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THE VOICES OF GRADE 11 LEARNERS ATTENDING OUTREACH PROGRAMMES OF TWO JOHANNESBURG INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

by

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to make a small contribution to the broader educational landscape in South Africa, as well as to fulfil their Corporate Social Investment (CSI) requirements, many independent schools have embarked on a form of academic outreach initiative. This study considered two such initiatives at Johannesburg independent schools which select learners from specific high schools to attend each respective academy in the afternoons. The views of those participating in such endeavours are not often heard. This study, which is qualitative in nature and phenomenological in design, used individual interviews and focus group interviews to explore the voices of Grade 11 learners involved in the two academies. The data obtained through this voice research indicated that the experiences of the learners fell into two broad themes, namely, opportunities and challenges. The nuances of the opportunities and challenges experienced by the learners attending the academies determined the level of marginalisation or inclusion the learners encountered. As a result of the voices of the participants in this study and findings from related literature it was ascertained that such outreach academies had a significant impact on their learners, particularly in terms of their personal development yet, nevertheless, had a number of limitations.

Key words:

inclusive education, inclusion/exclusion, marginalisation, outreach, voice research

DECLARATION

I, Frances Kerr-Phillips, hereby declare that the work contained in this research report is entirely my own unaided work. It has been submitted exclusively to the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

_____

Frances Kerr-Phillips

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____ 2017.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSI	Corporate Social Investment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction to the study

The South African education system is currently on a trajectory working towards achieving inclusive education a journey which began as a result of signing the Salamanca Agreement (UNESCO, 1994) in 1994. The internalisation and contextualisation of the aims of the former resulted in the launching of *Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* in 2001. South Africa has gone beyond the rather narrow interpretation of inclusion that is extant in many countries, where the focus is on improving access and support for learners with disabilities, to considering all barriers to learning. For the purposes of this research report inclusive education is interpreted broadly, holding that it is "concerned with achieving equity by identifying and addressing direct and indirect impediments to access, participation and belonging in school cultures, facilities and curricula" (Walton, 2011, p. 85). Writing in 2011, Walton asserted that the viewpoints of learners regarding their experience of inclusion, in its widest sense, was an area that was "relatively neglected in this country" (Walton, 2011, p. 86).

According to statistics published by the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) (DBE, 2016, p. 3) in 2014 there were 1 681 independent schools in the country forming 6.5% of all schools and catering for 4.1% of learners. In the decade 2000 – 2010, learner enrolment in public schools grew by 1.4% whilst the independent sector experienced growth in enrolment of 75.9%. Contrary to popular belief, independent education is not the preserve of the elite: currently the majority of independent schools are middle and low fee schools. This relatively recent increased demand for places at independent schools has largely come from middle and working class black families (Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) 2013). In fact, in terms of demographics, according to the CDE (2013, p. 7), there has been a major shift from

1994, when the majority of learners attending independent schools were white, to the estimate of 72% black enrolment in 2010.

Many of the more established independent schools have a strong tradition of community outreach programmes through which they seek to expose enrolled learners to the realities which are experienced daily by many South Africans and, as a result, to train their learners to be socially responsible citizens and potential leaders of the future. The types of community service engaged in vary widely. There are projects involving collecting goods or money for charitable causes; groups of school children going into disadvantaged areas to work with people (such as homes for the elderly); conversational English programmes at nearby schools or work in children's homes; and Saturday schools using the independent school's facilities both for learners from disadvantaged communities and for teacher training. This study is concerned with two outreach "academies" situated at two Johannesburg independent schools which select academically promising learners from several less well-resourced schools to receive lessons in English, Mathematics and Physical Science three afternoons a week for Grades 10 – 12 at the site of the independent school, using the teaching staff of the independent school. These two projects were established in 2009.

Statistics from the Department of Basic Education regarding candidate performance in the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2016 reveal that there is a desperate need for projects that assist in the improvement of candidates' knowledge and skills. For example, of the 265 810 learners who wrote Mathematics at NSC level in 2016 only 33.5% (89 084 learners) of them achieved more than 30%; of the 192 618 who wrote Physical Sciences only 39.5% (76 044 learners) achieved more than 30% (DBE, 2017, p 53 – 54). It is therefore clear that there is a clear need to promote successful intervention strategies.

1.2 Problem Statement

The two outreach initiatives mentioned above are now in their ninth year of existence. It is not known to what extent the intentions of the project have been achieved. The examination results of the participants only tell one part of the story, namely the

academic success of the projects. The personal development of the individuals involved and the challenges and the successes they experience in their three years at the outreach academies have not been explored.

1.3 Purpose

This study intends to listen to the voices of the learners in the outreach academies in order to gain insight into their experiences of access, participation and belonging both at the outreach schools and at the schools they attend full-time. It is hoped that the findings of the research will be able to be used by the respective schools running the outreach academies in their endeavours to make the programmes as beneficial as possible for programme participants, both current and future. It is the intention that the study will also make a contribution to wider debates regarding how to address educational disadvantage in South Africa within the context of the imperative towards greater inclusivity.

1.4 Research Question

The research question of this study is "How do Grade 11 learners voice their experiences of attending the outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools?"

Sub-questions:

a. In what ways do the learners express a sense of being a part of the community at the schools at which the outreach academies occur as well as at their own schools?
b. What do the learners voice as being the strengths and weaknesses of the programme of which they are part?
c. How do the learners express their experience of both the academic and cultural/spiritual aspects of the programme?

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research project is to gain insight into the experiences of learners attending one of two outreach academies in terms of access, participation and belonging, both at the outreach schools and at the schools they attend full-time.

There are two key objectives:

a. To contribute to wider debates regarding how to address educational disadvantage in South Africa.
b. To be of use to the respective schools running the outreach academies in their endeavours to make the programmes as beneficial as possible for programme participants.

1.6 Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative methodological approach and a phenomenological research design. Schools were selected by a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods. The participants themselves were selected from the Grade 11 outreach academy classes using systematic sampling. The data was collected through individual interviews followed up by focus group interviews. Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the methodology used in the research as a well as a discussion of the limitations of the approaches employed.

1.7 Clarification of relevant terms

1.7.1 Outreach academy

An outreach academy in this particular context is a specific separate section of a mainstream school, whose purpose is to provide subject specific teaching and learning opportunities of a very high standard to learners who are full time learners at another school, at which the conditions are not conducive to the learners reaching their scholastic potential.

1.7.2 School of origin

This is the term chosen by the researcher to describe the school at which a learner is enrolled as a learner and which he/she attends every day during term time.

1.7.3 Host school

This is the term chosen by the researcher to define a school which holds an outreach academy on its premises.

1.8 Overview of the study

Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

This chapter provides a brief introduction and background to the research topic. The problem statement, the purpose of the research and both the research question and the sub-questions are stated. The research methodology used to explore the question is then explained. The chapter concludes with a clarification of specific terms used in the course of the research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter presents an overview of the academic literature relevant to the background and the context within which this study took place. Thus, it considers academic literature in the following fields: the South African educational landscape; inclusive education – discourses of marginalisation; independent schools and corporate responsibility and, finally, voice research.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter discusses the phenomenological research design use in this study. The data collection methods used, the selection of schools and participants and how ethical issues were addressed are discussed. The analysis of the data is discussed. Then issues of reliability and validity are explored.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

This chapter analyses the data collected by considering each specific aspect of the opportunities and challenges raised by the participants during the individual interviews and/or focus groups. It then discusses the suggestions put forward by the participants as to how the programme could be improved from their perspective.

Chapter 5 Reflections, Summary and Conclusion

This chapter contains a summary of the research report. Limitations extant in the study are discussed. Thereafter, the various strengths of the study are considered. Recommendations discussed include both those for schools and those pertinent to inclusive education in the broader context. The chapter concludes with a brief reflection on the research process.

1.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the experiences of learners who attend one of two outreach academies, both at the outreach academies and at the schools which they attend full-time. This chapter provides a broad introduction to the research topic, preparatory to the review of literature in the following chapter which will provide the background and context for the current study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review aims to provide the background and the context within which this study took place.

This chapter will consider literature in the following fields:

2.1.1 The South African educational landscape

2.1.2 Inclusive education – discourses of marginalisation

2.1.3 Independent schools and corporate responsibility

2.1.4 Voice research

2.1.1 The South African educational landscape

The education system inherited by the new democratic government in South Africa in 1994 was widely disparate: fourteen departments of education, each responsible for a specific racial grouping in specific geographical area areas, with a fifteenth department being a national one, whose task it was to oversee the operations of the other 14. Learners were forced to attend schools designated for their respective race group. Schools were funded differently as well, with white learners being allocated funding up to 10 times more per annum than their black counterparts (Fiske & Ladd, 2005). A separate special school system existed for learners with special educational needs but was mainly for white learners. Many black learners with disabilities or special educational needs were unable to attend school as there were only a few schools for black disabled learners and those that existed were poorly resourced.

The new democratic government was determined to address what Pather (2011, p. 1) terms the "plethora of injustices, discrimination, vast inequalities and neglect" extant

across all spheres of life in post-apartheid South Africa. A single education system was created in which the nine newly established provinces shared responsibility for primary and secondary schooling with the national government. The rights of all to an education were enshrined in the following two pieces of legislation: the South African Constitution (RSAa, 1996) which states "Everyone has the right to a basic education" (RSAa, Chpt 2, 29,1a) and the 1996 Schools Act (RSAb, 1996) which stipulates "A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way" (RSAb, 1996, Chpt 2, 5, 1). With the establishing of a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training, as well as a National Committee on Education Support Services in 1996 (Education White Paper 6, 2001), the imbalance of resources and teachers across the system began to be addressed.

The South African government's decision to work towards inclusive education was heralded by the country becoming a signatory to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), along with 91 other countries in 1994. Article 2 of the statement declares "regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system" (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix).

This decision to strive towards an inclusive national South African education system was in line with the new constitution's declaration of the right of all citizens to basic education and the right of equal access to educational institutions, both mentioned above.

In 2001 *Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (DOE, 2001) was launched, in which the government set out its plans to "combat discrimination and achieve education for all" (Walton, 2011, p. 241). The intention was to establish 500 "full-service" schools over a 20 year period in specific districts around the country, which would have both the staff and the resources to cater for all learner needs within the specific community in which each

school was located. The existing special schools were to be retained to cater for children with moderate to severe needs and would also be utilised as resource centres for other ordinary schools in the area. District based support teams were to be established consisting of staff from special schools, district, regional and head offices, whose task would be to identify learning difficulties and facilitate the support and accommodation of the children concerned, as well as to up-skill teachers in the institutions where these children are located. Institution level support teams would be set up to assist learners with support needs at a more grassroots level.

In addition, *Education White Paper 6* expressed the need to get current out-of-school young people into the system. It was estimated that about 64 200 learners were attending 380 special schools in 2001. Using the World Health Organisation benchmark of the incidence of disabilities in children of school going age being 2.2% – 2.6%, White Paper 6 estimated that up to 280 000 children with disabilities in South Africa were not in the education system. Thus an advocacy campaign, particularly targeting parents, was one of the strategies promulgated in White Paper 6 to raise awareness and understanding of inclusion and the mind shift it requires if it is to be successful.

White Paper 6 was a ground-breaking document. It was followed by three more documents which attempt to further elucidate the means by which schools are to become inclusive. *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (2008 & 2014) has two main thrusts: to show how to ascertain whether additional support is needed for a learner and how to access and provide any support needed. *Guidelines for Full Service Schools* (2009) sets out the minimum standards required to qualify as a full service school and enables schools to gauge their progress towards being inclusive institutions. *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (2010) attempted to provide teachers with more clear and specific information as to what inclusive practice means in the classroom.

Initial progress towards the achievement of the goals of White Paper 6 faced a number of challenges (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007, p. 12). One of the key issues leading to poor implementation is lack of finance. Ironically, the proponents of White Paper 6 claimed

that inclusive education would, in the long term, save the state money as there would be one education system instead of two and a "much more cost effective use of specialist educators than is currently the practice". (DOE, 2001, p. 41).

Due to what Wildeman & Nomdo (2007, p. 29) refer to as "spiralling teacher costs" in the late 1990s there was a determined effort to halt wage increases for school personnel – at time when the need for specialised educators was growing, due to the requirements of White Paper 6. Instead, it was felt that available funds should be put into non-personnel expenditure – infrastructure, specialised equipment and resources, as well as advocacy campaigning, for example. The promised national conditional grant for special schools did not materialise and neither did funding norms and standards for the sector. Schools selected for conversion to full-service schools were often in a serious state of neglect, requiring substantial funding to bring them up to an acceptable standard. The tender processes involved before any work could start were incredibly slow. Wildeman and Nomdo (2007, p. 2) claim that the lack of finance shows "the folly of official policy in expanding inclusive education without a corresponding commitment to improving the overall availability of resources."

What Wildeman and Nomdo (2007, p. 3) refer to as "policy and implementation vacuums" has led some provinces to manipulate what special education services exist, in order to try to cope. Wildeman and Nomdo (2007) report that some provinces do not have the funds to locate and place in schools learners who are out of the education system. For provinces that do have the funds to locate such learners there is a moral dilemma as they do not know how many learners there are, or what their needs may be and, thus, if they will be able to accommodate their needs.

Teachers felt they were not adequately trained to deal with inclusive classrooms. This sentiment was still extant in 2016 according to Nel et al who found that one of the main areas of concern for teachers was the need for training in order for them to deal competently with inclusive classrooms (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016). They felt let down by the government which was expecting them to implement inclusion and yet had not provided them with adequate resources (such as electricity, suitable buildings and a secure environment) or adequate support in terms of human resources. They

cited the lack of specialists such as remedial teachers and physiotherapists. In addition, it was claimed that training provided for the teachers had been superficial with little focus on how to implement inclusive practices in the classroom. Greyling (2009, p. 432) asserts that "many educators are confused and angry because they are being asked to do the impossible. They feel they are bearing the brunt for the non-delivery of a quality education system, as promised by the new government." As a result, teachers are often resistant to trying out inclusive practices, preferring to continue with the rote-learning and textbook bound approaches that they themselves experienced at school. Thus the various government documents are often being ignored as they are meaningless in the contexts in which many teachers find themselves.

It has been claimed that inclusive education was "introduced prematurely and too rapidly" (Greyling, 2009, p. 428). She continues "An unskilled educator, no matter how open-minded and willing to try he/she may be, will fail to provide appropriate education unless supported by empowering structures" (Greyling, 2009, p. 428). The lack of good teaching, contextual circumstances, as well as an absence of heartfelt belief in inclusive education as a means for what Slee terms "educational reconstruction" (Slee, 2011, p. 155) has resulted in "resistance to inclusion and non-implementation of inclusive policies" (Walton, 2011, p. 241) in South Africa.

Research into the perceptions of teachers regarding inclusive education was conducted by Greyling using a sample of teachers from the Eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth and the rural Mthatha district) believing this would be representative of the views of most teachers in the country (Greyling, 2009). She found that teachers in the Mthatha area had an inaccurate understanding of what constitutes inclusion. They consequently were unable to buy in to the concept of inclusive education – believing that special schools were the place for children with physical disabilities, and mental and behavioural problems. The feeling was that having such learners in a regular classroom would lead to social problems due to the underachievement of those with difficulties.

In 2015 the DBE released a report on the progress of the implementation of White Paper 6 (DBE, 2015). By 2014 there were 787 full-service schools nationwide which

accommodated 24 724 learners with disabilities. Concern was raised in terms of the high numbers of learners with disabilities in some schools as it suggests that full-service schools may be seen as a new type of special school by some. However, this phenomenon may be explained by another concern expressed in the report regarding the ways in which learners were both identified and then recorded, which need to be verified due to the possibility of inaccuracies (DBE, 2015, p. 14).

Statistics indicate that in 2014 530 589 learners between the ages of 7 and 18 were out of the schooling system (DBE, 2016, p. 26). The DBE has introduced several strategies to try to decrease this number of learners, such as working with the Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency to ensure that all children from 5 to 18 years old who have Identification Numbers and who receive grants, do attend a school.

Not only has post-apartheid education seen a radical shift at policy level from teacher-centred education to the learner-centred approach envisaged by White Paper 6, but this has been accompanied by ongoing change in the sphere of the curriculum. Curriculum 2005, introduced in 1997 to "replace the previous pedagogically flawed, authoritarian teacher-centred curriculum" (Greyling, 2009, p. 428), espoused outcomes based education. This was replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement for GET in 2004 and the National Curriculum Statement for FET in 2006. These revised curricula were still concerned with skills attainment but had a content base. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements which came into effect in January 2012 consisted of a single document per subject which replaced a potentially confusing number of support documents that had come to be associated with the NCS. Thus teachers have been expected to cope with curriculum change over an extended period of time which has put undue stress on them, particularly when one considers that in 2013 19% of teachers are underqualified or unqualified, according to the *CDE Technical Report: Teacher supply and demand 2013 – 2025* (CDE, 2015, p. 30).

In South Africa in 2007 – 2008 11.5% of learners dropped out of Grade 10 and 11.8% of learners dropped out of Grade 11 (DBE, 2011, p. 3). In 2013 there were 562 112 full time candidates in Grade 12 who wrote the National Senior Certificate and 439 779 of

whom passed (Spaull, 2014, p. 1). However, in Grade 2 in 2003 the cohort had been 1 111 858 learners strong (Spaull, 2014, p. 1). This means that 49.44% of the learners did not make it through the school system, with most of them dropping out in Grade 10 and 11 (Spaull, 2014, p. 1). In the 2014 Annual National Assessments for Grade 9 the average mark obtained for Home Language was 48.3%, for First Additional Language 34.4% and for Mathematics, 10.8% (DBE, 2016, p. 30).

Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 (DBE, 2014) set 27 goals for the DBE in order to strengthen areas of the education system that were identified as being inadequate. Goal 6 set the minimum quality standard target of number of learners who pass Physical Sciences in 2014 as 170 000 (DBE, 2016, p. 174). In effect, only 103 348 learners achieved more than 30%, being 61.5% of those who wrote the subject (DBE, 2016, p. 24). For Mathematics the results were similarly alarming: Goal 5 set the minimum quality standard target of number of learners who pass Mathematics in 2014 as 180 000 (DBE, 2014, p. 174). However, only 120 253 learners achieved more than 30%, being 53.5% of those who took the subject (DBE, 2016, p. 24).

Walton (2011) has argued that successful inclusive schools have become inclusive by being inclusive – in other words not waiting for the Department of Basic Education to deliver, but getting on with it. Similarly, there are examples of rural schools which perform extremely well at National Senior Certificate level despite adverse circumstances. One such example is the Thabo Mofutsanyana district in the Free State where the Kagiso Trust, in partnership with the Free State Department of Education, has been implementing the Beyers Naudé Schools Development Programme (BNSDP) in 166 schools since 2007. In 2015, the Thabo Mofutsanyana district achieved a pass rate of 87.5%, making it the best performing district in the province (Kagiso Trust, 2016, p. 1).

2.1.2 Inclusive education and discourses of marginalisation

Inclusive education is a global trend in education which had its origins in the latter part of the twentieth century. The nascent international drive towards inclusive education

gained impetus as a result of the UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994 which called upon all governments to "adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise." (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix). It was also asserted that this type of schooling system would, in fact, be more cost-effective in terms of provision of education to all of a country's learners (UNESCO, 1994).

Inclusive education has "multiple meanings" (Artiles, Harris-Murri & Rostenberg, 2006, p. 260) with the common denominator in these varied understandings being the need to transform education systems. The reason for the diverse understandings of what constitutes inclusive education lies in the fact that the movement developed from calls for change from different quarters. Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou (2011) refer to four distinct origins: firstly, as a result of the challenge to the two-tiered system of special schools and mainstream schools which restricted the type of education available to learners deemed to have special educational needs; secondly, as a result of new understandings of disability which state that the concept of disability exists simply because society has decided upon a definition of "normal"; thirdly, as a result of criticism of the labelling and categorising of learners who are seen to be different, as a way managing their journey through the education system and, fourthly, as a result of the efforts in developing countries to expand basic educational provision to more children.

The issue of poverty is central to the exclusion of millions of children from accessing basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. Although one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals was universal primary education by 2015, in 2009, according to Lewin (2009) there were still 32 million children out of school and only two thirds of those in school reached the end of primary school. This latter fact led Lewin (2009) to specify that access to education needs to be understood as much more than simply being able to attend a school: it involves issues of attendance, achievement, progression and completion at the appropriate stages and ages.

Tragically, global impoverishment is growing rather than declining: Slee (2011) cites the horrifying fact of a world in which every cow in the European Union is subsidised

at the rate of $2 while across the Mediterranean Sea up to 500 million Africans live on less than a dollar day. Poverty and the disadvantage that accompanies it serve to exclude some of a population from the benefits and economic advancement enjoyed by others of their countrymen. Added to this is the fact that "competitive individualism" (Slee, 2011, p. 38) in which family members lever for access to the finite resources of good schools and university places, is what "saturates education policy discourse" around the world (Slee, 2011, p. 39). The result is a schooling system in which those who have educated parents who support them in their schooling endeavours, who have books in the home and whose parents can select the school they attend, will continue to be those who are the decision-makers in society. Such people are most likely to continue the entrenchment of the systems that lead to them being in the positions that they are (see Slee, 2011, p. 36).

However, those who have disabilities "continue to reside at the margins of civic life because we not only allow it, but because we create, enforce and sustain disability" (Slee, 2011, p. 36). Disabled people are just one of the groups of humanity who are excluded in this way. Other groups excluded from having choices that would improve their lives include a multitude of minority groups across the globe (whose very belonging to a minority group brings disadvantage), as well as the poor. To a large extent the suffering of the masses is viewed with "collective indifference" (Slee, 2011, p. 36) by those who do not know what real need is.

This is what leads Julie Allan (cited in Slee, 2011, p. 36) to argue that inclusion is an "ethical project" which is not "something we do to a discrete population of children, but rather as something we must do to ourselves". It requires a recognition that it is inequalities in society that result in the exclusion of some. Education policies do have the potential to address the inequalities extant outside of school, particularly those of social class. Thus, education initiatives such as "No Child left Behind" in the US, which was based on a cultural deficit view of working class families, attempted to improve levels of proficiency and through put in US high schools, while "Sure Start" in the UK aims to give children of disadvantaged parents the best start possible to their lives (Roberts, 2000).

Yet, simply ensuring access of previously marginalised and excluded groups to schools does not necessarily translate into equal participation. Many schools expect things to carry on as usual and for the newcomers to be absorbed or assimilated into the status quo. Artiles et al (2006) argue that if a school is to be fully inclusive, restructuring of cultural assumptions upon which the school is run will need to take place.

Furthermore, schools in the twenty-first century are difficult places in which to work: many governments impose ever more narrow curricula and increase their bureaucratic demands in terms of more standardised assessments with national reporting of results – in which schools are named and shamed, such as the UK secondary school league tables. Children who do not assist the school in the achievement of these demands are likely to be unwelcome, and will thus remain marginalised in a new setting or efforts will be made to consign them to alternate "lower-tiered" (Slee, 2011, p. 13) educational institutions which still exist. In other words, the concept of inclusive education is simply a repackaging of special education – the system does not change as a whole for the betterment of all, rather it is as if the excluded are "included" in terms of being allowed to be physically present, but little or nothing is done to integrate all learners into a new type of school in which all are equally valued.

Moreover, in the policies governments have drawn up in which they outline the way they will implement inclusive education in their particular country, escape routes have appeared which enable real inclusive education to be avoided – what Slee refers to as "clauses of conditionality" (Slee, 2011, p. 76). Thus, in the *US Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (1990) terms like "least restrictive environment" and "most appropriate setting" allow those implementing the act to interpret the law in a way that most suits them. In addition, the policies that have been devised are sometimes far removed from what is feasible to implement in the given context and, as a result, nothing happens, leading to critics claiming that inclusive education has failed.

It can be seen that what constitutes "inclusive" education is an area of contestation, but understandings of inclusion can nevertheless be divided into narrow and broad perspectives (Ainscow, Dyson & Booth, 2006). The former is concerned with the

inclusion of previously marginalised learners into mainstream settings, whilst the latter focusses on the issue of diversity and how schools respond to the needs of all learners who enter their classrooms. In many countries, inclusive education has had a narrow interpretation, focussing on improving access and support for learners with disabilities. In the South African context, Education White Paper 6 (DOE, 2011) distances itself from this approach and considers all barriers to learning.

Slee (2011) gives a broad definition of inclusive education as "a struggle against exclusion and oppression" (Slee, 2011, p. 151) which is "a political struggle to affirm the rights of all to access, participation and success in education" (Slee, 2011, p. 151): thus, inclusive education is an issue of human rights. This was taken further by Walton (2011) who asserts that inclusive education strives to achieve "equity by identifying and addressing direct and indirect impediments to access, participation and belonging in school cultures, facilities and curricula" (Walton, 2011, p. 85). The reference to school culture can be extended to include the concept of school community. This broad definition is the one that will be utilised in this research project.

Failed inclusion or the absence of any inclusive practices results in marginalisation of the excluded groups or individuals. Messiou (2006, p. 306) explains this as follows: "inclusion is concerned with any kind of marginalisation that might be experienced by any child, regardless if this is perceived as being about notions of special educational needs or not". In 1996 the UNDP (as cited in Messiou, 2012, p. 1312) defined marginalisation as "the state of being considered unimportant, undesirable, unworthy, insignificant and different resulting in inequity, unfairness, deprivation and enforced lack of access to mainstream power". Marginalisation in the school context is complex according to Messiou (2012). She identified four different types of marginalisation (Messiou, 2006): when a child experiences marginalisation and this is recognised by everyone including the child concerned; when the child feels marginalised but most others do not see this; when the child appears to be marginalised but does not experience it as such and finally, when a child is actually being marginalised but will not recognise this fact. These different types of marginalisation were identified as a result of research Messiou carried out in a Cypriot primary school (2006). In listening to the voices of young people attending two outreach academies in a South Africa

context this study aims to ascertain whether there is marginalisation extant in the academies and, if so, whether it relates to the types put forward by Messiou.

As has already been stated, in South Africa "inclusive education" has primarily been seen by teachers in the field as pertaining to learners with disabilities. This study proposes to use the wider definition proposed by Messiou (2006) mentioned above and thus will contribute to a little explored area in South African research.

2.1.3 Independent schools and corporate social responsibility

The right of independent schools to exist in South Africa is enshrined in the Constitution (RSAa, 1996) Section 29 (3) states:

Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that –

a. do not discriminate on the basis of race;
b. are registered with the state; and
c. maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.

This constitutional protection of independent schools is an unusual phenomenon (Hofmeyr & Lee, 2004) but may be linked to the persecution of such schools, particularly those with a religious foundation, under apartheid where the Bantu Education Act of 1953 phased out state subsidies and enforced the implementation of a state curriculum which meant that many schools could not continue, or did not wish to continue, operating under such constraints (Hofmeyr & Lee, 2003). The independent schools in South Africa are well placed to adopt and experiment with inclusive practices in order to meet the needs of the learners in their institutions. This is because they are not restricted to government roll-out schedules, can recruit what specialist staff and support staff they require and are accountable to governing bodies or owners and not to the state (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009).

Independent education is experiencing significant growth worldwide – Tooley (2001) refers to "The Global Education Industry" – and South Africa is no exception. In 2003 3.2% of South African learners attended independent schools (Hofmeyr & Lee, 2004 p. 153, citing Du Toit, 2003). By 2014 this had grown to 4.1% of learners (DBE, 2016, p. 4). In 2014 1 681 schools were registered as being independent (representing 6.5% of schools in South Africa), catering for 538 421 learners, taught by 34 482 teachers (8.1% of all teachers) (DBE, 2016, p. 4).

Although it has been argued (Tooley, 2001) that the existence of private educational institutions further aggravates levels of inequality, Hofmeyr and Lee estimated in 2004 that if all the learners in independent schools at the time had to be catered for in public schools, the state would have to find approximately R2 billion additional funds each year. Thus, the independent education sector can be regarded as providing a significant cost saving to the South African government.

The reasons for the global growth in the demand for private schools are twofold according to James (1991, cited in Hofmeyr & Lee, 2004): a greater demand for education exists than a particular government can provide for, or there is a demand for different types of education to that provided by the state. The norm is for the former to be a feature of developing countries, whilst the latter tends to be found in developed countries. However, Hofmeyr and Lee (2002) found that in South Africa both situations were extant with unmet demand being associated with black communities and differentiated demand coming from predominantly white communities.

The majority of independent schools in South Africa are registered with the various provincial authorities but there is, nevertheless, a significant number of so called "fly-by-night" institutions. Of those that are registered, about 90% are non-profit making institutions and within this category there is a wide range of fee structures, with approximately 60% of such schools receiving some form of state subsidy as they are "low fee" schools and the other approximately 40% are "high fee" schools which receive no financial assistance from the state (Hofmeyr, 2014, p. 263). Within the high fee category there are various types of schools such as religious, traditional, monastic, co-educational, those serving a specific cultural group (such as SAHETI, which serves

the Greek community) and those espousing a specific alternate educational philosophy (such as the Waldorf and Montessori schools). This research project concerns two monastic, traditional schools both within the Christian tradition and one, specifically Anglican.

With the desegregation of schools in the 1990s, high-fee independent schools lost much external funding for bursaries for black learners (Hofmeyr, 2014) since funding organisations could support several children at a former Model C school for the same amount as one learner at such an independent school. As a result of this change, many high-fee independent schools have started to increase their own means of offering assistance to some learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, through academic or sporting scholarships for example, or through organisations like the Student Sponsorship Programme (SSP), a non-profit trust which provides opportunities for able learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend top performing high schools, both public and independent, in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. In a 2012 survey the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) sent out to member schools regarding sustainability, it was revealed that the 329 schools which submitted results gave approximately R317 million in financial support to 10 273 learners per year (Hofmeyr, 2014, p. 274).

According to Hofmeyr and Lee's rather dated statistic from 2004 as many as 64% of independent schools has some sort of a community outreach programme working with less well-resourced schools than themselves in both the public and independent sector Hofmeyr and Lee (2004, p. 166). Details of 80 ISASA affiliated schools' community service projects were featured in Mark Henning's *Growing Together: a story of schools reaching out* published in 2003. Considering that it is estimated that 80% of South Africa's 30 000 government funded primary and secondary schools are under-performing (Osman, 2015) the potential results of these programmes are significant. However, one must be cognisant of the fact that whilst such programmes do benefit others who are less well-resourced, the private schools themselves do benefit from the positive image such work gives their institutions (Tooley, 2001) and, of course, from publicising their corporate social responsibility initiatives, which refers to their

contribution to initiatives that are outside of the direct business of their organisation and are not for the direct financial gain of the organisation.

The outreach programmes mentioned above are diverse in terms of strategy and access. ISASA launched a Mathematics and English Programme in 2007 which places disadvantaged black learners in ISASA member schools for Grades 10 – 12 (Matthews & Young, 2012). Penreach (the community service arm of Penryn College in Mpumalanga) has provided educational interventions for learners, teachers and school leadership since 1991 and impacts 600 schools in the province. Three2Six, run by Sacred Heart College, works with refugee children from Grade R – 6 who do not have the necessary papers to access public schools; Thandulwazi Mathematics and Science Academy, run by St Stithians College, offers mainly Science and Mathematics focused support to any learners from Grade 10 – 12 on a first-come first-served basis. It also runs skills development classes for current teachers and runs an intern-teachers programme (Matthews & Young, 2012).

Two northern suburbs Johannesburg independent schools each have an outreach academy which focuses on Mathematics, Science and English restrict their intake to two feeder schools and both have a selection process based on academic ability and potential. The feeder school provides the academies with a list of their Grade 9 top achievers in Mathematics and English as indicated by the mid-year examinations. These learners, boys and girls together, are then given a one hour English comprehension examination and a one hour Mathematics examination. Those learners achieving above a specified percentage are then invited to attend an interview. Successful learners will attend the academy at the beginning of their Grade 10 year. The boys attend the academy 3 times a week for 3 hours of lessons, whilst the girls attend the girls' academy 4 times a week for 3 hours of lessons. In both instances the afternoon commences with a hot lunch provided by the host school. The academies meet during the 4 term school terms, whilst the 3 term schools are in session.

Such initiatives made by independent schools in which an attempt is made to offer educational opportunities to some learners who would not be able to afford such can be seen as attempts at inclusion (Geyer & Walton, 2015). However, whilst potentially

offering the recipients the possibility of upward social mobility, not only are these programmes providing "individual solutions to systemic problems" (Geyer & Walton, 2015, p. 338) in the South African context and thus reducing the imperative for government to tackle major educational issues, but they may have results that were not anticipated at the outset (Geyer & Walton, 2015), which serve to further entrench feelings of alienation and exclusion in the very people they were designed to assist. Walton (2013) refers to three levels of access: physical access to being a member of an institution, access to the curriculum and access to the social and cultural environment of the school. Understanding how learners experience inclusion or exclusion in the school environment has the potential to "stimulate the self-questioning, creativity and action that seem to be necessary for moving a school in an inclusive direction" (Ainscow & Kaplan, 2005, p. 107).

2.1.4 Voice Research

Research "on" children (Kellett, 2010, p.16) was conducted by early developmental psychologists such as Piaget. Children became what Kellett (2010) calls the "objects" of research. "The child is portrayed, like the laboratory rat, as being at the mercy of external stimuli: passive and conforming" (James & Prout as cited in Kellett, 2010, p. 12). The suggestion is that the child is a lesser species to the adult human, to be observed and measured like an animal. The use of the word "on" suggests that there is no interaction between the observer and the observed.

The shift to children being participants in research came about following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. Article 12 states that:

Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Thus the views of children gradually came to be seen as being worth hearing. Research "with" (Kellett, 2010, p. 16) children suggests children are equal partners, so to speak, in the research process. A third approach, that of "research about children"

was suggested by Messiou (2008) in which young people are active participants but are not researchers themselves or involved in the research design.

In fact, in 2008 England and Wales passed legislation which requires all maintained schools to take learner views into account when considering matters that affect their schooling. The point being that "the perspectives that are of the most importance are those of the 'insiders', especially children themselves, since they are the ones who experience the impact of either inclusive or exclusive practices" (Messiou, 2006, p. 306). Fielding (2001) as cited in Messiou (2006, p. 307) goes further and argues that beyond the practical usefulness of listening to children this methodology can be used as a means for bringing about school improvement. It is important to note that, as Clark (2005, p. 491) states, listening is "an active process of communication involving hearing, interpreting and constructing meanings" and not a passive process. The researcher must engage with the children whose voices he/she is listening to.

It is indeed desirable to research insider perspectives on inclusion and exclusion in schools. As with any minority group an authentic voice is critical. Otherwise outsiders are commenting on their understandings of the daily experiences of others without knowing what it is like to be in that other's skin. Messiou (2006, p. 306), aptly explains this,

… the perspectives that are of most importance are those of 'insiders' especially children themselves since they are the ones who experience the impact of either inclusive or exclusive practices.

In reference to the views expressed by young people "being given due weight" (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,1989), Walton (2011, p. 89) refers to the importance of strategies being put in place following young people voicing their experiences "especially if these views reflect negative, discriminatory or stereotyping attitudes". In other words researchers should not just utilise children's voices for the sake of boosting their research record but must "hear" what the youngsters are saying by taking positive action as a result of their findings.

Voice research is not without its difficulties. The very fact of selecting such learners to participate in one's research means that one is selecting them precisely because they are different and, in turn, one's research which intends to give the unheard a voice in fact serves to emphasise their differences and the labels associated with them (Walton, 2011). In addition, concern has been raised with regard to how the power relations extant between an adult researcher and children will impact on what the children will say. However such concerns are not strong enough to halt academic voice research involving young people (Walton, 2013).

The context extant in South Africa is that the majority of the population are part of a patriarchal system in which traditionally children and young people have little or no voice. The relevance of listening to the voices of learners at the two outreach academies lies in the fact that they are experiencing being a learner at the academies first hand and can thus speak authentically about their exposure, whereas other stake-holders in the outreach academies, such as the teachers involved or the programme directors can only presume what the participants are under-going.

2.1.5 Conclusion

In the context of the literature review above it is clear that there may be merit in considering the voices of young people at two outreach academies in order to come to an understanding of their experiences of inclusion or marginalisation. The next chapter will explore the methodological approaches used in the research process.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research project, as stated in Chapter 1, is to gain insight into the experiences of learners who attend one of two outreach academies, both at the outreach academies and at the schools which they attend full-time, in terms of their inclusion or marginalisation. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods used to achieve the above. In this chapter the qualitative research approach selected and the phenomenological research design used are discussed. The chapter will also cover the data collection methods, explain how participant schools and learners were selected as well as how ethical issues were addressed. The approach to data analysis is discussed. In addition, issues of validity and reliability are considered. The latter are important considerations if the results of a study are to be deemed plausible, rigorous and authentic.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach chosen for this study is a qualitative one, as the intention is that of exploring and understanding the meaning that the young people ascribe to their experiences through words, rather than to test a theory by studying the relationships between different variables and dealing with numbers, as in quantitative research. Quantitative research tends to be linear in its approach, whilst the strategies involved in qualitative research have been compared to the moves in a dance (Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2011), as the researcher changes direction or follows a new lead dependent on what he/she discovers. The goal of this research is to understand the lived experience of the outreach academy learners in all its complexity and variety. This is better accessed through qualitative research rather than quantitative research, which it has been argued, through its coding of results according to pre-set variables forces a somewhat limited perspective on the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

3.3 Research Design

The research design is phenomenological in that it attempts to describe the meaning or quintessence of a particular lived experience as understood by the participants in that lived experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Phenomenological research was developed in the early twentieth century by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl, who argued that people could only experience certainty of the things that they themselves had experienced "and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 4). Husserl called his new philosophical approach "phenomenology" as reality consists of phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). Groenewald goes on to assert that "The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts." (Groenewald, 2004, p. 5), as explained by the people involved in the phenomenon or issue.

This research project attempts to understand the way in which the participants experience the outreach academies and their own school, by listening to their voices, rather than what is observed about the relationship between the participants and the outreach academies. The intention, as stated in the research objectives, is that the project will be of use to schools running the outreach academies, as they strive to make the programmes as beneficial as possible for the participants and successive groups of learners.

Thus a phenomenological approach was deemed apt for this study as it requires the researcher to put away any preconceptions on a phenomenon and seek to elicit the lived experience of the participants in their own voice.

3.4 Data Collection

Data was collected through individual interviews followed up by focus groups. In-depth interviews are well-suited to the phenomenological design as they provide an opportunity for the researcher to really probe and unravel the participants' memories

of an experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The very nature of the topic being researched meant that participant experiences would be hard to ascertain from approaches such as a survey, which by its very nature deals with closed-ended questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 94). The purpose of the individual interviews was "to gain rich qualitative data on a particular subject from the perspective of selected individuals" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 95) and from which patterns might emerge. An interview is in essence an "oral questionnaire" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 205) in that the construction of a set of questions involves the same processes as those used in questionnaire design, yet allows the interviewer more flexibility than a questionnaire. Questions decided upon need to "be diagnostic, to reveal the different ways of understanding the phenomenon within that context" (Bowden, 2000, p. 8). In addition, they should be open ended, not require a yes/no answer and, in fact, be probing.

There are several distinct advantages to employing the interview as a means of gathering information. It can be used with those unable or too young to read. It also allows for follow questions to be made immediately, as circumstance dictates. The interviewer is able to get non-verbal input as he is face to face with the interviewee and is able to encourage the interviewee (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, an individual interview does prevent "the possibility of one person dominating the conversation" (Messiou, 2006, p. 308) and allows each person to respond without feeling constrained by his/her peers.

However, there are distinct disadvantages extant in the use of the interview method. These include the lack of anonymity, the possibility of the interviewer's presence influencing the respondent's answers and the fact that one-on-one interviews are time consuming. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) note, in addition, that the interviewers understanding of what is said may be flawed and the interviewer, particularly if unskilled, may ask leading questions. Information that is revealed could be what the participant thinks the researcher wishes to hear. Furthermore, an interview with participants conducted in a language which is not their mother-tongue, could influence the understanding of the questions and therefore the responses made.

The decision to use individual interviews was made for several reasons. Firstly, participants could each talk to the researcher at a pre-arranged place which was a time saving strategy. Moreover, the interviewer did not have to observe the participants in their respective settings, over an extended period, in order to ascertain the extent to which they were or were not marginalised.

As recommended by Cresswell (2009, p. 130) an interview protocol was used to assist in the smooth running of the interviews. The interview was a blend of semi-structured and unstructured interview approaches. This dual approach enables an interviewer to have a guide at hand as to what to do next if the respondent is somewhat unforthcoming, but gives the freedom to ask broad questions to follow up on particular responses given. The questions themselves were open-ended to enable participants to reveal, "through discussion, their ways of understanding a phenomenon, that is, to disclose their relationship to the phenomenon under consideration" (Bowden, 2000, p. 9). Responses are then able to be followed up with more probing questions and the conversation can be pursued in directions which might not have been anticipated, but which are relevant nevertheless.

It is important that there is a "rapport" between interviewer and interviewee so that the two parties feel comfortable with each other and a "knowledge-producing conversation" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010) is able to ensue. A rapport can be developed through the interviewer being attuned to the body language of the interviewee and by the interviewer being an "active listener". Gesturing as appropriate and keeping eye contact are methods suggested by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) for achieving this. Thus each interview was preceded by a few minutes of general conversation with the respondent concerned in order to make him/her feel more relaxed and to build a relationship with the interviewer. Refer to Appendix F for the Interview Schedule used.

The various questions were asked in a conversational manner but in a similar order with each participant, as recommended by Longhurst (in Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010). This meant that there was flexibility in how the participant chose to respond and explore the matters that he/she felt to be important. The interviews were recorded with

a digital recorder. The interviewer did not take notes during the interview as this would have been be off-putting for the respondents and could lead to the interviewer not paying full attention to the respondent concerned.

It was decided to augment the individual interviews with focus group interviews. The purpose of these focus groups was for further clarification and exploration of any issues raised in the individual interviews and to confirm that the meanings the researcher had ascribed to individual comments were shared by those who had made the comments. A focus group brings the benefit of one person's comment sparking off a thought in another and is generally more relaxed than the individual interview. In addition, with several people being present the presence of the interviewer is less likely to be off-putting or to influence the response the focus group members make. As with any method, the use of a focus group does have limitations. Indeed, as Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p. 167) observe, the so-called "group effect", where there is the possibility of original comments made by individuals being changed once they have heard what others in the group have said, is why the data obtained from a focus group is not the same as the combined individual interview data. The "power dynamics" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 150) within a particular focus group can affect who speaks and what is said. Another potential pitfall in using focus groups is the possibility of confidentiality being breached as pointed out by Longhurst (in Clifford, French, & Valentine, 2010). In order to try to prevent this, all members were asked again to keep the discussion confidential.

Two focus groups, one at each outreach academy, were held after a preliminary analysis of the data. In the focus group, which took place in an informal setting (as suggested by Longhurst in Clifford, French & Valentine, 2010), the researcher's role became one of facilitator whose task was to keep the group on the topic concerned and to allow the group to explore the topic as broadly as possible. The researcher attempted to mitigate this possibility both by inviting other comments if it appeared that one person was dominating the conversation and by allowing group members to talk through and/or move away from their previously expressed ideas.

3.5 Participants

The outreach academies to be studied were then selected. This was followed by the selection of those learners at each outreach academy who would participate in the research project.

3.5.1 Selection of schools: this was done through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a "strategic" choice about "with whom, where, and how one does one's research" (Palys in Given, 2008, p. 697). Researchers believe that the selected sample will be representative of the group from which the sample is selected (Gay & Airasian, 1999, p. 141). As the research project aimed to study learners' experiences at outreach academies, prior knowledge led the researcher to purposively select two schools which have such academies and which were easily accessible. The selection of schools was also partly influenced by convenience sampling in terms of the proximity of the two schools to the researcher's workplace. One outreach academy involves girls only at a girls' school and the other involves boys only at a boys' school. The fact that the two schools selected were single gender schools was not intentional, rather, as stated above, a result of the existence of academies at these institutions and their ease of access.

3.5.2 Selection of participants: The participants were selected from the Grade 11 outreach classes of each school using systematic sampling. Systematic sampling is the selection of "every nth element" from a "list of all elements in the survey population, beginning with a randomly selected element" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 133). The selection was made from an alphabetical list of the potential participants. This meant that there was not a possibility of periodicity and thus this was a suitable method for systematic selection of participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The small group would then be representative of the whole from which it was taken.

Grade 11 was the year group selected for the research since the Grade 10s are relatively new to the environment and the Grade 12s need to focus all their energies on their studies. Five learners were selected from each of the two outreach academies by selecting every 4th person on the class list. This number of participants was to allow for some attrition should it occur. Both outreach academies are located at a single sex

independent high school in Johannesburg. Each outreach academy draws learners from two specific schools. One feeder school is an inner city school and the other is in an informal settlement. All the learners come from previously disadvantaged communities. In the event that the systematic sampling did not include at least one learner from each school the first learner on the outreach academy class list of Grade 11 learners was selected.

It must be borne in mind that both purposive and convenience sampling, whilst well-suited to this particular research topic, do have limitations which will need to be considered when discussing the findings of the research. The most significant limitations of which to be cognisant are that generalisation of any findings to a more general population is not feasible; the selected sample is not necessarily representative of the whole group; the result will be determined by the nature of the selected samples and researcher and/or participant bias is higher than with other types of sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.6 Ethics procedures

It is critical that any research undertaken is ethical in nature. The moral integrity of the person conducting the research is essential in order to ensure that both the research process itself and the findings are valid and can be trusted (Hess-Biber & Leavy, 2010). McMillan & Schumacher (2010) highlight four areas as needing consideration and attention in any research activity as being informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, empowerment and caring and fairness. Informed consent means that the participants have been advised as to how data will be used and that their information and identity will be kept confidential. Thus, participants are aware of what they are getting involved in and are free to withdraw at any point. Confidentiality and anonymity refers to the imperative of keeping participants' identity, location and setting unidentifiable. Empowerment is a critical part of qualitative research in that the "mission of social science is to enable community life to transform itself" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 339). Participants need to know that there will be some positive benefit to emerge from their participation in a project, perhaps not for them directly, but for others in the area.

Permission

Initial permission to carry out the research project was obtained from the Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand (Appendix G).

Permission to conduct the research was sought through an information letter sent to the two school principals concerned, as well as from the chairperson of the relevant governing body (Appendix A).

Voluntary participation (see Appendices B and C)

Permission to participate in the study was first obtained from the participants' parents since the proposed participants were under the age of 21 (and therefore seen as an "at risk" group) and then from the participants themselves. It was explained to all parties that participation was voluntary, and that no harm would be done to those involved. Great care was taken in explaining the research purpose and requirements to all involved and if any were unhappy with any aspect of the process they were told that they were free to step down from the project at any time with no adverse consequences.

Confidentiality (see Appendices A, B, C, D and E)

The issue of confidentiality was initially discussed when the researcher first met possible participants, and then when the completed consent forms were brought back, the meaning of the confidentiality aspect of the form was re-discussed to ensure that all learners understood what they were agreeing to. Confidentiality was assured and participants were told that no names of schools, programme participants or programme staff would be used in the final report. Information used in the final report would be on a general aggregated level; not on an individual level. The focus group participants were reminded about the issue of confidentiality and asked to be mindful of not discussing what had been said in the group or by whom outside the focus group venue.

Informed consent (see Appendices D and E)

The participants were informed as to how the results of the study would be of benefit to them as well as to the researcher. Participants were required to sign an informed consent form before participation in the research process could commence.

Interviews were scheduled so as to cause minimal disruption to the interviewees and their school commitments and requirements.

At the commencement of each interview participants were taken through what they had signed and their understanding of what that meant was discussed orally before the formal interview process began.

3.7 Data Analysis

Once all the interviews had been completed the process of transcribing began. The time consuming nature of the task resulted in the assistance of a professional transcriber being sought. This enabled a break from scrutiny of the data to be taken which McMillan and Schumacher (2010) believe can lead to fresh insight being brought to bear on the data when returning to it.

The next step was to organise the data in order to facilitate analysis. Zinker in Groenewald (2004) asserts that phenomenology infers a process "which emphasises the unique own experiences of research participants" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 18). Thus the transcripts were read over and over to become familiar with the voice of each participant. Statements which seemed to illustrate the phenomenon being researched were then extracted. These were then clustered into categories. These categories were discussed with the supervisor concerned in order to ascertain intercoder agreement. From these categories it was possible to extrapolate over-arching themes which describe the phenomenon. The two themes which emerged following the analysis of the transcriptions in this case were opportunities and challenges. This will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity in phenomenological research refers to how closely the findings correlate to the experience of the phenomenon by the participants. A typical way of ascertaining validity in qualitative research is by getting participants to corroborate the findings. This was carried out orally during the focus group interviews rather than by giving each participant a transcript of the individual interview. In the focus group interview session individuals had an opportunity to validate what had been captured as to what they had said in the in-depth individual interviews. A process of self-reflection as suggested by Creswell (2009) was used to reveal any bias that the researcher might have brought to the analysis of the data. The experience and guidance brought to bear by the supervisor also added to the validity of the findings.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results. In other words checking whether another investigation into the same questions at the same outreach academies reveal the same results. This was monitored in three ways: checking transcripts for errors, checking allocation of codes to data and though discussion of the results with the supervisor and fellow learners.

3.9 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the experiences of learners who attend either of two outreach academies, both at the outreach academies and at the schools which they attend full-time. This chapter discussed the methodological approaches that were used in the research project. A qualitative research approach and a phenomenological research design were used. The chapter covered the data collection methods, how participant schools and learners were selected and how ethical issues were dealt with. The data analysis method was discussed and issues of validity and reliability were addressed.

The following chapter discusses the data obtained and the findings which arose from its analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The participants in this study were selected by a combination of purposive and convenience sampling from the Grade 11 group at each outreach academy. Data was collected through individual interviews. After initial analysis of the data obtained from these individual interviews, focus group interviews were conducted. Phenomenological analysis of the data involving sorting and coding revealed that the collective meaning extracted from the responses of the participants concerned two main themes, namely opportunities and challenges. Each of these themes can be subdivided into more specific aspects.

This chapter discusses each specific aspect of the opportunities and challenges raised by the participants and then considers the suggestions that were put forward as to how the programme could be improved from the participants' perspective.

4.2 Opportunities

The concept of "opportunity" was a theme that arose from the data in this study. For the purposes of this research, opportunity is defined as "favourable chance or opening offered by circumstances" (Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1996, p. 623)**.** Attendance of an outreach academy has presented the participants with the possibility of experiences which they had not previously been exposed to and might not have been exposed to if they were not academy members. The participants' perceptions of these experiences are explored.

4.2.1 Selection

The consistent view expressed by the learners was that they had *"got an opportunity of coming"* to the academies as a result of being *"selected"*. The criteria upon which this selection was determined were good marks, exemplary behaviour and an interview with one of the academy heads. It was felt that *"top"* learners were selected: the terms *"selected"* and *"chosen"* were used by several participants suggesting that they perceived themselves to be part of a special category who *"made it"*. This finding is in keeping with that of Geyer (2014) who found that learners receiving scholarships to attend wealthy independent schools "are confident that they have earned their place" (Geyer, 2014, p. 349). Learners' use of the passive voice in their voicing of the selection process suggests that they felt the process was external to them; one that they had no control over, but one which had been fair as they felt they deserved to be on the programme. The criteria on which their selection was based was not explored by the participants beyond mentioning the tests they had to write and an interview.

4.2.2 Academic Opportunity

The participants clearly felt that there were several ways in which being a member of the particular academy presented them with opportunities in the academic sphere. The academy programmes enable them to learn more effectively, and therefore to achieve better marks, which in turn would present them with additional opportunities such as university access.

4.2.2.1 Approaches to Teaching

4.2.2.1.1 Approaches to teaching at school of origin

From the participants' responses it appeared that at one of the schools of origin *"the class is too big"*. This meant that the learners were often not able to get the teacher to assist them with a query since the numbers in the class precluded this type of approach: one participant said *"the teacher tries to be as short as possible and straight to the point, and sometimes being straight to the point and being short isn't effective"*. This suggests that the teacher did not provide elaboration that the learner felt was necessary. Another participant explained the matter as follows: the teacher *"wants to*

teach you and all … but really won't give you special attention and then you don't understand". This is indicative of a lack of support for individual learners.

In addition, Physical Science tended to be mainly theory with little, if any, exposure to experiments in a laboratory.

4.2.2.1.2 Approaches to teaching at academies

The participants expressed the view that attendance at the academies improved their understanding of the academic content of Mathematics, Physical Sciences and English (the subjects being taught at the two academies). They felt that help was given regarding concepts that they did not understand, often in a one-on-one context, where the learner would have a teacher's undivided attention whilst he/she was explaining a specific issue that concerned that individual learner. Additional information provided by teachers at the academies also assisted the learners in terms of understanding. A participant referred to the fact that the academy learners *"get better explanation on a topic"*. One of the members of the boys' academy stated *"we get to be ahead because you'll find that we go at a particular pace at school but when we get here it's like we kind of move fast with understanding as well"*. This indicates that learners' ability to understand is closely related to the teaching methods adopted. Teaching methods include both the explanation of the material taught and the pace at which the class moves through the material.

Several participants spoke of the benefit of having the space to ask questions until they understood (*"the teacher gets into detail with it until we understand"*). It appears that the boys' academy offers a dual approach – the work done can be self-directed by the needs/requests of the learners on a particular day, or if there are no requests, then the teacher concerned has a programme to follow. At the girls' academy the learners are asked a week in advance what they would like to focus on.

The practical aspect of Physical Science was commented on by a number of participants who found being able to actually conduct experiments themselves beneficial (*"it's more practical … they show you that this is what happens. It has been*

quite awesome"). Physical Science and Maths teaching at the girl's academy involved the use of tablets for various exercises and to get information regarding concepts. The participants found this approach beneficial as well.

There was a definite impression that *"harder work"* was done by the learners at the academies and that this *"broadens our minds"*. Participants felt that the different learning styles experienced in the two institutions they attended was a positive thing.

4.2.2.2 Academic Results

In response to being questioned about the academy's academic programme, a number of participants reported improvements in their marks across the subjects taught at the respective academy as a result of their attendance (*"it has boosted my marks"*). This raising of marks links directly to the theme of opportunities as it would mean access to tertiary institution courses is more likely. The participants were clearly aware of this as one of the girls stated *"with education we could literally go far".* The thought of the *"fruits"* of the hard work which would eventually be enjoyed, entry to university, as well as the concept of a better future, seemed to act as inspirations for a number of the participants.

4.2.3 Opportunities afforded to Personal Development/Growth

The opportunities participants reported in terms of their personal development and growth were wide-ranging. The soft skills included time management, responsibility and leadership, spiritual growth and life skills. In terms of personal development, spiritual growth as well as independence and maturity were also commented upon.

Attending two educational institutions seemed to have taught the learners to develop coping mechanisms which ultimately enabled them to work more effectively. One participant stated *"I don't use my spare time to fool around because I know that I have work to do".* The development of coping strategies was mentioned, as well as the ability to work more efficiently.

Being put in situations that were out of their comfort zone, such as on the boys' academy leadership camp, resulted in learners referring to a growth in responsibility which *"inspires us to be better leaders".* One participant stated that the leadership camp enabled the boys *"to know ourselves better, to know our colleagues better"*. Another explained that he had grown in confidence since he had joined the academy.

This concept of bettering oneself was echoed by two of participants from the girls' academy. One of them stated that the academy *"has taught us that you need to be a lady, you need to do things on your own and you need to have your name up there".* There was clearly a focus on making girls feel that they are empowered.

Several girls mentioned skills they had acquired as a result of attending the academy. These included computer skills, research skills and the ability to write a CV. Careers testing had given the girls more of a sense of where they might want to go regarding future study, as well as being an incentive to work hard in the present.

One of the ways in which the boys' academy differs to the girls' academy is that the boys attend what are called Divinity lessons. This involves discussions regarding *"our experiences as teenagers and how to deal with things like peer pressure"* as well as regarding religion. All the participants from the boys' academy spoke of the benefits of Divinity and indeed, it was clear that this subject had made a significant impact on them.

In addition, the boys' focus group made mention of a further life skill they had gained at the academy through being taught to greet everyone they met. This was "*not enforced at our schools*" but "*it's beneficial to your life*" indicating that the boys were aware of the positive impact that their manners could have on people they interacted with in terms of how they, the boys, were perceived. One boy explained it as follows: *"it shows other people, gosh, these guys have respect and that will take you a long way, I think, in whatever you plan to do"*.

The boys had experienced several out of school activities through the academy such as a leadership camp, a visit to the Apartheid Museum and a visit to Maropeng. One of the boys felt that the trips were just as beneficial as the lessons, whilst another spoke of the enjoyment of learning about *"stuff which I was not sure about"*.

In fact, more comment was made by the participants from the boys' academy regarding the spiritual and personal growth benefits of the programme than on the academic benefits.

4.2.4 Role of others in enabling participants to make the most of opportunities presented

Both boys and girls commented on the role played by family members in helping them push through the tough times when they felt the pressure of attending the respective academy as well as their own school was getting on top of them. This echoes Walton's (2011) finding that the involvement of parents is an important factor in the successful development of inclusive schools and that it is a positive influence on learners' experience of school. One boy referred to the encouragement he received from his mother and grandmother to concentrate on his school work. One of the girls spoke of how her mother reminded her that the opportunity she had many others would love to have, so she must make the most of it.

4.2.5 Financial opportunities afforded through attendance at the academies

The boys' focus group spoke of the fact that their university application entrance fees were covered by the academy. Thus no-one was prevented from attempting to open the first door to a tertiary institution through lack of funds. The boys also referred to the incentive of the top matriculant in the academy each year being granted a bursary to study 'A' levels at the host school.

4.2.6 Opportunity to use exposure to the academy programme to assist others

A definite awareness of social responsibility was seen amongst the male participants in the study. This was of two distinct types. Firstly, the boys felt that they needed to

take back what they had learnt to their own school or to others in their community. One participant, in speaking of what he had learnt on the trip to the Apartheid Museum said, *"I was able to pass it on to people who also want to know about history."*

Secondly, the boys were unanimous in recommending participation in the programme to other learners at their school. As one participant said:

"I can definitely see there is a brighter future in coming to the Academy, so why not share that future with other learners."

In addition, there was a view that if others came to the academy, they too would be able to make a positive contribution to society:

"… they can come here and be enriched, so they that they can also go out there and make a change in this world."

Some teachers at the schools of origin encouraged those attending the academies and asked the academy learners what they had learned or if they had information that they could pass on to other learners or, indeed, to the teachers themselves.

4.2.7 Opportunity to Belong

4.2.7.1 Opportunity to belong at school of origin

Participants reported three different approaches adopted towards them by their fellow classmates at their school of origin, once they had been given a place at the academy: an initial negative attitude, a positive attitude and no change in how they were treated.

Some participants, both boys and girls, reported that there had been an initial change in attitude towards them on the part of their peers when they had been selected to join the respective academies. Peers might have viewed them as *"smarties"* or *"nerds"* but these terms did not have negative connotations, rather, the academy members were seen as being able to help other learners at the school of origin. When the knowledge gained at the academy was taken back to the school of origin by the academy members themselves and sometimes fed into lessons, the boys reported that this was

seen as generous by some of their peers whilst some considered it to be showing off. Some participants, both boys and girls, had an initial negative reaction from members of their school of origin: one spoke of being *"un-friended"* and being told that she did not deserve the position at the academy, whilst another spoke of being perceived to be arrogant. However, it seemed that these negative perceptions did not last for long and *"now it's just usual, we're just equal"*.

Several participants referred to the fact that on being selected to attend the academies they received more respect from their peers than previously. Two separate comments on this issue were: *"you do, in a way get respected, somehow"* and *"they have this higher respect for us than how we were before".* One participant reported that younger learners *"look up to you and also want to be like you"*.

However, four participants stated that their experience had been that the attitude towards them of their peers at the school of origin had not changed at all as a result of their selection to be part of the academy programme.

These varied attitudes would seem to indicate that perceptions of the academy learners were influenced by individual character traits of the people concerned in each instance.

4.2.7.2 Opportunity to belong to or feel part of the host school

The vast majority of participants stated that they felt welcome at their respective academy host schools. This feeling of being welcome seems to have arisen mainly as a result of smiles and greetings being exchanged with host school learners that the academy learners just accidentally walk past. One participant stated:

"… it's good to feel welcomed in a school that's not mine, and to have the privileges that other kids have."

This suggestion of a positive reception was furthered by this statement from a participant:

"They make us feel like it's our school, we're all going to share it and be a part of it."

Another said in the focus group, *"but they welcomed us and that was just wild for me".* This feeling of surprise followed on from a discussion of about how at their own school visitors were ignored "*we don't look at them, like we're doing here. We didn't smile".*

In fact, only one female participant expressed experiencing any sort of negative attitude and for her that was not the norm:

"It's only one or two that I've come across that were negative … given a negative kind of reaction towards us, but here a lot of people are friendly and professional."

When asked in the focus group for any further comment on how the boys felt they were treated at the academy, one of them stated *"we are not being treated like an outcast".* The use of the word *"outcast"* could have been used due to the fact that English was not the boy's mother tongue or it could have been purposefully chosen. If the latter, the suggestion is that the boy did not feel totally alien but possibly did not feel as if he fitted in either. This feeling of what might be termed a slight discomfort was echoed by one of the girls, who unlike her peers referred to entering the host school being *"still as awkward as it was".* This sentiment can be compared with Geyer's (2014) finding in her research into scholarship recipients at affluent independent schools that the self-esteem of many such learners was negatively impacted as a result of them being aware that they did not quite fit in due to them not owning technological devices that many of their peers did own.

One of the boys recalled being told by the head of the academy that they were a part of the school, that they should not act *"differently and the school members would not act differently towards us".* The comment by the academy head indicates that the academy boys belong to the host school. However, only one of the participants voiced some sense of belonging: he said he *"partially"* belonged because of the time he spent at the academy and *"because I feel most of my knowledge comes from here most of the time".*

As indicated above, contact between the host school learners and the academy learners tended to be incidental rather than intentional and take the form of simple greetings. Nevertheless, there were instances of more prolonged interaction, but these again were spontaneous rather than planned ahead of time. For example, the boys mentioned playing soccer after the academy lessons with the host school boarders *"now and then".* Another boy recalled playing snooker with someone from the host school.

One of the girls recalled an occasion around Easter in her Grade 10 year when members of the host school and the academy girls sat together and interacted and were given chocolate rabbits. This event had not been repeated in the Grade 11 year – Easter eggs were given to the academy girls, but there was no mingling with host school learners.

The issue of how teachers could affect the extent to which they felt they belonged was mentioned by several girls in the focus group discussion. One girl felt that a teacher had misinterpreted a smile as being disrespectful and this had upset the girl. Others said they had been treated in what they perceived as a patronising way by the head of the girls' academy regarding the use of cell phones and access to the tuck shop, for example. One stated *"Sometimes she makes comments not fully knowing that it's going to have an effect on these kids".*

It is significant to note, however, that Geyer (2014) found the impediment to belonging amongst scholarship recipients at affluent independent schools lay not with teachers, who were not mentioned in this context, but rather with their peers. With the passage of time strong friendships developed between the scholarship recipients and non-scholarship recipients.

4.3 Challenges

The concept of "challenge" was a theme that arose from the data in this study. For the purposes of this research, challenge is defined as "a task or situation which tests someone's abilities" (Oxford Online English Dictionary). The ways in which the

opportunity to attend the respective academies have put the learners in difficult situation is thus explored.

4.3.1 Teaching and learning environment at school of origin

Three specific issues were mentioned with regard to the teaching and learning environment at the school of origin: large classes, learner misbehaviour and ineffective teaching strategies.

The class size at one of the schools of origin was mentioned as being an impediment to academic progress. This was despite the fact that the class, being about 30 in number is not large in terms of the norm. The teacher is unable to give any personal attention to learners who do not understand, such that several participants said that they save their questions to bring to the academy. Another learner felt that the sheer class sizes affected the ability of the teacher to provide detail. The teachers tended to be brief and straight to the point which the learner concerned did not find effective.

In addition, some of the learners in the class were not interested in the lesson and so misbehaved. This became a distraction to those who did want to learn and made it more difficult for the teacher to do his/her job. One of the girls explained it as being the *"bad people"* who caused trouble at her school but otherwise school was *"very nice"*. With regard to misbehaviour a participant stated:

"… it sometimes kind of delays us in terms of completing the syllabus because if everybody is not on track we have to like stop and concentrate on that particular group."

A participant who attended the other school of origin responded by stating how frustrating that would be and said that did not happen at his school.

One of the girls expressed the view that they were treated:

"… as university learners when it comes to Maths. Like we are given work and we're just left there to do it ourselves, without being monitored or the answers checked or anything. We do it ourselves."

However, the academy members would have the recourse of bringing their questions to the academies in the afternoons and both girls and boys reported doing this.

Teaching styles were mentioned as a detractor from high marks, but the learner concerned qualified his comment by saying *"some things I feel like I understand them better here, and some I understand them better at our school."*

The absence of the internet was seen as a disadvantage, as was the fact that learners did not do experiments themselves.

4.3.2 Exclusion at the school of origin

4.3.2.1 Exclusion by peers

As mentioned in 4.2.7.1 above, participants did express sometimes experiencing initial teasing or being singled out due to having been accepted to the academy. This sometimes affected friendship groups but appeared to sort itself out relatively quickly.

4.3.2.2 Exclusion by teachers

Although some teachers at the schools of origin were very supportive of those members of their classes who attended the academies (see 4.2.6), others were not. Participants referred to instances of belittling behaviour on the part of both male and female teachers at their own schools. For example, academy members were told that they did not work hard at their own school, only at the academy. A teacher told learners *"… oh, you think you're better just because you're going to _____"*

One of the schools of origin is some distance from the academy site. This necessitates a bus ride and on two days a week the learners had to leave 15 minutes into a Mathematics lesson. In the girls' focus group discussion the participants explained how the teacher would decide to give a test for marks just as the academy learners were leaving and tell them they could choose whether to stay or not. A participant further explained *"then he'd get racial about it and say, okay, it's fine you can go to your white*

school …" The learners expressed their distress about this kind of comment coming from an adult: *"where's the acceptance in you, where's the maturity in you? Gosh!"*

The academy members had to show resilience to cope with this type of ongoing negative comment.

4.3.2.3 Exclusion from extra mural activities

Attending the academies meant that the participants could not be part of activities that took place at their own schools in the afternoons. Whilst for some who stated that they were not sporty this was not an issue, others did have to sacrifice something that they had enjoyed. Gymnastics, chess, debating and dance class were the extra mural activities that had been foregone, sometimes altogether, and sometimes learners were able to participate in the specific activity one day a week. One girl spoke of dropping a dance class (*"I had to cut that out"*) and then doing gymnastics on one day as a sport. She chose gymnastics as it is an individual sport and no one would be negatively impacted if she was not there. However, members of both the boys' academy and the girls' academy felt that giving up school of origin extra murals was worth it. One boy stated, *"I think the academy is more beneficial to me than sports".* One of the girls went so far as to say that the academy is *"like the best thing you can actually do, like the best extra mural".*

4.3.3 Challenges to participation in the academy programme

The most frequently expressed challenge faced by the participants was tiredness and exhaustion. This was because of the extended school day and the travelling from school to the academy either by foot from one school of origin or by bus from the school further away. The travel was seen as a *"kind of draining thing"*. On arriving home, the academy members still had homework to do as well as the chores expected of them.

The pressure experienced had made some participants want to give up at times, but several participants spoke of how they had grown to cope. One said that commitment was key: *"… are you committed enough to take the strain that comes to you"*. This statement followed on from his colleague who had said that coping with the tiredness

is *"a sacrifice that we all need to make". "Balance"* was the answer and knowing how to work under pressure, according to one of the participants.

One of the participants from the girls' academy was of the view that even the tiredness was a good thing as it was ultimately leading to a better future.

In addition to the physical tiredness discussed above and mental tiredness from the extra hours of school work, a number of the learners voiced the pressure they felt due to others' expectations of them. Family, the school of origin and the academy itself all have expectations of these young people. One of the girls felt *"like you constantly have to push yourself, doing more than what you think you can do".* Another felt *"it's more like you are living for someone else".* The fact that their peers at the school of origin *"look up to you"* created further pressure. A recent drop in marks was reported by one girl due to an increase in level of difficulty. She spoke of the need to increase her efforts and stated *"I won't let the academy down"*, showing almost a sense of obligation to the academy. Geyer (2014) also found there was considerable pressure on the scholarship recipients in her study to perform academically – both from parents and from the schools awarding the scholarships – in order for the scholarship to be maintained. One learner went so far as to say that she felt that she was missing out on *"teenager experience and … experimenting period"* as a result of being a member of the academy. This latter comment was made in the focus group discussion where at one point it appeared that the girls were almost urging one another on in terms of being disgruntled. There was no similar sentiment expressed by any of the boys.

4.4 Perceived flaws in the programme

When asked specifically about flaws in the academy programmes, the participants, both boys and girls, said they had not thought of anything negative to say, there were no issues or problems. In fact, the only weakness in the programmes, per se, was expressed by one of the girls who felt that level and quality of the interaction between the girls of the two schools of origin which make up the academy needed to improve, and that that was something the girls themselves needed to work on.

4.5 Suggestions for improvement of the academies

When the participants were asked if they had any suggestions as to how the academy outreach programmes could be improved, their responses fell into four categories: no change needed; a change that was required on the part of the participants; changes to the programme structure which current participants felt would help them do better and changes to the size/scope of the programme.

4.5.1 No change needed

Several of the participants stated that in their opinion no changes to the programmes were needed. One boy said *"… everything has been perfect"* whilst another stated *"I don't really see any negative".*

4.5.2 Change on the part of the participants

One boy stated that the only thing that needed to change was the behaviour of the younger boys at the academy, whom he asserted, needed to show more respect to the more senior academy members. One of the girls commented on the need for the girls from the two schools of origin to make more of an effort to interact with one another as this would create a more cohesive learning group.

4.5.3 Possible changes to improve access to the potential benefits of the academies

The suggestion of adding additional subjects to those currently taught at the academies was made by several participants, with Life Sciences and Afrikaans being subjects particularly requested. One girl articulated that if the girls were able to take home the tablets they used at the academy, they would be able to do more Mathematics and Physical Science exercises and thus their marks would improve.

There was one request to enable the academy members to be involved in the sports programme of the boys' school. Several of the girls in the focus group voiced a desire for the type of outings that their male counterparts at the boys' academy had experienced. This, it was felt, would make learning more fun and not just *"work, work,*

work". It would also expose the girls to different environments, which it was felt would be of benefit to them.

To alleviate the stress of long days, one participant suggested that the academy should run during the school holidays or on Saturdays and Sundays. The question about improvements did not allow participants time to ponder or reflect, and therefore what they said did not have the benefit of considered thought regarding the feasibility of some of the ideas. Nevertheless, their comments give an indication of the issues on their minds.

4.5.4 Change: expand the programme to create opportunities for others

It was the general view that the programme should not only continue but expand to involve more than two feeder schools in order to *"give others a chance".* One participant went so far as to say that there was a need for such a programme that all South African youth could be exposed to.

However, there was a comment from a boy and a girl regarding the fact that they felt *"special"* people were needed for the programme: those who could *"cope with pressure" and "those who are willing"*. This suggests that these two participants believed that the academy was not for everyone. This relates to the earlier ideas, discussed in 4.2.1 of being chosen due to being deserving of a place at an academy.

4.6 Expressions of gratitude

At the end of the individual interviews participants were asked if there was anything further that they would like to add regarding their experience at the academy. A number of the participants used this as an opportunity to express their gratitude and appreciation for being a member of the particular academy. Their feelings were voiced through comments such as: *"… I'd like to say thanks to _____ for offering us this opportunity"*; *"I love being here"*; *"… my experiences here have been awesome"* and *"… it's a once in a lifetime opportunity that not everyone gets".* This finding supports that of Geyer (2014) who commented on the gratitude of learners who were scholarships recipients at affluent independent schools

4.7 Conclusion

It is clear that the ability of the boys and girls attending the two academies to take full advantage of their membership thereof, is influenced by the various opportunities and challenges they face as individuals in their endeavours to make the most of being a member of an academy.

The nuances of the opportunities and challenges determine the level of marginalisation or inclusion the learners encountered. Messiou's four types of marginalisation (Messiou, 2006) can be recognised in the experiences voiced by the academy learners (see Chapter 2.1.2 Inclusive education and discourses of marginalisation). Marginalisation experienced by the child and seen as such by the child and others is seen in the treatment of academy members by the occasional teacher at the school of origin. The child being marginalised but others not seeing it as such is evidenced by academy teachers misconstruing behaviour and reacting negatively and undeservedly, as felt by the learner. These issues raise questions as to whether when the academy children feel welcome as a result of smiles and greetings they are really perceiving the situation correctly, or rather that this is tolerance and acceptance of them so long as they exist on the periphery of the host school.

It is possible to argue that, in fact, they are being marginalised by not being given a full place in the host school itself. Lewin (2007a) coined the concept of "silent exclusion" to refer to children enrolled in school but not accessing all the benefits of this. A nuanced "silent exclusion" could be applied to the academy, since the learners are enrolled in the academy, but circumstances sometimes prevent them from reaping all the benefits of this. The circumstances which conspire against them are extant both in the school of origin and in the academies themselves. This finding is echoed by Slee's discussion regarding a parent in Australia who said that inclusive education in her area was "merely scraps from the table for children who, when all is said and done, are sometimes tolerated but never welcome". Slee, 2011, p. 43). Walton has referred to this issue as the "hospitality metaphor" (Walton, 2016, p. 74) where learners by being "welcome" are in fact being positioned as guests in a system that is essentially doing them a favour by allowing then to be there and where they are inferior in terms of power relations.

However, there can be no doubt that all the academy members interviewed in the course of this research believed that being part of the programme was of singular importance to them in terms of what it could do, when combined with their own efforts, for an improved future for them. In the words of one of the girls:

"The strength is like you're taking people who do have like a potential but it's not being used at that school and bringing it here for it to be groomed, and growing it into something better than how it was before. I think that's the main strength of it. And like it's going to help us in the future to be what we want to be, because we didn't even know what we wanted to be before we got into this thing … And it really opened our minds, yes, I think that's how it really strengthens us."

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

My interest in the voices of the learners attending the two academies arose because I was curious as to the experience of the learners themselves as opposed to what the academic results of the academies indicated about scholastic achievement. In order to conduct this research the methodological frame of phenomenology was selected. Data was collected using both individual and focus group interviews. The methodology and data collection methods were discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four analysed the data that was collected. The findings can be divided into two broad themes of opportunities and challenges both experienced by and expressed by the participants at the two outreach academies.

This chapter will discuss the answers that were found to each of the research questions. The limitations of the study, both in terms of design and execution, will then be explored. This will be followed by consideration of the study's strengths. Next, recommendations will be discussed: those pertaining to schools running outreach programmes and those relevant to the broader context of inclusive education. The implications of this study for further research will then be considered. The researcher will then provide some reflections on the experience of the study and will then provide concluding remarks.

5.2 Answers to the research questions

It can be seen how the over-arching themes of opportunities and challenges are integrally woven into the research question answers which arose from the data.

5.2.1 Do the learners express a sense of being a part of the community at the school at which the outreach academies occur as well as at their own schools?

The data spoke to the learners generally feeling a sense of belonging at both their own school and the school at which the academy takes place. Initial reactions to learners being selected to join the academy sometimes suggested feelings of jealousy, which tended to pass with time. Many of the participants' peers congratulated them on being selected to be part of an academy. Some participants reported that there was no change in the way in which learners felt they were treated by fellow learners at the schools of origin.

Some teachers at the schools of origin reportedly made life difficult for the members of the academy, usually by the negative comments that were made. In one instance a teacher made the academy members choose between missing a test or going to the academy.

Participants reported positive interactions with learners at the host schools, although these tended to be unplanned and occasional, so that they had a clear feeling of belonging. The way they were treated by staff at the host schools reinforced this feeling, although there were occasions when some of the girls felt they had been marginalised by an individual teacher at the host school.

5.2.2 What do the learners voice as being the strengths and weaknesses of the programme of which they are part?

One of the key strengths of the programme, as voiced by the participants, was the improvement in both their academic understanding and their performance in the subjects which were taught at the academy. Another strength of the programme was expressed as being personal growth, which the participants felt was as a result of being at the academy. Specific areas of development included resilience, drive, time management skills and growth in the areas of leadership.

Both the boys and the girls interviewed were not able to articulate any specific weaknesses in the programme. The only comment that hinted at a weakness concerned one of the girls who felt that the girls from the two feeder schools should make more of an effort to interact at the academy itself.

Suggestions were made as to how the academy could improve – these do not necessarily stem from a feeling that something was lacking, rather as to how to improve. Such suggestions included making the academies available to more learners and widening the number of subjects being taught at the academies.

5.2.3 How do the learners express their experience of both the academic and cultural/spiritual aspects of the programme?

The participants were unanimous in their agreement that the academies had had a positive effect on their academic performance at their own school. They suggested that this was due to the teaching approaches used at the academies where they were able to ask questions, could get individual help from teachers and were able to carry out experiments, for example.

The cultural/spiritual aspects of the programmes were commented on extensively, such that it appeared that this aspect of the academies seemed to have had the biggest impact on the participants. The programme at the boys' academy had a definite focus on nurturing the spiritual development and cultural exposure of the learners. In the girls' academy this took a subsidiary role to that of academic studies. In fact, some exposure to activities other than the strictly academic programme was seen by the girls as desirable.

5.3 Limitations of the study

As a result of the study certain important questions regarding the experiences of learners and the extent of their feeling of belonging have been answered. However, the findings cannot be deemed of value unless the limitations of the study are acknowledged.

5.3.1 Limitations in the design of the study

The study is limited due to the fact that only two outreach academies were considered. In addition, the two that were selected were located at what are essentially neighbouring schools. This selection was made due to the time constraints experienced by the researcher in terms of accessing research sites, as well as by the prior knowledge the researcher had of the existence of these outreach academies. Furthermore, only a small sample of learners was consisting of five participants from each academy. The above limitations mean that is not possible to extrapolate from the findings of this study to suggest that such findings may be indicative of general trends.

5.3.2 Limitations in the execution of the study

The lack of experience on the part of the researcher in terms of carrying out interviews was a limitation. Although a list of interview questions was prepared to be able to guide the semi-structured interview, the interviewer's inexperience was evident when listening to the transcripts. Questions were sometimes asked in ways which may have impacted on how the participants perceived what was being asked of them.

In addition, during the girls' focus group interview there was a definite change in tone when several of the girls began to get animated as a result of negative comments made about one of the people involved in the running of the outreach academy. The researcher was concerned that some of the statements made then and thereafter may have been influenced by the emotional state of the participants and may not have been carefully considered opinions. This point illustrates the potential limitation in the use of focus groups in that group members may have their opinions influenced by those of others.

5.4 Strengths

Despite the limitations expressed above, this study did provide an opportunity for a small number of outreach academy participants to have a voice, which they would not otherwise have had, as to how they had experienced the two programmes. The data collected were sufficient to draw conclusions, and the limitations are not deemed to threaten the credibility of the study. The experiences as voiced by the participants can

be used by the two research academies to guide initiatives aimed at the improvement of the two programmes. Such improvements, it is hoped, would try to ameliorate some of the challenges expressed by the participants.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendations for schools running outreach programmes

The voices of the young people as heard in this research project indicate a strong positive and laudatory attitude to the programme. However, as a result of the research, it is recommended that the host schools endeavour to foster a positive relationship with the academic staff of the feeder schools in order to remove the suggestion of the academy being a threat or an indication of incompetence in the school of origin. Secondly, the data suggests that it would be a good idea for the host schools to make a conscious effort to understand the contexts in which the learners find themselves, so as to enable the learners to maximise what they are able to gain from the academies. In addition, the data indicates that the significant value that the learners placed on what they learnt at the academy over and above academic subject knowledge be taken into consideration when either planning a new outreach initiative or attempting to improve on an existing one.

5.5.2 Recommendations for the broader concept of inclusive education

It is recommended that schools undertaking outreach projects of this nature consider the extent to which their current practices are truly "inclusive" or are simply allowing the participants to merely exist on the periphery where they are tolerated rather than truly accepted. A dilemma exists as to whether some form of limited inclusion which may be problematic is better than none. In addition, the selection criteria for such outreach programmes needs to be revisited to include the concept of potential and an awareness of issues that disadvantaged learners face.

5.5.3 Implications for further research

The research conducted in this project could be furthered by considering different models of outreach academies as well as looking at a bigger sample of learners. In

addition, the impact of the outreach academies could be investigated by considering the tertiary education careers of former academy members. It would then be possible to ascertain the extent to which the outreach academies had assisted in the promotion of access to tertiary education. It would be also be worthwhile to conduct a longitudinal study, in which the voices of the outreach academy members regarding their experiences of the academy are sought several years after they have exited the programme.

5.6 Reflections on the research project

During the course of my interaction with the participants, whether individually or in a group, I was struck, quite profoundly, by the determination, commitment and drive of these young people, and that of the boys in particular. It is clear that privileged education in South Africa could potentially be criticised as being unacceptably removed from the reality of the schooling experienced by the majority of learners in the country. The benevolence shown in outreach academies such as the ones studied in this research project is limited, as has been shown. This leads one to wonder whether such initiatives are a means of satisfying CSI imperatives in a manner which enables the status quo in the privileged schools to remain unchanged or are genuine efforts to do something, albeit small and limited to alleviate the inequalities extant in the education system. Clearly a dilemma exists as to whether such outreach initiatives simply allow the significant problems and inadequacies in the education system to continue, or whether interventions such as these academies, flawed as they may be, are better than nothing.

5.7 Conclusion

Grade 11 learners attending the outreach academies of two Johannesburg independent schools voiced the opinion that they did feel a part of the school community both at their school of origin and at the host school. The learners clearly expressed their experiences of both opportunities and challenges in being part of the programme. In the main, the challenges had enabled them to grow as young people, developing resilience and various other life skills. In fact, it was the non-academic skills learnt as a result of attending what are primarily academic enrichment programmes

which, in the words of the learners themselves, seemed to have made the most significant impact on them.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

DATE

Dear NAME

I am writing further to our conversation of a few months ago regarding my interest in conducting research at your outreach academy.

As you know, I am a Masters Degree Student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

My research is into the voices of Grade 11 learners attending outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools.

My research involves interviewing participants in your outreach academy on two separate occasions. I would anticipate that each interview session would take no more than 2 hours.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because you have an outreach project of the type I am looking for. Would you be amenable to me conducting my research at your school?

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely

SIGNATURE:

Frances Kerr-Phillips
kerr-phillipsf@ieb.co.za
083 415 9250

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SHEET LEARNERS

DATE

Dear Learner

My name is Frances Kerr-Phillips and I am a Masters in Education Student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on the voices of Grade 11 learners attending outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools.

My investigation involves interviewing learners attending your outreach academy on two separate occasions. I would anticipate that each interview session would take no more than 2 hours.

I was wondering whether you would consider being one of the participants. I would like you to be an interviewee. This would mean being part of a small group of about five people who will be interviewed together on two occasions for no more than two hours each time. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Remember, this is not a test, it is not for marks and it is voluntary, which means that you don't have to do it. Also, if you decide halfway through that you prefer to stop, this is completely your choice and will not affect you negatively in any way.

I will not be using your own name but I will make one up so no one can identify you. All information about you will be kept confidential in all my writing about the study. Also, all collected information will be stored safely and destroyed between 3-5 years after I have completed my project.

Your parents have also been given an information sheet and consent form, but at the end of the day it is your decision to join us in the study.

I look forward to working with you!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

SIGNATURE

Frances Kerr-Phillips
kerr-phillipsf@ieb.co.za
083 415 9250

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION SHEET PARENTS

DATE

Dear Parent

My name is Frances Kerr-Phillips and I am a Masters in Education Student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on the voices of Grade 11 learners attending outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools

My investigation involves interviewing learners attending the outreach academy your child attends on two separate occasions. I would anticipate that each interview session would take no more than 2 hours

The reason why I have chosen your child's class is because the Grade 11s have had over a year's experience of being in the academy.

I was wondering whether you would consider permitting your child to be one of the participants. I would like your child to be an interviewee. This would mean being part of a small group of about five people who will be interviewed together on two occasions for no more than two hours each time. The interview will be audio-recorded.

Your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. S/he will be reassured that s/he can withdraw her/his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and your child will not be paid for this study.

Your child's name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. His/her individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information.
Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Frances Kerr-Phillips
kerr-phillipsf@ieb.co.za
083 415 9250

APPENDIX D

LEARNER CONSENT FORM

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study called: The voices of Grade 11 learners attending outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools.

My name is: _____

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO

Permission for interview

I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

I know that FRANCES KERR-PHILLIPS will keep my information confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.	**YES/NO**
I know that I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.	**YES/NO**
I know that I can ask not to be audiotaped.	**YES/NO**
I know that all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.	**YES/NO**

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX E

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child to participate in my voluntary research project called:
The voices of Grade 11 learners attending outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools.

I, _____ the parent of _____

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree that my child may be audiotaped during the interview YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

Permission for interview

I agree that my child may be interviewed for this project. YES/NO

I know that he/she can stop the interview at any time and does not have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

I know that FRANCES KERR-PHILLIPS will keep my information confidential and safe and that my child's name and the name of his/her school will not be revealed. YES/NO

I know that he/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time. YES/NO

I know that he/she can ask not to be audiotaped. YES/NO

I know that all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project. YES/NO

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

Begin by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of the research.

Review each item on the informed consent form with the participant and ensure that each item is understood.

Give the learner an indication of the expected duration of the interview.

Spend a few minutes in general conversation to put the participant at ease.

Commence formal part of the interview

The interview will be semi-structured and the following questions will be used as a guide. Responses to questions could be such that it is necessary to further explore comments and then an unstructured format will be used.

1. What school are you at and how long have you been there?
2. Tell me a bit about your experiences at your school.
3. Did your experiences of your school change when you became a member of the outreach academy? Explain.
4. What lead to you being a member of the outreach academy?
5. Tell me a bit about your experiences at the outreach academy.
6. In what ways do you or do you not feel part of the school community at your school?
7. In what ways do you or do you not feel part of the whole school community at the outreach academy?
8. To what extent do the learners of the outreach school make you feel part of their school?
9. How have you found the academic programme offered by the outreach academy?

10. What are the spiritual and cultural aspects of the outreach programme and what have been your experiences of both?
11. What would you consider to be the strengths of the outreach programme?
12. Give one thing that you would like to see changed at the outreach academy and explain your choice.
13. What would you consider to be weaknesses or drawbacks of the outreach programme?
14. Would you recommend this programme to other learners at your school? Why?

CONCLUSION

Ask the participant if he/she has anything further to add to what has already been said.

Ask if he/she would be willing to take part in a focus group to discuss the issues that are raised in the interviews.

Thank the participant for his/her time and involvement.

FOCUS GROUP

The structure of this will be determined by the preliminary findings from the interviews.

APPENDIX G

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193•Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Telephone: +27 11 717 3007 • Fax: +27 11 717 3009 • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Student Number: 778826

Protocol Number: 2014ECE004M

04 June 2014

Dear Frances Kerr-Phillips

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education by Coursework

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

How do Grade 11 learners voice their experiences of attending the outreach programmes of two Johannesburg independent schools?

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely

M Mabeta

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

011 717 3416

CC Supervisor: Dr Elizabeth Walton