim that they are mainly written in the heat of the moment as events unfold. The researcher's eyes and ears tend to be the primary data collection tool during observation. They make mention of the following key components of field notes:

- Writing legibly so that the notes are still readable after a period of time.
- Records of time that act as a guide to the length of an observed activity.
- Descriptions as well as direct quotations of what is said, wherever possible.
- Using codes for people's names so that their identities remain confidential.
- Developing a shorthand language.
• Drawing maps and layout diagrams to indicate where the action is taking place.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004:230) emphasise the importance of being non-judgemental when writing field notes. They claim that, according to most researchers who regularly conduct field-based observation, the focus should be on describing behaviour rather than on attributing meaning to it.

3.5.4.2 Individual phenomenological Interviews

According to Gay and Airasian (2003:210), the focus of interviews in qualitative research is on depth of understanding. They state that interviews lend themselves more to the probing of participants’ responses, thus obtaining clarification of participants’ responses. They further claim that it is easier for the inexperienced researcher to conduct structured interviews, as structured interviews contain the questions to be put to the participants. Unstructured interviewing, even in small doses, requires insight, recognition of needed probing and finesse in posing questions that will elicit the response sought. They contend that the interview protocol provides a safety net, as the researcher refines his/her sensitivity to the participants and the interviewing technique.

In Creswell's (2005:214) view, a qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask open-ended questions and record their answers. He asserts that an open-ended question allows the participant options for responding. Creswell (2005:215) states that interviews in qualitative research offer both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that interviews provide useful information when the researcher cannot directly observe participants, whilst they allow participants to describe detailed personal information. The interviewer also has better control over the type of information received.
The disadvantages are that the interviews provide information that is ‘filtered’ through the views of the interviewers. Another disadvantage is that the presence of the researcher may influence how the interviewee responds.

Transcribing equipment needs to be organised in advance to alleviate any problems that may be encountered (Creswell, 2005:215). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:250), interviews are essentially vocal questionnaires. They maintain that interviewing techniques are flexible and adaptable. Interviews can be used to suit many diverse problems and types of persons, such as those who are illiterate or too young to read and write. Their responses can be probed, followed up, clarified and elaborated on to achieve specific accurate responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:250). These authors contend that the major disadvantage of an interview is its potential for subjectivity and bias. The respondent may also be uncomfortable and unwilling to divulge his or her true feelings. The main advantage of this approach is that it helps establish a positive relationship between the interviewer and the respondent. The data collection method best recommended for interviews is audio- or videotaping, as it provides a verbatim account of the interview session, whilst it also provides researchers with original data for use at any time (Gay & Airasian, 2003:212). As a researcher, I chose to use open ended one-on-one interviews with the educators of the selected schools, specifically directed to the experiences, feelings and beliefs of the participants, as cited by Creswell (2005:214).

As indicated in Chapter One, individual interviews were conducted with the class teachers and teachers in charge of discipline at the respective schools under study, as they were considered to be particularly information rich and might have unique problems and experiences that they would like to share. The primary aim of the study is to understand and describe how the learners and educators interviewed, were managing discipline in their school communities from their own frames of reference. The question posed to educators was, “tell me about the discipline in your school”.
3.5.4.3 Focus groups

Creswell (2005:215) states that the focus group interview is a process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six. The key advantage of focus group interviews is that interaction and cooperation among interviewees who share similar characteristics could potentially yield the best and richest information. A disadvantage is that focus group interviews could be challenging for interviewers who lack control over the discussions. When the discussions are audiotaped, the transcriber may also have difficulty discriminating between the voices of the individuals in the group (Creswell, 2005a:215).

According to Conrad and Serlin (2006:380), focus groups involve interviewing several participants at once. They express the opinion that this setting allows for a type of verbal exchange about issues that the researcher and participants may feel are important. This setting allows the participants to think about issues in ways they would not have, had they been interviewed alone. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:432) regard focus group interviews as a strategy for obtaining a better understanding of a problem or an assessment of a problem, concerns, a new product or idea through interviewing a purposefully sampled group of people, rather than each person individually. They add that by creating a social environment in which group members are stimulated by each other’s perceptions and ideas, one could increase the quality and richness of data. Therefore, focus groups could be a more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing.

McWilliam, Danby and Knight (2004:2) state that data construction rather than data collection in qualitative research constitutes the reality being explored, which is produced through the enactment or the interaction of the bodies in the focus group. They observe that many authors prescribe a number of mechanical steps as the typical process of focus groups. They argue that it is interesting to note how writers take a position as to a ‘right’ way and a ‘wrong’ way of conducting focus group research. An important consideration is the
power relations between the researcher and the researched, as focus group methods are generally perceived to be non-threatening.

In this study, focus group interviews were used to interview groups of Grade Seven learners, because as confirmed by McWilliam, Danby and Knight (2004:8), participants feel more secure if they can reasonably expect that others will support and build upon their views and defend them, if challenged. My initial stance regarding focus groups had to change of necessity, following the limited response I received from Grade Seven learners. The unequal power relationship between myself as Deputy Head teacher and the learners made them very reluctant to speak in the focus group. Having little success in getting them to open up, I decided to elicit responses from the learners by means of qualitative questionnaires.

3.5.4.4 Use of qualitative questionnaires

Struwig and Stead (2001:89) assert that two types of questionnaires can be developed: interviewer-administered questionnaires and self-administered questionnaires. This research will make use of group questionnaires, which will be completed by primary school learners.

3.5.4.4.1 Group-administered Questionnaire

Delport (2003:165-185) states that the respondents who are present in a group must complete a questionnaire individually. Each respondent must complete the questionnaire while the field worker is present to give certain instructions and clear up any possible uncertainties. The aforementioned authors caution that there are disadvantages to this method. Obtaining a suitable venue and a time slot that suits all respondents may pose a major challenge. Even if each respondent completes his or her questionnaire independently, some degree of mutual influence may occur among the respondents. Some respondents may experience difficulty in understanding certain questions and instructions, but
because they are too embarrassed to ask for clarification in the group, they may answer the questions arbitrarily, which could affect the validity of the data.

De Vos, Srydom, Fouché and Delport (2002:176) propose certain principles for the formulation of the questions in a questionnaire:

- Sentences must be brief and clear and the vocabulary and style of the questions must be understandable to the respondents.
- Question and response alternatives must be clear and must not reflect the bias of the researcher.
- Every question must contain one thought only.
- Every question must be relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire.
- Abstract questions not applicable to the milieu of the respondents should be avoided.

The questionnaire used in this study was constructed according to the content determined by the study objectives. Open-ended questions were included to allow the participants to answer in their own words and to express any ideas they thought might be relevant (Struwig & Stead, 2001:92). De Vos et al. (2002:172) state that questionnaires can be applied in various ways, but must not be confused with the research interviews as data-gathering method within qualitative research.

The questionnaire (see Annexure G) was constructed in line with the goals of the research, which was to explore the perceptions and experiences of the learners regarding the disciplinary processes at their schools. The secondary goal was to formulate recommendations to develop and apply pro-active disciplinary approaches intended to facilitate self-discipline. One of the questions designed to elicit information was: “What in your opinion does discipline mean?” Another question was: “Have you been involved in drawing up the classroom rules and the code of conduct for your school?” This question relates to the application of pro-active disciplinary measures intended to
facilitate self-discipline and simultaneously explore learner involvement in self-disciplinary procedures. In drawing up the questionnaire, I attempted to gain the maximum amount of information with the minimum number of questions, in keeping with the aims of the study.

3.5.4.5 Role of researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to gain an understanding of social and psychological phenomena from the participants’ perspectives. According to Hoberg (1999:25), in qualitative studies the researcher is seen as the key ‘instrument’: much depends on what he/she sees and hears and much rests on his/her powers of observation and listening. Hoberg (1999:27) maintains that qualitative researchers should interact with their participants in a natural and unobtrusive manner.

The main aim of a researcher’s investigation is not to find ‘truth’ or ‘morality’, but to understand other people’s perspectives. Gay and Airasian (2003:169) state that the researcher does not impose an organisating structure or make assumptions about relationships between data prior to collecting evidence. They maintain that the researcher seeks to find common themes and patterns, thereby making his or her task one of describing participants’ understanding of their own unique reality.

According to Gay and Airasian (2003:169), researchers should take a holistic stance; that is, they should look at the overall context to obtain and guide their understanding. They further maintain that researchers should avoid making premature decisions or assumptions about their study, but should focus on the opportunity of gathering data directly from the participants. In the data collection process, the researcher should collect clear information and detailed description about the study, which should include the voices of the participants. The focus must remain on discovery and understanding (Gay & Airasian, 2003:170).
As an educator and Deputy Principal in charge of discipline who has to deal with disciplinary issues on a daily basis, I had to assume an interactive role with the participants. Due to an obvious bias, I attempted to put all preconceived ideas aside to allow the participants to explain their experiences and perceptions from their own point of view. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:58), the researcher should not come to the field as an expert; qualitative researchers should attempt to mentally cleanse their preconceptions.

Moustakas (1994:116) explains this step as follows: “Prior to the interview, the primary investigator engages in the bracketing process, so that to a significant degree, past associations, understandings, facts and biases are set aside and do not colour or direct the interview.” Kruger (1988:142) argues that complete bracketing is impossible, as the researcher is often unaware of what he or she feels about an issue. However, through this process, the researcher attempts to approach the phenomenon of investigation from the position of conceptual silence, in order to open him- or herself to perceiving its emergent dimensions more clearly.

### 3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Gay and Airasian (2003:239), data analysis takes place simultaneously with data collection. The initial step in data analysis is managing the data so that it can be studied. They further corroborate that the researcher cannot interpret data until the data is broken down and classified in some way. They claim that the analysis itself requires four iterative steps, namely reading; memoing; describing; classifying and interpreting, which is a cyclical process focusing on becoming familiar with the data and identifying main themes in it. Gay and Airasian (2003:239) further state that the interrelationships among reading, memoing, describing, classifying and interpreting are not necessarily linear. However, as the researcher begins to internalise and reflect on the data, the initial sequence loses its structure and becomes less predictable. They emphasise that it is not the four steps that lead to understanding and interpretation, but the researcher’s ability to think, imagine, hypothesise and
analyse. The researcher thus ultimately becomes the data interpreter, digesting the contents of qualitative data and finding common threads in it. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:479) state that qualitative data analysis is an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among categories. This means that categories and patterns must emerge from the data and not be imposed on the data prior to data collection.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:428-444), data analysis consists primarily of three linked sub-processes, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. Data analysis needs a lot of well-informed practice and grounding of data manipulation skills (Creswell, 1994:150).

Central to this process is a focus on data reduction and data interpretation. (Creswell, 1994:154). Tesch (1990), as cited by Creswell (1994:153), describes the data analysis as “eclectic”, implying that there is no one correct way to analyse the data.

**Capturing and handling data**

The interviews conducted in this study were audiotaped. Additional field notes containing non-verbal, para-verbal and verbal observations were made. I used a transcriber to transcribe the interviews. The transcriptions were checked against the audio recordings to ensure that all data had been accounted for. The data sets were then printed for analysis.

**Coding data**

Tesch, in Creswell (1994:155), lists the following steps to consider when organising and analysing qualitative data:

- Read through the data base and get a sense of the whole by reading through the transcriptions and jotting down thoughts and ideas.
• Ask questions about the meaning of the dialogue and write thoughts and ideas in the margin.

• Make a list of all topics and group them into major topics, sub-topics and unique topics.

• Assign codes to the topics and write these down in the text. Scrutinise unmarked text to see if new topics emerge.

• Each code should be listed on an index card and quotations from the text should be linked to each category. The categorising and coding of data and the writing up of themes, categories and relationships on index cards also serve to reduce it to relevant information.

The researcher searched through the data for regularities, patterns and topics in the data and wrote down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. The data was divided into categories and sub-categories, which were identified as natural themes. As categories and themes emerged, they were coded.

3.7 LITERATURE CONTROL

In qualitative research, a literature study is conducted to justify the research study. It plays a minor role in providing direction for the research question (Creswell, 2005:46). In this study, a literature control was conducted in an effort to compare and support the research findings. Therefore, a literature control serves to link the current research findings to previous work and theories and thus demonstrates the contribution and significance of the research (Byrne, 1997:81). For this study, the aim is not only to collect what had been said about styles, practices and perceptions of discipline at schools in the Northern Areas
of Port Elizabeth, but to deepen views about discipline and inculcate self-discipline in the classroom.

3.8 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Conrad and Serlin (2006:412) approach trustworthiness in qualitative research by demonstrating that qualitative research findings are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable. They note that these notions are parallel to internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity in quantitative research. They state, however, that no methods exist that can assure one that one has absolutely grasped those aspects of the world one is studying. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004:183), teacher researchers can take elementary steps to ensure that they increase their own and other people’s confidence in their data. One such step is to check with the participants that what the researcher think they have said, is what they in fact intended to say.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004:184) suggest a simple procedure, which involves asking a question such as “I think what you have said is X, Y, Z (putting them into one’s own terms). “Is that what you meant?” Whether or not the data that researchers have collected, is trustworthy, is dependent on the grounds for believing that what the informants stated, is genuine. The authors advise qualitative researchers to think about and develop data collection tools in ways that incorporate opportunities to check for consistency between responses. They claim that the higher the level of similarity between what the informant tells the researcher and what another person who is familiar with the circumstances of the informant tells him or her about the same thing, the stronger the researcher’s grounds are for believing that the data are trustworthy.

3.8.1 Credibility

According to Conrad and Serlin (2006:413), credibility is established if participants agree with the constructions and interpretations of the researcher. They argue that the case is credible when what the researcher presents,
describes the reality of the participants who informed the study. They further state that reporting processes and interactions within the boundaries of the cases with sufficient depth to really highlight their complexity satisfies the credibility standard. Conrad and Serlin (2006:413) claim that qualitative researchers validate their findings throughout the various steps of the research process and that conveying these steps is essential in ensuring the accuracy of the findings and thus the credibility thereof. Miles and Huberman (1994:38), as cited by Conrad and Serlin (2006:414), outline credibility in qualitative research in terms of the researcher-as-instrument, as essentially the researcher is observing, interviewing and recording, therefore it is the researcher that determines credibility. Miles and Huberman (1994:38) suggest that good qualitative researchers will be familiar with the phenomenon and setting under study, have strong conceptual interests, a multidisciplinary approach and good investigative skills. They define credibility as ‘truth value’; in other words, what is depicted, must be authentic. Miles and Huberman (1994:38) further claim that the product should be a comprehensive and context-rich account that is sensible, convincing and plausible for the reader; conclusions that are considered accurate by the participants in the research.

Creswell (2003), as cited by Conrad and Serlin (2006:414), suggests that the triangulation of data sources, for example, asking participants to check how their own comments have been interpreted, be used to advance credibility. Creswell (2003) further recommends that researchers advance credibility through conveying findings through rich, thick description, clarifying the bias that they bring to their work and presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to themes generated. To enhance credibility in this study, the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure an accurate reflection of the respondents’ views and also by triangulation of data sources eg. educators and learners.

3.78.2 Transferability
Conrad and Serlin (2006:414) cite Miles and Huberman (1994), who state that the degree to which others can apply the conclusions, implications and recommendations of a study is also a measure of its validity and transferability (generalisability). They suggest that the research should cause its “users”, including those studied, to make better decisions by being better informed and that the study should be accessible and offer usable knowledge whilst prompting change. Marshall and Rossman (1999:197) suggest that the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests with the researcher who would make the transfer, rather than with the original researcher. The latter should therefore describe the case in sufficient terms that is detailed enough for a subsequent researcher to ascertain whether the case is similar enough to be relevant.

In this study, transferability was achieved by carefully selecting samples that typified the Northern Areas schools and respondents who had experience in working in these schools. The research questions for the study were based on the management of discipline in these schools.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Conrad and Serlin (2006:416), dependability involves accommodating the changes in the environment studied and in the research design itself. Marshall and Rossman (1999:194) note that in qualitative research, the social world is always being constructed and that the concept of replication itself is problematic. They state, however, that findings must go beyond a snapshot, implying that if the study were conducted again with the same participants in the same context, results should be similar. They emphasise that qualitative research does not control the conditions of research purposely so as to advance its replicability. Miles and Huberman (1994:278) define dependability as whether the process of study is consistent and reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods. This allows readers to follow the researcher’s path in order to see how conclusions were arrived at. A further purpose of an audit trail is to guide other researchers who
may want to conduct similar research. An audit trail is also known as an ‘inquiry audit’. This enables an independent auditor to scrutinise and examine the research documents, including all the data gathered, the findings, interpretation of the findings, and the final recommendations. After this process, the confirmability of the research can be established.

Consistency and accuracy were catered for in this study by tape-recording the responses of subjects and transcribing them verbatim to ensure a rich description of research methodology and that critical detail were captured.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the concept that the data can be confirmed by someone other than the researcher (Conrad & Serlin, 2006:417). Marshall and Rossman (1999:192) state that the findings should reflect the participants’ perceptions and the inquiry itself, not a concoction of the researcher’s biases and prejudices. They note that a measure of subjectivity is inevitable in qualitative research; nevertheless, if the research is done well, the qualitative inquiry will enable the researcher to enter the world of the participants, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of complex social systems. Miles and Huberman (1994:278) view confirmability as neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher biases. They suggest that words, findings and conclusions depend more on the research participants than on the inquirer. Confirmability, according to them, depends on the following:

- The researcher must clearly demonstrate how he or she has structured the study and collected and analysed the data.

- An awareness of the researcher’s own assumptions, values and biases, as they influenced the study.

- Matching patterns by considering conclusions in terms of predictions from theory.
• Checking whether interpretations relied too heavily on elite or convenient information.

The criterion of trustworthiness concerns the achievement of the aims of the study rather than the researcher’s assumptions and preconceptions. In this study, trustworthiness was achieved partly by coding the themes in the data to show how they were linked to resources. The trustworthiness of the research was ensured and enhanced by deploying the four abovementioned strategies of qualitative research.

3.9 ETHICS OF RESEARCH

According to Creswell (2005:225), participants should be informed as to the purpose of the study to gain their support. He suggests that the anonymity of participants be protected by assigning numbers or aliases to them in the process of analysing and reporting data and that in certain qualitative studies there may be a need to develop a composite picture of the group rather than focusing on any single individual. He cautions against deception about the nature of the study; if a study focuses on a sensitive topic, the participants may not want to be involved. Ethical issues likely to arise are whether the researcher should share his or her experiences with participants in an interview setting. Issues around the research site include whether the researcher will disrupt the individuals or groups at the site. Creswell (2005:227) warns that the researcher’s presence could cause permanent unwelcome changes. For example, he or she may take sides during focus group interviews. Inappropriate conduct, such as being rude to gatekeepers and failing to act as one would expect of a guest, could reflect poorly on all researchers. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:107) emphasise issues such as the protection of the participants from harm, informed consent, and the right to privacy. They state that researchers have a responsibility to society, as they are obligated and accountable for their conduct and their research and as they often represent various funding institutions and society.
Consent to gain access was obtained from the Department of Education and the principals of the various schools. I also requested permission from the principal of each school to interview the participants. Informed consent was obtained by providing the educators and learners with an explanation of the nature, purpose and ethics of the study. The names of the participants were not recorded, as their anonymity and confidentiality had been assured according to the ethical aspects of the research.

The ethical aspects of the study were explained to the learners and educators prior to the commencement of the interviews. The purpose of the study was discussed and the terms were negotiated. The researcher orientated all the participants to the purpose of the study and what was required of them. The participation of all participants was on a voluntary basis, and no coercion was used.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an explanation of the qualitative research design selected for this study, which aims to explore the classroom management techniques in selected schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth. The philosophical background informing the qualitative approach was discussed and justified within the context of this study. The research methodology was described in detail, as were the ethical considerations and the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness. In Chapter Four, the findings of the research study will be presented and discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research design and method followed in this study. Some ethical considerations and measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the research outcomes were also outlined. According to Creswell and Clark (2007:133), presenting qualitative research results may involve a discussion of the evidence for the themes or categories as well as a presentation of figures that depict the physical setting of the study. This chapter will focus on the research data analysis and present the results from the field work and validate these through a literature control.

A discussion of the findings derived from the data generated during individual interviews with educators, as well as written descriptions from the learners, will follow. Firstly, the schools included in the research will be briefly discussed. The biographic characteristics of participants will be summarised. The researcher had assured the participating participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their involvement. The names of the schools will therefore not be included.

The ensuing sections present the significant themes that emerged from the interviews, observations and completed learner questionnaires. Most interviews were carried out in English, with interviews at one Afrikaans-medium school being conducted in Afrikaans. The researcher used participants’ views verbatim; no alterations were made. Quotations are presented in italics and comments in brackets.
4.2 SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN RESEARCH

As previously indicated, the research involved educators and learners from indigent Northern Areas schools. The participants were requested to express or relate their views, opinions and experiences of discipline at their particular schools. Individual interviews with educators and focus group interviews with learners were conducted. However, the focus group interviews with learners were later abandoned due to a poor response. Qualitative questionnaires (see Appendix G) were used as a more suitable means of data collection. Data was gathered until the researcher was convinced that the data had reached saturation level (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:385), as no new information was forthcoming from the data collection process.

4.2.1 Context of the schools

Three primary schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth were purposively sampled. The Northern Areas refer to the residential sectors in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth, Nelson Mandela Bay, in South Africa (George & Hendricks, 2003:9). The Northern Areas came into life essentially when the northern part of Port Elizabeth was geographically reserved for people of colour to successfully execute separate development. Politically, it was demarcated in terms of the Group Areas Act, Act 41 of 1950 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2008). Because of past racially discriminatory policies, it is still an economically underprivileged area. Education in the Northern Areas suffered under the apartheid laws, resulting in schools being poorly equipped and educators receiving inferior training (George & Hendricks, 2003:57). Although educational opportunities have theoretically been equal for all race groups since 1994, apartheid legislation has taken a heavy toll, and disadvantaged conditions are therefore still prevalent in the area (George & Hendricks, 2003:25).

In many ways, the participating schools were well resourced, with between 700 and 1000 learners each. They had proper classroom buildings with permanently employed principals and deputy principals. There was no serious understaffing
problem, though a few heads of department served in acting positions. Almost all educators were professionally and academically qualified and were permanently appointed.

Although the schools were discussed previously (see Section 3.5.2) the following information will help to paint an accurate picture of the environment in each school:

School A served a very poor socio-economic community, hence the school fees at this school were fairly low in comparison to the fees at the other schools in the area. However, the school had sufficient classrooms that were well kept. There were a few vacant classrooms, as learner enrolment had dropped, as many parents had chosen to send their children to ex-Model C schools in better resourced areas, stemming from the belief that they would receive a better education there. Academic achievement at this school was average to low, and discipline was generally poor.

School B also served a poor socio-economic community, although it was situated in a more affluent community. Many of the learners attending the school came from informal settlements on the periphery of the area. School B was a co-educational school and had a library, which had, however, not been updated in the previous ten years. The school had a computer room, which was available to the learners, although the hardware was mostly outdated, as it had been sourced from a company upgrading its own computer equipment. Discipline at the school was said to be “not too bad”, and the academic performance of the learners was fair to poor.

School C served middle- to high-income households. The building had been constructed from board, which is high maintenance, but had largely been neglected. The school had applied to the Department of Education for a new building, as repairs to the old structure would be too costly. School fees were fairly high in comparison to the other schools in the area, but still low in comparison to ex-Model C schools. The facilities were better than at the other
schools, as the school had an up-to-date computer laboratory (built into a container) and a well-resourced library for the learners. Discipline was generally good and the academic performance of the learners was good.

4.2.2 Learners

Eight Grade Seven learners from each school were chosen to participate in the research. Their gender representation was on average four boys and four girls per school. Their ages ranged from between twelve to fourteen years of age.

**TABLE 4.1: Learner participants from School A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNER</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
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<td>Coloured</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
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<td>female</td>
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<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of class representatives</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership programmes at school</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**TABLE 4.2: Learner participants from School B**

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<th>8</th>
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</thead>
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<td>female</td>
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<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of class representatives</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
<td>Class vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership programmes at school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
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Table 4.3: Learner participants from School C

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</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Educator’s choice</td>
<td>Educator’s choice</td>
<td>Educator’s choice</td>
<td>Educator’s choice</td>
<td>Educator’s choice</td>
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<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
<td>Co-ed</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Educators

Four educators per school from the chosen three schools participated in the research. They were aged between 30 to 65 years old, with an average of two males and two females per school. All the educators were academically and/or professionally qualified, with qualifications ranging from three-year college or university diplomas to Honours degrees. They were all members of professional educators’ unions and were registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE) under the South African Council of Educators Act, No. 31 of 2000 (Brunton & Associates, 2003:E-1-18).
### TABLE 4.4: Educators from School A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educators</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic qualification</td>
<td>B Ed. (Hons) (incomplete)</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Four-year Diploma in Education</td>
<td>Three-year Diploma in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of experience as an educator</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>None</td>
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### TABLE 4.5: Educators from School B

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<td>Male</td>
</tr>
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<td>36</td>
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</tr>
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<td>42 years</td>
<td>18 years</td>
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<tr>
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<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Membership of South African Council of Educators</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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TABLE 4.6: Educators from School C

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<tbody>
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<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 THEMES EMERGING FROM DATA ANALYSIS

The following question was posed to the participants in the research:

*What are your experiences of and thoughts of discipline at this school?*

Learners were initially approached through focus groups, but when it was discovered that they were not responsive, qualitative questionnaires were substituted as a means of data collection (see Appendix G). The learners felt that they could express themselves confidentially in this way without being ridiculed by their fellow learners, something that frequently happened when they spoke in front of each other. Writing down their responses to the qualitative questionnaires permitted them the necessary confidentiality to express their views, opinions and experiences without concern. The main source of data collection was the qualitative individual phenomenological interviews with the
The responses highlighted some crucial factors, outlined in the themes that emerged.

**TABLE 4.7: Themes and sub themes emerging from data analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Most educators were critical</td>
<td>1.1 Abolition of corporal punishment</td>
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These themes will now be discussed individually.
4.4 THEME 1 – MOST EDUCATORS WERE CRITICAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROHIBITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Blame and anger were directed at the Department of Education for abolishing corporal punishment. Educators expressed the opinion that the political changes were doing more harm than good.

‘With so much emphasis on learners’ rights, how are we expected to do our work? Anything that you say or do is seen as a violation of the learners’ rights. Just looking at learners in a serious way is said to be having destructive, psychological effects. Why should we become criminals because of the behaviour of these learners?’

“The Department has disarmed educators. There is nothing we can do any more. Our hands are tied. This system is really frustrating us!”

4.4.1 Abolition of corporal punishment

Educators viewed changes such as the abolition of corporal punishment as being counter-productive in the exercise of discipline at schools, claiming that it had ‘disarmed’ them and left them with alternatives that did not work. They blamed the government for contributing to the disciplinary problems at schools by over-emphasising learners’ human rights (Republic of South Africa 1996b:6-8). They were unhappy with the fact that they were permanently and unconditionally prohibited from corporal punishment in any form at school (Republic of South Africa 1996a).

One educator expressed frustration at the present state of affairs:

“If you look at five years ago, we never really had discipline problems, but nowadays you are bombarded with, I won’t say major issues, but problems, especially in class. In the absence of corporal punishment, you need to talk to
resolve problems to see what change you can bring about in the pupils’ behaviour. In the past, giving them a spanking would have set them thinking.”

One educator expressed the concern that although educators were the people who had to deal with disciplinary problems in the classroom on a daily basis, they had not been consulted by government concerning appropriate disciplinary measures and methods.

“We are compelled to enforce rules that are given, but many times these measures do not work, because there is no consultation with the person on the ground. After the abolition of corporal punishment, measures were put in place by the Department of Education which do not work in practice.”

A cardinal part of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996b:5-8) that has a major impact on education in general and on the subject of discipline in particular is the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights is not only the cornerstone of democracy for every South African, but the document stipulates the following: “Every human being has unconditional, inherent dignity and the right to have his dignity respected and protected” (Republic of South Africa 1996b:7-8).

In terms of this Act, everyone has the right to be free from all forms of violence and no citizen may be subjected to any form of torture or cruel, inhumane treatment.

The problem in South Africa is not that we have a new dispensation based on a new Constitution, but rather that there is confusion around how the new concepts should be applied in practice. There is a greater emphasis on respect and responsibility in the new democracy, but there must also be equal emphasis on the fact that, with rights, comes responsibility. If we wish to actualize the moral vision of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996b) for a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy, peaceful co-existence and the development of opportunities for all South Africans, the vision will have to be interpreted and empowered by corresponding basic
principles (De Klerk, 1998:20). Based on this argument, it is right that corporal punishment was abolished in our schools, but this should have been replaced by a disciplinary approach that encourages learners to act responsibly, thereby diminishing the need for punishment or corrective action by educators. However, the educators in this study were mostly not familiar with such pro-active approaches to discipline.

Only a few participating educators seemed to appreciate that classroom discipline could be enhanced by a more pro-active approach. These educators freely accepted the recommendations and stipulations in the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996:7-8), which criminalise any physical harm to or corporal punishment of any person. They did not find the new Constitution to be a threat to or limiting their work. One educator recounted how he had dealt with the unacceptable behaviour of a learner without resorting to punishment. In effect, he promoted responsible behaviour in the learner by encouraging him to accept a leadership role:

“I saw the learner coming late to school every morning, and because of the abolition of corporal punishment, I thought that there must be an alternative means of helping him. I introduced him to the sport of rugby. I allowed him to enjoy the game and gave him responsibilities, where I made him Vice-Captain after explaining the role of the leadership position.”

These few educators were aware that establishing effective alternative disciplinary measures would present their own demands and challenges. They affirmed that non-corporal punishment measures were indeed a better means of maintaining discipline. With this attitude and dedication, these educators seemed well set to deal effectively with disciplinary problems in the classroom. They maintained that appropriate theories, techniques and approaches had to be formulated, implemented, tested and evaluated. Educators should learn to discipline learners without destroying the latters’ self-esteem and educational spirit.
4.4.2 Learners' lack of self-discipline

According to the participant teachers, the moral crisis in our schools manifested itself in a lack of respect among learners for each other, their teachers and school property. The teachers lamented the absence of a work ethic among learners; dishonesty; and the absence of responsibility on all levels, which coincided with increasing self-centeredness; growing ethical illiteracy; vandalism; and the escalation of violence amongst learners.

"With regards to the programme, that there was a stabbing the other day, it is so difficult; we're constantly taking knives from children; disciplining children; you cannot just get on with your own work because you're constantly disciplining; you can see that, really, discipline, it's a problem in my school. We struggle to maintain discipline in the classroom; the minute you discipline one child, there's another child giving problems. Most of your day is taken up with disciplinary problems."

"The one child will stab another child, I just look at you, grab your pen; there's no time for teasing or joking with you, and that's how discipline breaks down, because there's always a fight that leads into something."

The spirit of poor discipline in schools does not only manifest in ill-disciplined learners, but is also exhibited by undisciplined educators who are not serious about and committed to their task and calling (De Wet, 2003:39).

"I think it is important that the educator should be in his/her class, when the educator is not in class, it is a recipe for ill-discipline. If the educator structures work in such a way that the learner is kept busy constantly, most disciplinary problems can be avoided."

All of the above-mentioned statements give evidence to the tension caused by the divergent opinions how disciplinary problems should be addressed in South African schools. In the pre-democratic era, Christian National Education was
designed to support the apartheid system by schooling children to become passive citizens who would accept authority unquestioningly (Department of Education, 2000b:5). Educators were encouraged to use the cane as a way of keeping control and dealing with children who stepped out of line. Beating children into submission or punishing them was simply taken for granted in a society familiar with violence. However, during the 1970’s, when resistance to apartheid escalated, student organisations began to demand an end to physical punishment in the classrooms. At the same time, international thinking about corporal punishment began to change (Porteus et al. 2001:6). International literature now promotes the encouragement of self-discipline through cooperative interaction between persons in the learning environment. Teachers are now required to model responsible, self-regulated behaviour, with an emphasis on positive feedback and cooperation (Antes & Nardini, 1994:218).

For self-discipline to exist at schools, educators will have to deliberately and consciously demonstrate and facilitate it to and for their learners (Van Rooyen, 2002:159). Educators cannot just expect self-discipline to be experienced, displayed or sustained by chance; dedicated and focused efforts are required. As agents of self-discipline, educators will have to be exemplary models of internalised self-discipline (Wright, 2000:9).

Educators must also build positive relationships with learners and create a classroom climate that is driven by mutual respect and trust. According to Vitto (2003:46), the relationship-driven teacher builds and maintains a positive classroom climate by praising learners and using strategies to increase their emotional safety. In this way, learners learn to communicate clearly and respectfully and deal constructively with negative feelings, instead of acting them out in a destructive manner. However, it appears that the respondents in this study were not aware of the more positive approaches to discipline, and still tended to stick to what they knew.
4.5 THEME 2 – EDUCATORS USE TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINARY METHODS AND INEFFECTIVE DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The study revealed that educators were engaged in strategies that were counter-productive to the development of self-discipline, which is grounded in the realisation that educators need to be equipped to mould, guide and lead learners towards experiencing and demonstrating self-discipline (Van Rooyen, 2002:160).

“There will be learners with learning disabilities, then they will sing, or poke other children, or something to that effect, but then I will just bring them to the front and they sit and work there or I will punish them and they stay in at break-time.”

“It disrupts your day, it becomes a long, drawn-out process and sometimes you’d find teachers who just ignore the situation.”

To many educators and learners, discipline and punishment mean the same thing: these two terms are often used loosely as synonymous. The participants in this study displayed a limited, misdirected conception of what these concepts stand for in the field of human behaviour. Educators need to be aware that methods, approaches and attitudes towards externalised discipline do not necessarily lead to self-discipline.

4.5.1 Educators are using external motivation to maintain discipline

Educators are attempting to maintain discipline in the classroom and in schools generally by removing certain privileges from learners who have contravened rules or promising certain privileges to learners who do not misbehave.

In this regard, the educators participating in the study commented as follows:
“*We have a system in place for the Grade Six and Seven), that if they contravene certain rules, privileges are withheld*”. For example: “*On Friday, you will not go to the tuck-shop.*”

“I *explained to him that if he gave problems to any of the educators regarding homework or discipline, and it comes to my attention, then I will remove his privileges by punishing him for a few matches.*”

The reality of the situation is that many educators daily face struggles with issues of discipline in their school environment, finding themselves in a situation of not knowing what to do in the absence of corporal punishment. Whilst a few of the respondent educators were comfortable with the changes and had managed to identify and implement alternative strategies, the majority were battling to find effective alternatives to corporal punishment in the classroom (Department of Education, 2000b:1).

Hartley-Brewer (1994:82) warns that the awarding or withdrawal of rewards by educators teaches learners to compete in a self-centered way to get something, not to cooperate and value the importance of involvement and meaningful participation in educational processes, because they owe it to themselves. Children therefore internalise this “payment to do something to get something” practice and expect external reward for “good” behaviour. This sort of approach diminishes intrinsic motivation and therefore limits the potential of the individual (Hartley-Brewer, 1994:82). It also encourages destructive competition, as learners compete for individual rewards and success, rather than cooperate towards a common goal.

Punishment is not expressed in forms of corporal punishment only; it has many forms. While some of them may appear somewhat civilized, not that brutal, the results are similar, because the intentions are the same. Hartley-Brewer (1994:155) and Dinkmeyer, McKay and Dinkmeyer (1997:104-105) elaborate on the fact that the fundamental difference between punishment and discipline is the underlying objective by which they are driven.
Punishment is based on the belief that if children are made to suffer for doing wrong, they will probably not repeat their inappropriate behaviour (Porteus et al. 2001:83-89). However, this approach is said to have caused psychological damage in a number of children, often resulting in feelings of alienation, entrenched patterns of anti-social behaviour and even acts of violence (Department of Education, 2000b:1). The aim of punishment, retribution or chastisement is primarily punitive, humiliating and degrading; it is concerned with the past, with what happened in the life of the child (Du Plessis & Loock, 2006:2). These authors argue that punishment intends to get even with or to repay the child for the wrong things that he/she has done. In nature, punishment is always reactive rather than corrective and nurturing.

In contrast, discipline is future-orientated, aimed at methods that do not damage but rather build the learner’s self-esteem (Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Du Toit, 2003:468). It seeks to teach learners to correct their past and present behaviour for the benefit of their own future. This approach should be educative, pro-active and constructive. It should give learners the opportunity to learn to exercise self-control, choose from their own evaluated alternatives, accept that they have a responsibility to respect both themselves and others, and learn to live with the consequences of their own actions. Through discipline, children must learn to separate their identity from wrong behaviour, to speak out about what they feel and, through guidance, practise to choose appropriate behavioural patterns (Tirisano, 2000:9-12). The learner responses indicated that they were not developing and demonstrating the attributes of being self-controlled, motivated and responsible.

4.5.2 Shouting and name-calling by educators

According to the learners, their educators often shouted at them and sometimes even resorted to using corporal punishment to maintain discipline. One of the learners wrote:
“Teachers shout at the children and sometimes give them a hiding, too.”

According to Dobson (1992:42), no matter how irritating learners might be, empty barrages of words will not improve their behaviour. He points out that empty threats carry little or no motivational power for the child, arguing that learners have the ability to “programme themselves” to no longer hear what is being said to them repeatedly. They learn to ignore what they regard as “meaningless noise” in their environment. They can be conditioned to hear only what they want to hear and screen out everything else, choosing to cooperate only if it is to their personal advantage.

4.5.3  Suspensions and detentions are used to maintain discipline

The respondent teachers tended to use the threat of suspension or detention to maintain discipline.

“Learners are kept in class at break-times and made to write out lines.”

Many learners, however, viewed suspensions and detention as counter-productive and ineffective in encouraging them to adopt more positive behaviour.

“Teachers give the learners detention as a form of punishment, but then we only listen for a day.”

“The teacher recently came up with the rule that if children do not finish their work in class, they have to stay back for detention – this just makes us angry and we play around in detention any way.”

In the absence of corporal punishment, divergent types of suspension seem to be common practice to cope with unruly learners.

“We cannot keep learners in our class who just do not want to learn.”
“We hope that when they are away from school, they will have enough time to reconsider whether they want to be learners or not.”

The respondent educators and learners described the different ways they implemented suspension:

- Sending the learners out of the class for a period, without taking any further interest in what happens to them when they are outside. The above treatment was given for minor infractions like noise making, not doing homework or deliberately breaking rules. Learners reported that they sometimes enjoyed this form of suspension, as it allowed them to miss those classes they were not interested in attending.

- Suspension for a day or a week. This was implemented in cases where learners had been persistently disruptive, violently chaotic or had deliberately refused to do schoolwork. Learners perceived this type of suspension as counter-productive to the disciplinary process, as this gave the perpetrators an opportunity to roam around the streets aimlessly, possibly looking for mischief.

- Indefinite suspension, to last until the learner’s parent(s) came to the school. This was implemented when learners had refused or failed to respond to any corrective measure; they were then sent to their homes and told to return only on condition that they return accompanied by their parents. This type of suspension was perceived to be effective by certain learners, as they felt that the engagement of the parent in disciplinary matters assisted the process.

According to Andrews and Taylor (1998:4-5), the basic idea behind detention should be to discomfort the learner concerned by taking away his/her free time, thereby attempting to modify his/her behaviour to a more positive or disciplined approach. In some cases, such as after-school detention, the educators were
just as discomforted as the learners! One form of detention that was highly rated by learners as an effective method of discipline, was lunch-break detention. This was also favoured by educators, as it lessened the administrative burden on them, yet made the learners feel uncomfortable.

Dinkmeyer, McKay and Dinkmeyer (1997:103-104) draw attention to the fact that when learners are punished, they naturally feel angry, resentful and aggressive. They claim that punishment teaches learners that there is nothing wrong with punishing other people, thereby promoting a culture in which resorting to violence to get what one wants, is acceptable. Van Jaarsveld (2004:40) indicates that negative disciplinary measures and ways of interacting with learners that may lead to rebelliousness and negativism disrupt the learning process and inhibit the development of responsibility in learners.

4.6 THEME 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

The findings of this research clearly indicate that educators perceive the poor socio-economic conditions of parents and learners to be a key factor in disciplinary problems.

“Our kids live in a poverty-stricken area where parents are always fighting; where, I think that when you treat a child with aggression, the child becomes aggressive, so role models are not there for their kids. They admire the gangster.”

4.6.1 Home and family circumstances

A lack of knowledge and skills on the part of parents was perceived by the respondent educators as major barriers to parental involvement in school activities.
“We write letters to the parents stating what the problem is, but unfortunately very few parents respond to these letters.”

“We have learners in our schools where, because of their socio-economic circumstances, there are very definite disciplinary problems, and not that these learners are rude, but they are disruptive.”

The respondent teachers expressed their concern that aggressive behaviour amongst learners was very common. They thought that there was a direct link between the lifestyle at home and how learners reacted at school.

“Well, you will find that most of our learners, to solve a problem, will use their fist; that’s the only way they understand to solve a problem, because they experience the problem: if Mom has a problem with Dad, he will swear or he will smack her or he will hurt her. And when do they normally solve these problems? – when they’ve had a drink, and that’s the reality. And here at school, we try to teach them something different. Very often a boy kicks a girl and sees nothing wrong with what has happened; it’s happening within their environment and we’re trying to show them that socio-economic conditions have an effect on how emotions develop.”

Another educator disclosed that parents were often embroiled in domestic scuffles and that this had an adverse effect on the learners living in these conditions.

My experience as an educator in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth for the past twenty-three years supports the finding that the socio-economic conditions of learners have an immense impact on their behaviour and their response to discipline. This fact is corroborated by Du Toit (2006:6), who states that disciplinary problems in schools often bear a striking similarity to the social problems found in the community in which the students live, because children’s behaviour frequently mirrors the behaviour of the community in which they live. Noguera (2003:347) endorses the preceding statement, stating that when one
locates disciplinary problems exclusively in learners and ignores the context in which the problematic behaviour occurs, one runs the risk of overlooking some of the most important factors that give rise to that behaviour. Therefore, any behavioural problems found in schools could be addressed with a greater degree of success if they were first addressed in the areas in which the learners live.

Even in more affluent communities, where lack of parental involvement is mostly due to the fact that both parents are employed; where children have access to material goods, but where real communication and relationship may be missing in the families, children can often feel hopeless and goalless (Wolhuter & Steyn, 2003:531). Middleton and Walsh (1995:59) state that young people in general have become submerged in a world of disorder, senselessness and madness, so that many feel a loss of hope and a sense of angst. In her study, Wood (2004:126) revealed that learners from poverty-stricken communities were often exposed to violence and neglect at home. Many learners have been orphaned by the AIDS pandemic and the violence prevalent in these communities, often forcing learners to become the heads of households or move in with any relatives who would take them in (Wood, 2004:118). These destructive home circumstances may negate educators' best efforts to inculcate appropriate values. Rossouw (2003:426) concurs, stating that unstable or dysfunctional homes caused by poverty and HIV/AIDS have an enormously destabilising effect and impact negatively on education.

The respondent educators were very aware of the impact of home circumstances on learners' behaviour and expressed their frustration that they were required to teach discipline in class, but that that was not being reinforced at home.

“You try your best in class to enforce discipline; you know the normal values and norms, but because it's not inculcated at home, it makes our task so much more difficult. As educators we cannot teach discipline: discipline begins at
home. I felt that some of the parents are actually the cause of the learners’ disciplinary problems. The problem emanates from home; the father and mother don’t know how to talk to each other, and they drink, argue and fight in front of the children. The children come with that attitude to school and believe it is correct.”

This is especially true for the sub-economic Northern Areas in which, as a result of economic realities, many learners have been raised in an environment that is totally inadequate. The sentiment of the respondent educators was that parents should first foster self-discipline within the child at home. The school would then provide an environment in which this could be further developed and entrenched.

4.6.2 Lack of parental involvement

One respondent educator explained that many of the learners came from a poor socio-economic background, with the result that they received very little guidance and support from their parents. Educators were trying to discipline the learners at school, but the lack of parental involvement made this difficult to achieve. In addition to the external problems that lead to disciplinary problems at school, mention was made of the fact that few parents were involved in school activities or in their children’s learning.

“As educators, we cannot teach discipline; discipline begins at home. We write letters to the parents stating the problem or the cause of the problem, but unfortunately there are very few parents who respond.”

According to Gootman (2001:5), discipline poses a great challenge in modern schools, because of the pressures society imposes on individuals and families. He contends that the effects of drug abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse and neglect, community violence, poverty and single parenting reverberate in contemporary schools. A child who does not receive sufficient love and good care from his/her parents, is likely to have no respect for them and may well
extend this perception of adults to all other figures of authority in his/her life, including educators.

According to Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:534), parents should set a responsible example, give guidance to their children and engage in positive and responsible involvement in school matters. Parents should do everything in their power to help their children relate co-operatively with adults and other children. They further emphasise that parents should do their best to encourage children to develop the required attitudes and values on which society is generally based. The Elton Commission quotes research indicating that children who present serious behavioural problems in school are likely to have experienced either neglect (expressed by either of the two extremes of physical punishment and permissiveness), or rejection (Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office, 1989:134).

According to Masitsa (2006:3), recent years has evidenced major changes in the composition and profile of families, with an explosion in the number of single-parent families and households in which both parents work. He adds that large numbers of the recent generation of learners have not spent their formative years in the kind of “traditional” families that many teachers experienced in their own childhood. As a result of economic realities, many children have essentially been raised in an environment totally inadequate for meeting their physical and emotional needs. Many parents are completely out of touch with their children, and there is a serious lack of parental involvement in important aspects of a child’s life. According to Rossouw (2003:426), a total or partial lack of the maintenance of discipline by parents at home is one of the major reasons for disruptive behaviour at school. He mentions that parents expect the teaching profession to solve their children's disciplinary and other problems, while they themselves remain apathetic or disinterested in school or educational matters.
4.7 THEME 4 – MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE

The respondent educators and learners both referred to the issue of how discipline was maintained at school, particularly with regard to how the rules were being made and implemented.

4.7.1 Development of a code of conduct

A code of conduct is central to school discipline. The respondent learners from all three schools confirmed that a code of conduct to deal with misconduct was in place at their schools. However, the learners indicated that they had not been consulted on the issue. In response to the question whether they as learners had been consulted in drawing up a disciplinary code of conduct, some of the replies were:

“No, but the teachers have written down rules which were given to us.”
“No, I have not been involved.”
“No, because usually it is done by the teachers.”

Educators expressed the view that drawing up a code of conduct and learner involvement therein was essential, but that problems were being encountered with the consistency of their involvement.

One educator commented as follows:

“At the beginning of the year, we set up a code of ethics, a code of conduct for the kids, and I find that the kids are eager in the beginning, but if you don’t constantly re-affirm it with them, then you find that they slack off. You have to be consistent and I think consistency, actually there’s no time for consistency with the learners, but I think it’s a good idea to involve them.”

The fact that the educator referred to “set up a code of conduct for the kids” in itself implies that there was little learner involvement. This is contrary to the
recommendations that the process should be democratic and that learners, educators and parents should be involved (Sacred Heart College, 1999:70). The *South African Schools Act* (Act 84 of 1996) confirms this statement, stating that the School Governing Body must adopt a code of conduct after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. This code of conduct must make provision for due process, thereby safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings. Problems were also experienced in implementing the policy contained in the Code of Conduct.

### 4.7.2 Implementation of code of conduct

Although the codes of conduct of the participating schools prohibited the use of corporal punishment, and all the educators stated that they no longer used physical means of punishment, the responses of some of the learners brought the truth of these statements into question.

*“Educators shout at the children and sometimes give them a hiding, too.”*

Although not admitting to using corporal punishment, one educator revealed his true feelings about it:

*I honestly think that hitting is the best form of punishment. If you hit the child for the right reasons, they will learn from their mistake.*

This would indicate, that, in spite of the change in educational policy, the practice of discipline has not yet been transformed to become more democratic and positive.

According to Du Preez (2003:91), it must be borne in mind that educators and school managers carry a great responsibility in dealing with misconduct. Educators are called upon to solve disciplinary and behaviour problems on a regular basis in their classrooms, and they are not allowed to use corporal punishment. Punishment in general has been shown to be an ineffective way of
improving learner behaviour (see Section 2.2.1.1). Thus, certain techniques need to be learned or acquired in order for learners to improve the quality of discipline and control in their classrooms (Lessing & Dreyer, 2006:123). These authors suggest techniques such as the adoption of a positive attitude towards learning barriers and social challenges; democratising discipline by involving learners in making their own rules; and building a classroom community that enhances a positive class atmosphere.

Sound discipline and the management of discipline are central to effective schools. However, the issue of discipline continues to be problematic in schools universally. Moreover, the management of discipline has become more complex since the banning of corporal punishment by the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Many educators are frustrated and do not know how to handle the disciplinary problems facing them. The continuous lack of self-discipline at schools is an issue that cannot be ignored or taken for granted. Central to the lack of self-discipline is the learners’ inability to motivate and control themselves, guided by appropriate principles. Aggravating the situation is the unqualified assumption that educators must act as agents for facilitating self-discipline among learners.

According to Heystek (2001:201), democratic principles in discipline have come to the fore after the change in government in 1994. These democratic principles have also been put into practice in schools, where every role-player has to be a part of governance. Learners are supposed to be the main focus of and the most important persons in schools and should therefore be included in all decision-making processes, including disciplinary measures.

These authors state that student involvement in formulating and negotiating classroom rules and contingencies increases their commitment to conforming to classroom expectations. Such shared decision-making could also teach self-judgement in monitoring and self-evaluating behaviour.
Heystek (2001:219) argues that since learners may not have the necessary skills and knowledge to make a meaningful contribution to school governance, they should receive the necessary training and experience to help them to contribute positively to school governance. Learners must be given the opportunity to become involved in and make a difference in the daily running of their school. However, the findings of this research indicate that learner involvement in school management, including the development of a disciplinary code of conduct, is currently non-existent or minimal.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the data analysis of the research. It examined the results from the researcher’s field work and validated them through a literature control. The findings revealed that educators were struggling to find ways to maintain discipline at schools; that they blamed the fact that they could no longer use corporal punishment as a deterrent; that parents and the home circumstances of the children were contributing to the lack of discipline; and that the decision how children should be disciplined at school, was still largely in the hands of the educators and school management, with minimal involvement of other roleplayers.

Chapter Five will present a synthesis of significant themes and implications for the management of self-discipline at schools and recommendations for further research. The conclusions and limitations of the investigation will also be discussed.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a general overview of the investigation in order to show that the aims of the research expressed in Chapter One have been achieved.

My interest in and observation and conviction of the fact that educators are not implementing positive disciplinary methods and that learners and educators themselves generally lack self-discipline, underpinned the study. I thought that educators in general needed to be challenged and guided to realise that all human beings possess the potential and ability to change, control, shape, direct and focus their thoughts, beliefs and behaviour, in other words, to practise self-discipline.

The data analysis revealed that educators were unable or failing to facilitate self-discipline in their learners and were experiencing many problems as a result. The information obtained during this study will be utilised to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations in respect of the themes that emerged. The limitations of the study will also be acknowledged.

Chapter One comprised a general overview of the study. It presented the background to the study, the problem statement, research aims, and a clarification of the key concepts and the research design, including the measures taken to ensure adherence to ethical considerations.
Chapter Two constituted a theoretical perspective on the management of discipline in South African and overseas schools. Grounded in the social learning theory, I based this study on the social emotional learning approach, which is characterised by the development of positive and personal relationships between educator and learner. These relationships are based on the principles of emotional safety, trust, mutual respect and cooperation.

Chapter Three provided a detailed theoretical exposition of the chosen research design and methodology for the study, which was qualitative in approach.

Chapter Four presented the findings of the research in terms of themes and sub-themes, substantiated by quotations from educators and learners as well as a literature control.

This final Chapter Five consists of the research conclusions and recommendations for classroom management and discipline in the relevant three schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS OF STUDY

The findings of this study are based on the field work conducted among educators and learners from the selected three schools. This was done in the form of in-depth, individual face-to-face interviews with educators, which were triangulated by the qualitative questionnaires given to learners.

The primary aim of this research was to investigate and explore the perceptions and experiences of learners and educators regarding the management of classroom discipline at selected Northern Areas schools. Responses from participating educators and learners were collected through individual face-to-face interviews (educators) and questionnaires (learners). Additional data were collected through observations and field notes. The phenomenological question that was posed to educators was, “What is your experience and thoughts of discipline at your school?”
The primary aim has been attained and the following conclusions can be drawn from the data analysis, as indicated below:

5.2.1 Conclusions in support of primary aim of research

The focus of this research was on the perceptions of educators and learners regarding the management of discipline in the indigent Northern Areas schools.

From the data analysis, it may be concluded as follows:

5.3 THEME 1: MOST EDUCATORS WERE CRITICAL OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROHIBITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Sub-Theme 1.1: Abolition of corporal punishment

It has been fourteen years since the abolition of corporal punishment in schools; yet educators are still battling to come to terms with alternative strategies to attain and maintain classroom discipline.

It may be concluded that:

- Educators are experiencing an increased intensity and frequency of problem behaviour in schools, which impacts negatively on the teaching and learning situation.

- Educators are frustrated at not being able to maintain discipline, since they do not know how to initiate the intervention process towards the attainment of self-control and self-focus, which has as its aim the facilitation of self-discipline.
• Educators tend to blame the government for depriving them of a means of discipline that they perceived to be effective (corporal punishment), rather than empowering themselves by learning effective alternative disciplinary strategies.

Sub-Theme 1.2: Learners’ lack of self-discipline

Educators inferred that learners were the source of the problem, in that they did not possess the required self-discipline.

It may be concluded that:

• Educators perceive that there is an inability or failure amongst learners to motivate and control themselves, guided by appropriate principles.

• Educators are not aware that they can influence the behaviour of learners by helping them to become more self-disciplined.

5.4 THEME 2: EDUCATORS USE TRADITIONAL DISCIPLINARY METHODS AND INEFFECTIVE DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

The study revealed that educators were engaged in strategies that were counter-productive to the development of self-discipline in learners.

Sub-Theme 2.1: Educators are using external motivation to maintain discipline

Educators were still resorting to methods of discipline based on punishment rather than on encouraging pro-social behaviour.

It may be concluded that:
• Educators do not really understand the difference between punishment and discipline.

• Educators do not know how to accept and respect their responsibility and accountability in guiding, leading, assisting and motivating learners to desire and practise to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Sub-Theme 2.2: Shouting and name-calling by educators

Educators sometimes resorted to shouting and name-calling to try to maintain discipline.

It may be concluded that:

• Educators do not have the skills to maintain discipline in effective and respectful ways.

Sub-Theme 2.3: Suspensions and detentions are used to maintain discipline

Educators favoured suspensions and detentions as alternative strategies to maintain discipline in the absence of corporal punishment.

It may be concluded that:

• Educators are still focused on punishing learners rather than trying to influence them to adopt a more positive behaviour.

• Many learners view these suspensions and detention as counter-productive practices.
• The use of these practices does not serve any educational outcome, except to raise tensions between educators and learners.

5.5 THEME 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

Sub-Theme 3.1: Home and family circumstances

Educators did appreciate the fact that the stressful home circumstances of the learners were a major negative influence on their behaviour.

It may be concluded that:

• Educators are aware that a poverty-stricken environment amplifies the already difficult circumstances under which they are expected to perform their tasks.

• Educators are aware that dysfunctional families can impair the disciplining of learners.

• Educators appreciate the fact that the environment in which some of their learners grow up, render many of them dispirited and hopeless and that some then act out their feelings of hopelessness, often in violent and antisocial ways.

Sub-Theme 3.2: Lack of parental involvement

The educators viewed parents as the primary discipliners of their children. They blamed the parents for not fulfilling this role adequately.

It may be concluded that:
Although educators realise the importance of parental support in disciplining learners, they do not know how this could be achieved.

5.6 THEME 4: MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Sub-Theme 4.1: The development of a code of conduct

Learner and educator responses indicated that both groups recognised the importance of having a school code of conduct, but had experienced that the development of such a code was not a democratic process.

It may be concluded that:

- Learners are not actively involved in the process of drawing up the code of conduct as they should be, according to legislation.

Sub-Theme 4.2: Implementation of code of conduct

The findings indicate that problems were being experienced by learners and educators with the implementation of the school code of conduct.

It may be concluded that:

- Schools are still using corporal punishment to deal with disciplinary problems.

- The codes of conduct generally do not make provision for the adoption of positive approaches to school discipline, based on developing self-discipline in learners.
5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The secondary aim of this study was to make recommendations as to how to develop and apply positive disciplinary measures intended to facilitate self-discipline in learners.

The following recommendations are presented to build on the body of knowledge of this study, derived from the conclusions:

5.7.1 Recommendations for professional development

It is recommended that:

- Teachers be assisted to reflect on their attitudes towards and understanding of discipline through in-service training aimed to help them understand the benefits of a more positive approach to discipline.

- Educators be helped to develop self-discipline through professional development initiatives.

- School principals and management teams be helped to provide leadership to design codes of conduct that will promote and facilitate the development of self-discipline in learners.

5.7.2 Recommendations for pre-service programmes

It is recommended that:

- The curricula for pre-service education for educators include modules on positive disciplinary approaches, including social-emotional learning, for maintaining a positive school climate in which self-regulation is promoted.
5.7.3 Recommendations for further research

It is recommended that:

- Similar research be conducted at schools in other areas, to ascertain if the findings can be generalised to other populations.

- Research be conducted to find strategies to improve parental support and involvement in learners’ education and disciplinary issues, as well as parents' understanding of positive disciplinary approaches.

- Evidence-based research be conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of positive disciplinary approaches in schools.

5.8 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

An obvious limitation of the study was the small size of the sample, typical of qualitative research. It is apparent that different schools may have produced different results. This research was designed to be exploratory and descriptive in nature, and as a result, no attempt has been made to generalise the findings.

I felt that more comprehensive findings could have revealed different results, but I was hampered by the resistance of some educators to interviews as well as the bureaucracy displayed by certain principals, which delayed the data collection process. The academic ability of the learners was also a limiting factor, as much more rich data could have evolved if they were more verbose during the focus group interviews.

Despite these limitations, the data gathered from the research contributed to a better understanding of the management of discipline and the perceptions of the educators and learners in indigent Northern Areas schools.
5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter summarised the findings of the research and presented some recommendations based on these findings. The limitations of the research were also addressed.

I have attempted to demonstrate through this study that the management of discipline in schools is central to teaching and learning. If educators are unable to manage a class, they will be unable to teach. It is therefore imperative that in order to facilitate self-discipline at schools, the focus should first be placed on educators’ perceptions and behavior to find out how best to guide them towards being able to be effective facilitators of self-discipline. The facilitation of self-discipline presupposes that educators are the most important crucial agents of creating, nurturing, supporting and sustaining a culture of self-discipline in schools. This study has as its intent to deliberately shift the emphasis away from external discipline, which depends on outside factors, towards internal discipline, which is internally motivated.

South African educators have to be challenged and exposed to academic, in-service and professional guidance and empowering programmes to equip them with various dynamics of theory and practice to be able to foster self-discipline in learners.


Middleton, R.J. & Walsh, B.J. 1995. *Truth is stranger than it used to be*. Downer’s Grove: InterVasity.


State v Williams and Others 1995 (3) SA 632 (CC).


Ref: [H08-EDU-ASE-007/Approval]

Contact person: Carol Poisat

29 April 2008

Mr J Erasmus
Education Faculty
NMMU

Dear Mr Erasmus

AN EXPLORATION OF DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE IN SELECTED NORTHERN AREAS SCHOOLS IN THE NELSON MANDELA METROPOLE

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the April 2008 meeting of the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee (Education).

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is H08-EDU-ASE-007.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Prof M M Botha
Chairperson: ERTIC
Dear Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT DATA COLLECTION AT SCHOOLS.

I am presently the deputy principal at Soutpan Primary School, as well as a part-time final year M. Ed. Student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, doing full research under supervision of Dr. Lesley Wood.

My study centers on effective classroom disciplinary approaches to classroom management in selected Northern Area schools. I hereby seek permission from the Department of Education to conduct interviews at the following schools:

1. School A
2. School B
3. School C

The investigation will entail interviews with principals, educators and Gr. 7 learners. Observational field notes will also be taken.

The aim of the study is to investigate the perceptions of educators and learners regarding the management of discipline and to explore the adoption of measures that foster autonomous discipline(self-discipline).

I trust that my request will meet your favourable consideration.

Please feel free to contact my supervisor Dr. Lesley Wood at 041-5042834

Yours truly,

Julian M. Erasmus
ATT: THE PRINCIPAL

Ethel Valentine Building * Sutton Road * Sidwell * Private Bag X3931 * North End * Port Elizabeth * 6056 *
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA * Tel: 0414034420 * Fax: 0414510193 *
Website: ecp.gov.za * e-mail: randika.mbopa@edu.ecprov.gov.za

Mr J. Erasmus
38 Hanna Avenue
Rowallan Park
Port Elizabeth
6025

Dear Mr Erasmus

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT PORT ELIZABETH SCHOOLS

I refer to your letter dated 30 April 2008.

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research on the following conditions:

1. your research must be conducted on a voluntary basis;
2. all ethical issues relating to research must be honoured;
3. your research is subject to the internal rules of the school, including its curricular programme and its code of conduct and must not interfere in the day-to-day routine of the school.

Kindly present a copy of this letter to the principal as proof of permission.

I wish you good luck in your research.

Yours faithfully

L.M.T. MBOPA
ACTING DISTRICT DIRECTOR: PORT ELIZABETH
/ab

09 May 2008
The Principal

Dear Sir

I am presently the deputy principal at Soutpan Primary School, as well as a part-time second year M.Ed. student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, doing full research under supervision of Dr. Lesley Wood.

My research study centers on the disciplinary approaches to classroom management in selected Northern Area schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole.

The investigation will include interviews with educators as well as learners to solicit their experiences of classroom discipline.

I hereby seek permission from you and your staff, parents and learners to engage them as participants in my study. The investigation will be guided by a strict code of ethics, as presented by the ethics committee of the NMMU. All data collected during the investigation will be treated in a strictly confidential manner. Your participation in my study will be invaluable and highly appreciated.

I declare myself available to answer any queries you or your SMT members might have regarding the nature of the investigation.

Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable response.

Yours truly,

Julian M. Erasmus
M. Ed – Student
N.M.M.U.
Dear Sir /Madam

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I wish to conduct a research project which centre on the disciplinary approaches to classroom management at selected Northern Area schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole.

I am presently the deputy principal at Soutpan Primary School, as well as a part-time second year M.Ed. student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, doing full research under supervision of Dr. Lesley Wood.

The investigation will include interviews with educators as well as learners to solicit their experiences of classroom discipline.

You are kindly requested to participate in this research study. Your anonymity will be assured at all times and the information you supply will only be used for the purpose of improving disciplinary approaches at schools. There are no known risks for your involvement, but you may benefit from future training programmes.

You will be requested to give your written informed consent to participate by signing and dating a consent form. If anything in the consent form is not clear to you, you are free to ask for an explanation.

Anonymity will be ensured through omission of names and places in the study. Only the researcher and independent coder will have access to the information obtained from tapes.

J.M. ERASMUS
MASTERS DEGREE STUDENT-NMMU
0845136944

CONSENT FORM

I ..................................................(Name of educator/learner) hereby give consent to be interviewed for the purpose of this study. I understand I may withdraw from the study at any time, my participation being purely on a voluntary basis. I am aware of the purpose of the research and how the findings will be disseminated.

Signed on this ....................... day of ........................................ 2008

at ........................................ Signed ........................................
Dear Sir/Madam

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

I wish to conduct a research project which centre on the disciplinary approaches to classroom management at selected Northern Area schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole.

I am presently the deputy principal at Soutpan Primary School, as well as a part-time second year M.Ed. student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, doing full research under supervision of Dr. Lesley Wood.

The investigation will include interviews with learners to solicit their experiences of classroom discipline.

You are kindly requested to give consent for your child to participate in this research study. Their anonymity will be assured at all times and the information supplied will only be used for the purpose of improving disciplinary approaches at schools. There are no known risks for their involvement, but they may benefit from future training programmes.

You are requested to give your written informed consent by signing and dating a consent form. If anything in the consent form is not clear to you, you are free to ask for an explanation.

Anonymity will be ensured through omission of names and places in the study.

J.M. ERASMUS
MASTERS DEGREE STUDENT-NMMU
0845136944

CONSENT FORM

I .....................................................(Parent/guardian of)..................................................

hereby give consent for him/her to be interviewed for the purpose of this study. I understand he/she may withdraw from the study at any time, his/her participation being purely on a voluntary basis. I am aware of the purpose of the research and how the findings will be disseminated.

Signed on this........................................day of...........................................2008

at........................................... Signed.................................................
Interviews

R: Sir tell me about the management of discipline in your school.

KB 1: Discipline is a general and universal problem which occurs at many schools. We are familiar with corporal punishment, but as a result of new legislation we have had to find other ways and means of maintaining discipline. At our school we sat and looked how we could assist each other as educators individually battled with disciplinary problems. Structures were put in place, there is a disciplinary committee of which I was chosen as disciplinarian of the school. I was also appointed to work with the prefects, they were chosen by the educators. They looked at all the grades and educators had to give their input as to whether the learners would qualify to become a prefect, and whether the learner has the necessary leadership qualities and discipline. The most important aspect is for the learner to have self-discipline to give the necessary guidance. I was fortunate to have been chosen and I have spoken to them, being also their life orientation teacher for grade 7. Luckily for me we have an open relationship when it comes to sex education, my learners are not shy to speak to me because I got them on that level that we could speak openly. So much so that they come to me with their personal matters that affect them. They do not hesitate to come and discuss these issues with me. One of the things that other educators could do is to get the learner on his side. If you hold that carrot in front of him, the learner would basically be eating out of your hand. The learner would then open up to you many times learners do not open up and educators do not

R=Researcher
KB=Participating educator
know how to address the problem, as a solution the learner leaves the school as a child with disciplinary problems. The problem is exacerbated at high school and the learner becomes a drop out, and the learner becomes a gangster. At our school we have educators that follow a duty roster at school in the morning and even during breaks. I stand at the main gate and encourage the learners to be on time. The other educators are placed at strategic places where we suspect that problems could arise, I’ve had problems with parents of learners whom I have spoken to. I felt that some of the parents are actually the cause of the learners disciplinary problems. The problem emanates from home, the father and mother don’t know to talk to each other, they drink, argue and fight in front of the children. The children come with that attitude to school and believe that it is correct. They then clash with the discipline, parents have approached me with harsh words, but fortunately I am a man that can stand my ground. I mentioned that this is the place where the learners are moulded, where they are taught the various aspects of life, where discipline is one of the most important factors. So that one day when he is an adult, he will arrive at his work timeously. The first time his boss might be lenient towards him, but the second and third time he might be fired, because he did not learn this aspects at school. At one time I had a disagreement with a parent, five parents stood and listened where I stated my case unequivocally that it was in the interest of the child. I made it abundantly clear that if that was the way in which they were going to speak to me, I would not listen. Then I do as the school rules say and they can then challenge me on the code of conduct. The five parents had heard me, called that particular parent aside and lambasted him, and supported me. There are parents in the community that see that discipline is deteriorating and see that the school has a large role to play in that child’s discipline, so that the

R=Researcher
KB=Participating educator
learner can be a good upstanding member of society. Problems have been encountered, there was a learner who had been expelled from another school. They enrolled him at our school, he however lived with his grandparents which was far and he had to travel by taxi, the result being coming late to school every morning. I saw him entering late every morning and because of the abolition of corporal punishment I thought that there must be alternative means of helping him, I introduced to the sport of rugby. I allowed him to play he started to enjoy the game and gave him responsibilities where I made him vice captain and explained the role of captain and vice, the leadership they should show. I explained to him that if he gave problems to any of the educators regarding homework or discipline, and it comes to my attention then I will remove his privileges by punishing him for a few matches. This worked well so much so that I gave him more responsibilities. I made him a prefect, he was not academically inclined, he was more practically orientated. What was ironic was the position that I placed him at was at the gate because I saw that he was a late comer I asked him to see who was coming late. Every morning when I arrived the learner saluted me like a soldier and the problem was resolved. The principal called me and enquired what I did with him as he was in the office everyday for being late. I told him that many times people like to be noticed and to carry responsibility. The person can gain new perspectives but it depends on educators’ to give him that chance in life to exercise these responsibilities. There were others where I used the same method introducing rugby and allowing them to enjoy the game. I feel that with the abolition of corporal punishment that there are structures that a person can use to reach the undisciplined learner in way that they gain confidence in you. You can’t imagine how much you can attain with such a learner.

R=Researcher
KB=Participating educator
R: Your opinion is thus that the building of a relationship with the learner is the ideal.

KB 1: I think it is of utmost importance, seeing that we work with learners, if we are negatively orientated, the learner will carry this negative attitude and assume it is correct, but when we as educators make the learner feel important in the system and he is not seen as an individual that is divorced from the system, but rather one that is involved in the entire setup I think we can achieve wonders not only in the school but also in the community and in South Africa as a whole. We have many challenges in the school and in the country but I believe that we as educators and school have an important role to play in solving the problems of our country. If we do not resolve these problems at our schools we will shift the problems to the country where the learner will become part of the statistics of vandalism, breaking into houses and cars. The school therefore has a very important role and the educator himself. He must convince the learner to do what he wants him to do, e.g. the learner that I assisted was not an academic but was more practically orientated. I made him fell important and in that way solved the problem. Schools can assist each other in this regard.

R: How does the participatory drawing up of classroom rules come into the equation?

KB 1: I think it is important that the educator should be in his/her class, when an educator is not in class it is a recipe for ill discipline. An educator should know his subject. It is important that the educator comes down to the

R=Researcher
KB=Participating educator
level of the child, when the learner perceives that the educator explains clearly within his realm of understanding the educator is winning over that learner. When I was at high school I had such an educator, who knew his subject very well. I then said that I would like to be like Mr E. Mr E. who is currently the principal of a Secondary school. This is what internalised discipline in me so to speak, and that is the ideal that I pursue and I later became an educator. It is still embedded in my sub consciousness that I must convey information so that I win him over to my side. So that the learner feels important, when the child feels important you can achieve wonders with him. In the classroom you have problems here and there but if the educator is in the classroom he is in control of his class, he can immediately address the minor problem which could escalate into a major problem. The educator will first try and address the problem if it is of a serious nature it is then referred to the office where it is noted in the punishment register. An attempt is first made to speak to the learner and if no success is attained the parents are called in. A record is taken of the discussion and if the problem repeats itself a referral is made to the social worker to speak to the child in a professional manner. If the educator structures work in such a way that the learner is kept busy constantly most disciplinary problems can be avoided. I think it is important that the learner understands the classroom rules so that he/she will internalise and accept them. If rules are not known by the learner, he would not be in a position to abide by them.

R=Researcher
KB=Participating educator
R: What is your opinion regarding the corrective measures which has been handed out by the Dept. of Education to the schools?

KB 1: There will always be challenges in this regard. We are a young democracy, we are in a learning curve and make mistakes and those mistakes can be corrected if we listen to each other. It is important that the Minister of Education come and listen not only to his MECs’ but to the educators on ground level. Remember they sit in offices and we sit in the classroom with those problems, the best person to offer advice would be the educator who is in the classroom with that learner. We are compelled to enforce the rules that are given but many times these measures do not work because there is no consultation with the person on the ground. There are unions that give their opinion and you are part of the unions but they do not consult. After the abolition of corporal punishment measures were put in place by the Dept. of Education which do not work in practice. Classroom rules are therefore exclusive, my rules would not work in yours and vice versa. When there is broad consultation solutions can be found and recommendations can be made to the Dept of Education. There is therefore a need for more workshops pertaining to discipline and input from educators.

R: I would like to thank you for your time and effort. I know that educators are very busy and I hope that this study will contribute to the teaching of positive discipline.

Here ends the interview.

R=Researcher
KB=Participating educator
QUESTIONNAIRE

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES FROM GRADE 7

1. INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS
   • What in your opinion does discipline mean?

2. DISCIPLINE
   • What role do you play in creating a disciplined environment in your class?
   • What do you consider to be a well-disciplined learner?
   • What is classified as poor discipline in your class?
   • Is discipline a problem within the classroom?
   • Give some examples of misconduct that occurs within the classroom?
• How do you teachers react to disciplinary problems?

• Are you actively involved in the process of helping the teacher deal with misconduct?

• What is your view on punishment? Is it effective?

3. COMMUNICATION
• Is there sufficient communication/collaboration between the teachers and yourselves regarding discipline issues?

• Are you able to consult with the teacher when problems arise?

• Have you been involved in drawing up the classroom rules and code of conduct?

• Does being a class monitor/prefect have an influence on your relationship with your friends?