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The experience of teaching in residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Different and often contradictory opinions about deafness abound in the history of deaf people and in their education. On the one hand courtesy and compassion toward deaf people was called for in ancient Hebrew tradition, as indicated in Leviticus 19 verse 14: "You shall not treat the deaf with contempt." On the other hand, congenitally deaf people without speech were denied citizenship and other legal rights in the Roman Empire by the Justinian Code. This was influenced by Aristotle's idea that the ability to speak and the ability to reason were connected (O'Neill, 2009). Far from being historical, these contradictory connections between speech, reason and personhood may be apparent in modern Shona[1], a Zimbabwean language in which Chiswanda (1997) says that deaf people are called *mbeveve* meaning mute. According to Dale (1981) this term has concordial agreement with the pronoun for non-humans. In the same language, deaf people may also be called *matsi* which refers to 'not hearing' and has concordial agreement with pronouns for human beings (Nyota, 2013).

These different concepts of deafness reflect different opinions which determine how deafness is valued by hearing service providers such as teachers of deaf pupils in Zimbabwe. How deafness is defined, valued and perceptions of what a deaf life means will determine aspects of the curriculum for deaf students (Power & Leigh, 2011, p. 32). On the one hand, teachers may define deafness in relation to the characteristics or goals of children with normal hearing, placing value on speaking and listening while viewing a deaf life as silent and segregated from mainstream society. In this pathologic view, teachers would set out to remedy the deficiencies of deaf

[1] The Shona are the largest single ethnic group in Zimbabwe comprising of Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru sub-groups. Each of these sub-groups speaks a dialect of Shona language. Shona therefore refers to both the language and the people who in plural are referred to as *MaShona* and in singular as *MuShona*.

children so that they could be assimilated into hearing society. On the other hand, teachers may define deafness as a cultural difference and value the linguistic difference, perceiving deaf life as complete and wholesome in itself. This view of deafness concurs with Deaf[2] people's argument that they are a cultural and linguistic community, rather than a grouping of people with disabilities (Ladd, 2003; Parasnis, 1998). Baker (2008) says that in this view deafness is regarded as a difference, a characteristic that distinguishes 'normal' Deaf people from 'normal' hearing people.

In light of these differing perceptions about deafness, the experiences of teachers of deaf children in Zimbabwe become intriguing, as they are mostly socialised into Shona culture, are all hearing and therefore not necessarily members of what Ladd (2003) calls the Deaf community. These hearing teachers teach in boarding schools for the deaf that Padden (1998) says are the major socialising agent for deaf children into Deaf culture and Sign Language. The manner in which the teachers negotiate between a pathologic model of deaf people as disabled, and a socio-cultural model of deaf people as a minority group with its own language and culture becomes problematic. The encounters between the deaf learners and their hearing teachers in these boarding schools are unusual, with unpredictable demands and consequences in curriculum implementation. This is evident in the findings by Valentine (1993) that hearing teachers who pioneered deaf education in the United States and Europe were benevolent and yet intrusive towards deaf people whom they treated as underlings. Plann (1993) explains that these pioneering teachers viewed deaf learners as passive recipients of hearing largesse and enlightenment. The

[2] This study follows the convention established by Woodward (1972) and followed by other authors (Ladd, 2003; Parasnis, 1998) whereby the capitalised form 'Deaf' is used to refer to those deaf people who share a Sign Language and cultural values that are distinct from the hearing society. The lowercase 'deaf' is used to refer to the audiological condition of deafness and this study recognises this latter term as encompassing children to whom Deaf culture is a birthright by virtue of having been born deaf or having become deaf in childhood as they may not yet have decided to become members of the Deaf culture.

hearing largesse was chiefly in the form of vocational and speech training rather than academic education. This study focuses on what current hearing teachers of the deaf know about teaching deaf learners, and what they believe is their role in residential schools for the deaf. Garberoglio, Gobble, and Cawthorn (2012) say that the beliefs teachers have of their capacity to make an impact on students' performance is an unexplored construct in deaf education research. Through exploring what the teachers know and believe about teaching deaf children in these residential special schools[3] for the deaf, an understanding of their experience and the meaning they attach to teaching should become apparent. The experiences of teachers of the deaf and their potential contribution to understanding deaf education in Zimbabwe appear to be areas overlooked by researchers. This study therefore initiates reflections on the teachers' experiences in the special residential schools.

1.2 Background

Deaf children's educational outcomes are a long-term global challenge. Literature is replete with research studies recording how most deaf high school leavers barely manage to achieve a fourth grade reading level (Brueggemann, 2004; Wauters, van Bon, & Tellings, 2006) and how their mathematics attainments are lower than those of their hearing peers (Bull, Marschark, & Blatto-Vallee, 2005; Nunes & Moreno, 2002; Zarfaty, Nunes, & Bryant, 2004). These global low levels of academic achievement are also evident in the education of deaf children in Zimbabwe, a country which has the double distinction of having a literacy rate of 92%, the highest in Africa (UNDP, 2010)[4] and as Devlieger (1998b) reports, is one of the most disability-friendly on the continent. In spite of these accolades, Musengi and Dakwa (2011) found that deaf pupils in

[3] A residential special school for the deaf is a boarding school established to cater exclusively for deaf learners. According to Padden (1998) it is a bounded community headed by teachers and administrators who carefully separate deaf children from the public to protect them from outside hearing people.

[4] United Nations Development Programme

Zimbabwe who make it into high school are the exception. Typically, deaf learners are placed in boarding institutions where they undergo elementary education after which most of them are then taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing and cookery (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004). Peresuh and Barcham (1998) observed that historically in Zimbabwe, teaching such children was considered more of a moral and religious obligation than a right, as churches and humanitarian organizations like the Jairos Jiri Association educated deaf children without national coordination and direction.

Three elementary special schools were established by churches and a humanitarian organisation specifically to cater for the needs of deaf children in Zimbabwe. The Henry Murray School was established by the Dutch Reformed Church in 1947 at Pamushana Mission in Bikita district and transferred to Morgenster Mission near Masvingo in 1948 because of water shortages (Muzembe, Musengi, & Makahamadze, 2009). Another special school for the deaf was established in the same year by the Dominican nuns of the Catholic Church at Loreto Mission near the city of Kwekwe. Musengi (1999) says that this school abandoned the rural Loreto site in 1978 because of the war and relocated to Harare's Emerald Hill suburb. It was renamed Emerald Hill School after the suburb. A Zimbabwean charitable organisation, the Jairos Jiri Association established Jairos Jiri Naran School for the deaf in the city of Gweru in 1968 as the third special school for deaf learners (Barcham, 1998). These elementary schools offered an academic and technical-vocational curriculum up to seventh grade, the end of the elementary school course in Zimbabwe. After elementary school, the learners focused solely on vocational training in a two to three year programme which was certified by the local teachers at the schools. There was no high school education specifically meant for deaf learners in Zimbabwe before independence in 1980.

Teachers of deaf children in that pre-independence era in Zimbabwe were typically untrained but nevertheless committed to the improvement of the lot of the deaf (Barcham, 1998). According to Barcham (1998) the few teachers of the deaf who were trained, were trained internationally and as a result a great variety of ideas were brought into deaf education in Zimbabwe. Nziramasanga (1999) says that in the early years of Special Education, either some visiting professionals would come to offer on-the-job training at special schools or a few teachers would be sent outside Zimbabwe, particularly to Malawi, South Africa or further abroad. Barcham (1998) also reports that the three schools for the deaf in colonial Zimbabwe had twinning relationships with schools in South Africa and Europe in order to get assistance with teacher training. The majority of teachers in these residential special schools were expected to learn their craft through being mentored by more experienced teachers and to improve through trial-and-error. The discourse during this colonial period appears to have been that teaching was technically simple, requiring devotion and loyalty in carrying out the directives of one's more knowledgeable teaching superiors. Hargreaves (2000a) depicts this phase in teaching as 'the pre-professional age' as the teachers are regarded as virtual amateurs. The seminal paper by Johnson, Liddell, and Erting (1989) with the title *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*, also observes the general devotion in education of deaf learners thus: " ... a field populated by dedicated, hardworking and committed individuals, most of whom have made a principled choice to pursue a career of public service" (1989, p. 12). Also writing on the global situation, Tijselling (2014) says that teaching deaf learners has over the years become a highly professionalised field, where educated and skilled experts apply standardised tests to measure outcomes of education. This dedication, hard work, commitment and professionalization notwithstanding, the majority of deaf school children still left school functionally illiterate (Storbeck, 1999) and barely numerate, but with some practical skills in the crafts, especially in developing countries. Research specifically relating to the academic performance of deaf learners

in pre-independence Zimbabwe is not available. This gap in the literature indicates the need for further research of an historical nature. There is however no reason to think that deaf learners in pre-independent Zimbabwe fared any better than others all around the world; underachievement of deaf learners in literacy and numeracy was a global problem cited in the literature (Brueggemann, 2004; Nunes & Moreno, 2002; Wauters *et al.*, 2006; Zarfaty *et al.*, 2004).

After independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean government began to coordinate and regulate the education of deaf learners (Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chireshe, & Maunganidze, 2007; Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). Mpofu and Harley (2002) explain that this can be traced back to the extension of basic civil rights to all Zimbabweans after independence, as the new democratic dispensation was more conscious of and receptive to the civil rights of all people, including those with disabilities. At independence the three special schools for the deaf had long waiting lists of deaf children who wanted to start school. Government decided that the deaf children on these waiting lists should be allowed to attend what were officially called self-contained integration units for the hearing impaired (Chimedza, 2008) at the nearest ordinary schools. The self-contained classes were geographically located within the mainstream school, so it was argued that integration should occur naturally as disabled and non-disabled mixed and played together in and outside the classroom. In their explanation of the international trend of mainstreaming Koster, Nakken, Pijl, and Houten (2009) state that it was no longer taken for granted that pupils with special educational needs were to be sent to separate schools for special education. Vislie (2003) wrote that in the integration process, the student with a disability was expected to adapt to the mainstream system with the provision of support. Chimedza (2008) pointed out that in a developing country such as Zimbabwe, the provision of such support might not be forthcoming and so issues such as whether the child was really accepted and included in learning were ignored.

The need to ensure acceptance and inclusion in learning is congruent with UNESCO (1994)[5] and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). This is the reason that government became a signatory to these international treaties. In practice, this shift to inclusive education meant that the previously 'self-contained' integration units became less self-contained as deaf children became more engaged in academic subjects in mainstream classes. New government policies stipulated that special needs education was now the responsibility of all teachers who were to teach all students regardless of any disabilities they might have (Mpofu, *et al.*, 2007). In line with the global community, the emphasis was now on provision, within the mainstream school environment of the conditions and support to enable diverse people to achieve certain specified goals which might or might not be the same for all learners (Green & Engelbrecht, 2007; Koster *et al.*, 2009). Hodkinson (2005) and Green and Engelbrecht (2007) pointed out that this contrasted with the traditional understanding of schools as inflexible systems to which all learners despite their differences had to adapt if they were to be successful.

Inclusive education is relevant even to special schools for the deaf. The founding document of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994) pointed out that deaf pupils may be more inclusively provided for in special schools rather than mainstream schools. UNESCO observed that deaf children needed to use a national Sign Language as the medium of communication in order to have access to education. UNESCO recognised that the particular communication needs of deaf learners should be addressed in order for them to participate and become included in education. This is the reason that UNESCO (1994, p. 18) stated that deaf pupils' education may be more

[5] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation document commonly called the Salamanca statement.

suitably provided in special schools or special units in mainstream schools where Sign Language is used. Powers (1996) corroborated on this notion of inclusion as he argues that inclusive education should not focus just on geographical place where pupils are taught but should be about attitudes geared towards ensuring learning. He is saying that inclusive education should focus on adapting educational practices to suit each pupil so that he or she learns optimally. This supports the continued existence of separate residential special schools which Padden and Humphries (2005) say have a unique environment that could provide a deaf child with immersion in interaction and experience, as well as with a critical mass of visual learners.

In light of this international support for the continued existence of separate special residential schools, the post-independence Zimbabwe government maintained the schools and began to regulate and direct the schools to make them inclusive and accountable. Government regulation has mostly been the stipulation that standards in mainstream schools should apply to the special schools as well. Deaf learners are now required to study the same curriculum and sit the same public examinations as hearing peers as required by the Chief Education Officer's circular number 3/89 (Chief Education Officer, 1989). Teachers who were teaching deaf children in these special schools began to receive training in special education. Initially a Diploma in Special Education was offered at an associate college of the University of Zimbabwe starting in 1986 and by 1994 the University of Zimbabwe had begun to offer Bachelor of Education (Special Education) degree programmes (Mavundukure & Thembani, 2000; Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). These diploma and degree programmes are in Special Education and include two to three courses in what is called Hearing Impairment[6]. Such programmes have provided many of the hearing

[6] 'Hearing Impairment' is the official term used in Zimbabwe to describe the whole range of hearing loss from mild to profound. In this study this term or its short form 'HI' is only used in instances where it describes official titles of programmes in Zimbabwe and in direct quotations of participants. The term is otherwise not

adults[7] who teach in the special schools with lengthy training after general teacher training, which entitles them to be called specialist teachers of the deaf (more detail in chapter 3). Relying on these specially trained teachers, one of the residential schools for the deaf has even opened the first high school for deaf pupils in Zimbabwe.

The inclusive education thrust also resulted in two of the existing residential schools for the deaf either sending some of its deaf pupils into nearby mainstream schools for lessons during the day so that they only board at the schools for the deaf. In another thrust which they called 'reverse inclusion' the two special schools also began an experiment to co-enrol some hearing pupils into classes with deaf pupils. The third school for the deaf is also at an advanced stage of preparing to co-enrol hearing pupils into their classes with deaf pupils.

It is in the context of the foregoing historical and current developments in the residential special schools for the deaf that teachers' conceptualisation of deafness needs to be understood. It is not clear what dominates the teachers' discourse on the teaching of deaf pupils even though it is clear that the education system has officially moved from charity and care to integrated education and now inclusive education. On the basis of one of two perspectives, there has to be a clearer understanding of how hearing teachers define deafness, value it and perceive a deaf life. As pointed out by Power and Leigh (2011), these considerations will determine aspects of the curriculum for deaf learners. From one perspective, it needs to be understood whether teachers believe in a pathologic view of deafness and value the remedying of deficiencies of deaf children in order to assimilate them into hearing society. From another perspective, it also needs to be

used in this study as it is based on a pathologic perspective which is perceived as demeaning many Deaf people.

[7] All the teachers in the residential schools for the deaf under study are hearing people.

understood whether teachers believe in a cultural view of deafness and value differences between deaf and hearing people as natural cultural differences, so that a Deaf life is full and wholesome as it is. The continuum of hearing teachers' beliefs ranging from the pathologic to the cultural need to be explored in order to understand the meaning they attach to their experience of teaching in residential special schools for the deaf in the current context of inclusive education. This study therefore explores the teachers' conceptualisation of deafness and how it dominates their discourse on the teaching of deaf pupils in Zimbabwe's special residential schools for the deaf.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Typically, deaf pupils in Zimbabwe undergo a primary school education longer[8] than hearing peers and this longer stay in school is attributed to various factors. One of the prime factors is that in addition to learning the mainstream curriculum also followed by hearing pupils, the deaf pupils have other areas of need dictated by their deafness. These specialist areas and technical-vocational skills are aimed at preparing them to earn a living and fit into society. The specialist areas in the curriculum include speech, lip-reading, auditory training and Sign Language which *Curriculum Policy in Primary and Secondary Schools* (Secretary for Education, 2002) lists as one of the languages that can be taught in schools. Teachers have various perceptions about the feasibility and desirability of teaching specific aspects of the curriculum to deaf learners. These perceptions appear to have a bearing on what is actually taught, and how it is taught.

Nevertheless, in the public examination at the end of primary school, deaf candidates typically usually do far worse than hearing peers in the mainstream. After the primary school course, most

[8] Deaf pupils typically spend from 10 to 12 years in these primary schools whereas hearing peers normally spend seven years undertaking primary school education (Musengi, 1999).

of the deaf learners take up low level vocational skills training courses in the same schools. This general inability to continue with an academic education could be attributed to their weak grade seven results. Another factor is the severely limited number of places available in the only secondary school for the deaf which cannot take school-leavers from all three schools for the deaf plus the numerous self-contained integration units attached to mainstream schools throughout Zimbabwe. In any case, teachers' perceptions on academic education for the deaf could influence the primary school-leavers' future course of action, just as they determine other curriculum aspects in the primary schools.

In the primary schools for the deaf, the curriculum followed and how the subjects are taught appear to be determined by what Power and Leigh (2011) call the definition, valuing and perception of a deaf life. This means that the mainstream, specialist and vocational aspects taught and the manner in which they are taught is determined by the hearing teachers' individual and collective knowledge and beliefs. Teachers' beliefs on deafness, the ability of deaf people to learn and the teachers' knowledge about how to teach deaf learners all have a profound impact on deaf learners' lives. All these inform how teachers experience their work. Conversely, how the teachers experience teaching also informs and reinforces their beliefs and knowledge. The relationship between the experience and meaning of teaching on the one hand, and teachers' knowledge and beliefs on the other hand appears to be reciprocal. This reciprocal relationship is an unexplored construct in deaf education research in Zimbabwe even though it has the potential to give vital insights into initial specialist teacher-education and continuing professional development in deaf education.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to explore what hearing teachers know and believe about teaching deaf pupils in residential schools for the deaf in order to understand the meaning[9] they attach to the experience of teaching deaf learners. The study highlights how the teachers define deafness, how they value it and how they perceive a deaf way of life. This is done so as to explore the teachers' beliefs and convictions which underlie their everyday practice therefore uncovering the meaning they attach to teaching. The study should provide baseline understanding of deaf education in the residential schools from the hearing teachers' perspective. This aim has been broken down into the following research questions:

1.5 Central research question

What is the meaning of teaching for hearing adults who teach deaf children in residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe?

1.6 Secondary research questions

1.6.1 What do hearing teachers believe about deaf pupils' ability to learn?

1.6.2 What do hearing teachers know about teaching deaf learners in separate residential institutions?

1.6.3 How do hearing teachers' knowledge and beliefs relate to their experience of teaching deaf children?

1.7 Rationale

[9] The meaning referred to in this study has to do with issues of teachers' social participation and relations with deaf pupils and other teachers. This is different from theories of meaning in the philosophy of language or in logic where issues of correspondence between statements and reality are the main concern (Wenger, 1998, p. 15).

Teachers are entrusted with the task of ensuring children's intellectual growth and preparing them to meet the challenges of the future (Hargreaves, 2009). Such vital work is done in residential schools for the deaf which Padden (1998) calls 'island communities' because of their secluded nature. The work is carried out by hearing adults working with deaf children whose culture is potentially different from that of the teachers. It is imperative to understand the meaning these teachers attach to their experiences in the schools. An exploration of the teachers' perceptions of their professional experiences in these island communities might provide insights into the cognitive, affective and behavioural essence of a teacher of the deaf. These insights might indicate what essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that teacher-education and continuing teacher-development programmes in deaf education need to impart. The premise of this study is that if systematic information is collected about deaf education from teachers of deaf children, this would improve understanding of the teachers' experiences and ultimately inform what may need to be done to improve the schools for the deaf.

As I myself have had the experience of teaching in schools for the deaf, I decided to explore my own experiences and so I engaged in an autoethnographic component of research in one chapter of this study (see Chapter 6). As Mizzi (2010) points out, through reflecting inward and then reflecting outward, the presence of the researcher's life experience is acknowledged with all his vulnerabilities. All hearing educators of deaf learners should reflect on how their inner beliefs might affect the way in which teaching of deaf children is conceptualised. In order to move deaf education forward, I do what I expect the other hearing educators to do. As Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 738) explain, the purpose of autoethnography is to "come to understand yourself in deeper ways and with understanding yourself comes understanding others." An understanding of my own beliefs would help me understand how the other hearing educators conceptualise and treat deaf learners.

1.8 Assumptions of the study

An understanding of the meaning of teaching is assumed to be possible through the use of systematic procedures for eliciting teachers' knowledge and beliefs on teaching deaf learners in residential special schools (see Chapter 4 for details on methodology). It is assumed that once the teachers' knowledge and beliefs have been elicited, they could be related to the meaning teachers attach to the teaching of deaf pupils and their experience of teaching in residential schools for the deaf. It is assumed that although beliefs and knowledge are not always easily distinguishable (Calderhead, 1996) this would not affect the eliciting of what are in effect teachers' cognitions and ultimately relating them to the experience of teaching. Having said that, it is important to note that this study follows Calderhead (1996) in referring to 'beliefs' as suppositions, commitments and ideologies whereas 'knowledge' refers to factual propositions and understandings which inform skilful action.

It is assumed that participants have some knowledge about teaching deaf learners by virtue of their participation in teaching in residential schools for the deaf. The study also assumes that the participants will be willing and able to tell the true stories of their experiences. This is particularly important given the self-report nature of the individual interviews and focus group discussions used in collecting data in this study (see Chapter 4). It is also assumed that the quality of the teachers in the special schools affects the quality of the education provided in these institutions.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The participants in this study are 50 hearing educators of deaf pupils with experience of teaching in the three residential special institutions originally founded for deaf learners in Zimbabwe. Table 1.1 below is a summary of participating educators at each school.

Table 1.1: Summary of participants

School	**Teachers**	**Principals**	**Total**
Henry Murray	16	1	17
Emerald Hill	16	1	17
Jairos Jiri Naran	14	1	15
Total	46	3	49

The researcher, who has had experience teaching at two of the three residential schools for the deaf, complemented the information provided by the 49 educators shown in Table 1 and so becomes the fiftieth participant. The study limits itself to the experiences that teachers within these schools are willing and able to share.

1.10 Structure of the Dissertation

This section outlines the organisation of the research into ten chapters. Chapter One is a general introduction to the study setting the tone for the rest of the study by discussing the influence of contradictory views of deafness on the experience of teaching in a school for the deaf. The chapter shows how teachers might be informed by a pathologic view of deafness which values speaking and

listening. It also shows how, contrary to the pathologic intention to remedy and assimilate deaf children into hearing and speaking society, teachers might have a cultural view of deafness which appreciates the linguistic difference between Sign Language and spoken languages. It is argued in this chapter that these different beliefs and knowledge on deafness inform how teaching is experienced, while the experience of teaching in turn also informs beliefs and knowledge. It is therefore argued that as a direct result of this reciprocal relationship, it is logical that in order to understand the experience of teaching deaf learners, the study would focus on eliciting the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching. In order to achieve this, the study focuses on exploring beliefs and knowledge evident in the manner in which curriculum implementation is negotiated between the pathologic model and a socio-cultural model of deafness. The chapter highlights that an understanding of teachers' experience and the contribution teachers make are aspects which are often overlooked in deaf education research.

Chapter Two extends the discussion started in Chapter One on the multiple, often contradictory views of deafness. Chapter Two does this by engaging in a theoretical discussion of a conceptual framework which recognises that teachers' knowledge and beliefs are as much dependent on the environment within which the teachers work, as on the individual teachers. The situated perspective is employed in this chapter as a conceptual framework that illuminates the multiple views of deafness informing the experience of teaching. The perspective is well suited to an emphasis on how knowledge and beliefs are in part a product of the teaching activity, the context and the culture in which teaching happens. This perspective is considered appropriate for this study because of its recognition of the interaction of particular contexts and situations evident in its use of multiple conceptual tools with roots in various disciplines including psychology, sociology and anthropology. Chapter Two uses some of the conceptual tools from the situated perspective to review literature related to this study. Literature germane to key concepts and issues around each of

the research questions is critically discussed with the intention of shedding light on the problem and showing how the current study might further the discussion in areas where there are gaps in the literature.

Chapter Three analyses the socio-cultural context of the experience of teaching deaf learners in residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe. The analysis is grounded in the situated perspective and emphasises how the indigenous Bantu culture of sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Shona culture in particular, inform perceptions of disability and deafness. This sets the scene for an exposition of religious missionary intervention in disability and local organisations of people with disabilities. The chapter concludes with a general discussion of how globalisation has influenced perceptions of disability and deafness in modern day Zimbabwe.

Chapter Four is an exposition and justification of the methods used to collect data for this study. The study is within the qualitative research paradigm because it assumes that deafness, ability to learn and the experience of teaching are socially constructed, multiple realities rather than objective givens. In line with the multidimensional experience of teaching illuminated by the situated perspective employed as an orienting conceptual framework in this study, a combination of phenomenology, social interactionism and anthropology were deemed to be appropriate qualitative methods for collecting and analysing the data. Data collection involved the use of multiple tools: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) of specialist and non-specialist teachers, (five to six per discussion group per school), individual in-depth interviews with four other teachers per school, and the principal as well as review of teacher-education and policy documents. Additionally, the chapter shows how I engaged in self-reflexivity in order to recollect my own experience of teaching deaf learners as a former teacher of deaf pupils in two of the residential special schools.

Chapter Five presents and analyses various policy documents that guide deaf education in Zimbabwe. Some of the government documents are pieces of legislation while others are national policies that interpret and give effect to the legislation. Teacher-education policy documents from mainstream and specialist courses are also analysed. The discussion in this chapter is meant to provide a context for the presentation and analysis of data from teachers which begins in Chapter Six and ends in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Six presents and analyses the data from my own teaching experience in residential schools for the deaf. The chapter presents this data in a highly personalised manner addressing the question of the meaning of teaching through autoethnographic vignettes. This account of my own teaching experience is followed by the presentation and analysis of the accounts of other teachers in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

Chapter Seven specifically presents the other teachers experience of teaching as narratives with a beginning, middle and an end. Four core plots of the narrative of teaching provide an insight into beliefs on the teachers' role in the schools and the collective experience of hearing teachers teaching deaf children in special residential schools for the deaf. Chapter Eight presents specific data on the teachers' knowledge and beliefs on deafness and deaf pupils' ability to learn. Chapter Nine presents specific data on the teachers' knowledge about teaching deaf learners in separate residential institutions. Chapters Eight and Nine present and discuss various themes and concepts that emerged in addressing research questions on teachers' knowledge and beliefs.

Chapter Ten concludes the study. It does this by summarising the main issues raised throughout

the study and highlighting the main findings of this study in an essence description of teaching. The chapter also discusses the main findings presented in Chapters Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine. The discussion cites more literature than the data presentation chapters and focuses on trying to address the central question in this study more directly. It aims to highlight the meaning of teaching for hearing adults who teach deaf children in residential institutions for the deaf. The teachers' beliefs and knowledge of teaching of deaf pupils are used as empirical evidence supported by literature discussing the meaning of teaching experience in this chapter. The chapter then makes recommendations based on various conclusions drawn from the findings. As indicated earlier, in the next chapter which is Chapter Two, the discussion initiated in this Chapter One is continued on a more theoretical level and also empirical research is discussed in a review of related literature.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to understanding the meaning of the experience of teaching in residential special schools for the deaf and discusses the conceptual framework used to illuminate this problem. In order to conduct a systematic review of literature, keywords from the statement of the problem were used to survey the following sources as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2010): *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Education Index, Current Index to Journals in Education*, the *Cumulative Book Index* and ERIC. This broad range of sources was reviewed in order to capture the multidimensional nature of teaching experience. A review of related literature was deemed critical because as Leedy and Ormrod (2013) point out, the more one knows about peripheral investigations germane to one's study, the more knowledgeably particular problems of the current study can be approached. They state that a review of related literature serves to 'look again' (*re + view*) at reports of what others have done (*literature*) in a (*related*)[10] area not necessarily identical with one's own study. In light of this understanding of a review of related literature, this chapter discusses reports of research on teaching in such related areas as mainstream and special needs education. Where they are available, reports specific to teaching in deaf education are also discussed. The chapter discusses the traditional, pathological and socio-cultural paradigms of disability and deafness; the meaning of teaching; and teacher professionalism as well as teachers' theoretical knowledge base and how this might relate to teaching orientations. This type of review is crucial as it illuminates the study in light of earlier strategies on associated problems thereby helping to evaluate the current research effort by comparing with similar efforts of others (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

[10] All emphases are in the original.

Before reviewing related literature, the chapter begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework orientating this study.

2.2 Conceptual framework

The hearing teachers' experiences in the residential schools for the deaf are explored in the context of what Putnam and Borko (2000) and Robbins and Aydede (2009) call the situated perspective. The term 'situated' in the situated perspective refers to a conceptualisation of learning as participation in socially organised activities in which individuals use knowledge as an aspect of their participation in social practices (Greeno, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The concept of situated learning has philosophical roots in John Dewey's pragmatism with its emphasis on learning from real life experience (Hughes, Jewson, & Unwin, 2007). This study seeks to understand hearing adults' participation in teaching and argues that like learning, teaching is also a socially organised activity. Logically following from situated learning and situated cognition (Greeno, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Robbins & Aydede, 2009) this study therefore makes 'situated teaching' a natural consequence of these concepts. Just as Lave and Wenger (1991) situate learning in social co-participation, this study situates teaching in communities of practice participating in the creation of beliefs and knowledge that influence their experience of teaching. The situated perspective proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) posits that active social participation is the main vehicle for learning processes. Hughes *et al.* (2007) say this represents a paradigm shift from the classical learning theory of behaviourism and cognitivism which characteristically conceive of learning as an individual process involving the acquisition of a formal body of knowledge from an expert. According to Kirshner and Whitson (1997) the situated perspective seeks to reflect the fundamentally social nature of learning and cognition. Cognition is perceived as an

interaction effect: the result at least in part of causal processes spanning the boundary between the individual person and the natural and social environment (Robbins & Aydede, 2009).

The situated perspective is a framework that aptly illuminates the experience of teaching deaf pupils as teachers learn from their real-life, active participation in the schools. The perspective foregrounds how communities of practice offer teachers a model of learning, innovation and collaboration within their workplaces in the schools for the deaf, in local communities and in society generally. This is because multiple views of deafness inform individual teachers' knowledge and beliefs about deafness and teaching. As Robbins (2008) explains, an individual's conscious mental life tends to mirror that of socially salient others. In other words the teachers' knowledge and beliefs are embedded in complex transactions with salient aspects of the world of deafness and teaching around them. The situated perspective not only enables exploration of complex transactions with socially salient others in the school, local community and society at large but also facilitates illumination of the extent to which formal teacher-preparation[11] as a situation for learning offers possibilities for teacher-learning in the field of deaf education. In selecting an appropriate conceptual framework, the bio-ecological perspective championed by Bronfenbrenner (2005) was considered a strong contender as it illuminates the complexity of influences, interactions and interrelationships between individual teachers and multiple systems. The bio-ecological perspective also appeared to be useful in illuminating how knowledge and beliefs are, on the one hand a product and on the other hand a contributor of the teaching activity, context and

[11] Teacher-preparation is a neutral term depicting either teacher-training (with a skills orientation) or teacher-education (with a knowledge-base orientation). The neutral term teacher-preparation is used throughout this study in instances where the curriculum for preparing teachers for teaching cannot be readily pre-determined as either skills-oriented or knowledge-base oriented. This understanding of training, education and preparation follows Hoban (2005).

culture in which teaching occurs. The study settled on the situated perspective because it not only takes all these aspects into consideration, but goes further than the bio-ecological perspective. The situated perspective allows the pragmatic use of appropriate conceptual tools from various disciplines to clarify the multidimensional meaning of the experience of teaching. According to Borko (2004, p. 4) the situated perspective is a set of theoretical perspectives with roots in various disciplines including anthropology, sociology and psychology. No single theory from just one discipline can adequately capture the complexity of influences on teachers, and also reflect the reciprocal nature of teachers' cognitions and context, in the manner of the situated perspective. A multiplicity of concepts from various disciplines appears to be necessary in a study that posits, after Borko (2004), that teaching has both individual and socio-cultural features because it is a process of both enculturation and construction.

In the first instance enculturation means that teachers appropriate prevailing cultural narratives of teaching such as relationships with pupils and their parents. This is particularly important in a study of teaching deaf learners whom many consider to be disabled and others consider as culturally different. Teachers are already socialised into the local African culture and its narratives about disability. Local proverbs usually capture narratives about disability as Kisanji (1995a) explains that proverbs generalise a community's experience and Devlieger (1999) says they are containers of meaning on disability. On the basis of these assertions, the current study employs disability-related Shona proverbs in Zimbabwe in order to illuminate the enculturation of teachers of the deaf into Shona culture.

In the second instance teaching as a process of construction means that individual teachers do not only appropriate collectively shared narratives of teaching as they have what Murray (1989) called psychological space. Each teacher has a unique life history and a specific perspective which he or she transforms into a personal narrative of teaching. Ylijoki (2001) stated that individuals make their idiosyncratic personal narratives public in their daily practices. These might lead to conventionalisation as some transformations are incorporated into the cultural stock of narratives, thus enriching the overall resources of the culture. She points out that this process guarantees the continuous interplay between personal and cultural elements in the narrative construction of life.

It is necessary to employ a variety of concepts to examine changes in what teachers know, what they believe and how they regard themselves as professionals and hearing people who teach deaf children who are potentially members of a culture quite different from their own. The multiple concepts help illuminate not only the social context and the personal agency of the teachers but also how these interact to manifest teachers' beliefs and knowledge. These beliefs and knowledge would in turn provide insights into the meaning the teachers attribute to their experience of teaching deaf learners in residential schools. Figure 2.1 conceptualises teaching as situated within the wider Zimbabwean society, the school and the class as communities of practice in which individual teachers co-participate in the experience of teaching deaf learners.

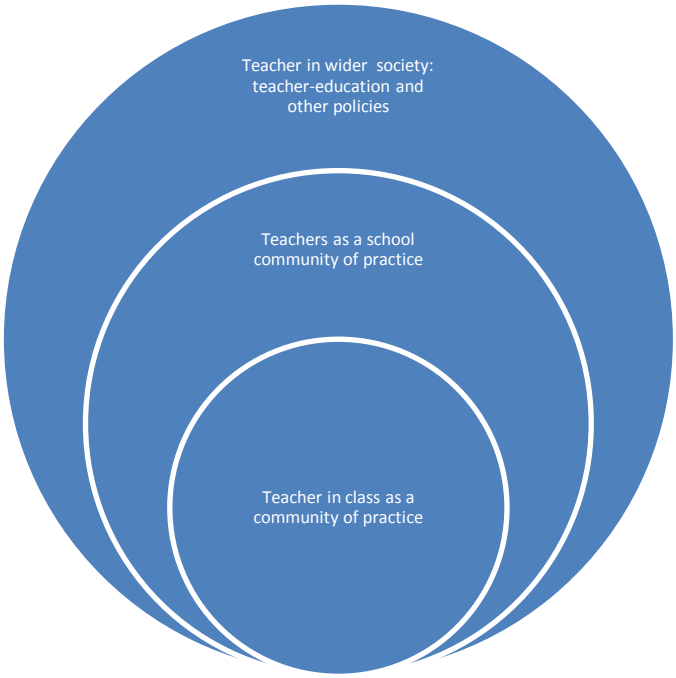


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework: Situated Perspective of Teaching Deaf Learners (Design derived from the bio-ecological perspective of Bronfenbrenner (2005) and concepts derived from communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002)).

Figure 2.1 depicts key concepts derived from the situated perspective's communities of practice. At the level Bronfenbrenner (2005) calls the micro level, learning is an active, constructive process at individual teacher level (Borko & Putnam, 1996). As the individual teacher's mind interacts with her deaf class, certain salient aspects of these children's behaviour affect her and she in turn affects them in a complex, reciprocal transaction. Other teachers in the school and significant others in society (mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem) also transact with the teacher's knowledge and beliefs about teaching in the special school for the deaf. The learning of individuals, including the teachers, is a constructive and iterative process in which the person interprets events on the basis of existing knowledge, beliefs and dispositions (Borko & Putnam, 1996, p. 674). Learning is a social participatory process rather than an individual process. The present study highlights how teaching is inseparable from a teacher's knowledge and beliefs and the social input

teachers internalise about deafness. The study recognises the subtle difference between internalisation of norms (Parsons, 1962) and the construction of identities within communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and emphasises the latter. Following Jansen (2001) teacher identities highlighted in this study are the understandings that teachers have of themselves, plus their knowledge, beliefs, dispositions and orientation towards work. The reciprocal processes of these teacher identities and social input are scrutinised in order to render meaning to the experience of teaching deaf learners.

The social input internalised by individual teachers can be understood as being based on the cultural context in which they grew up, live and work as teachers. To understand how teachers perceive their work with learners whom they regard as disabled or as a cultural grouping, one therefore needs to understand the cultural context in which the teacher grew up and in which he or she is currently living and working. Bearing this in mind, language used in connection to people with disability might illuminate meanings within the local cultural context. From the African proverbs collected and analysed as containers on the meaning of disability by Devlieger (1999) three that come from the Shona language appear to be relevant and are briefly discussed here.

The first proverb is *Seka hurema wafa* (Laugh at disability after you are dead, implying that one should never laugh at disability as one can get disabled even in old age). Devlieger (1999) stated that this proverb reflects the existential insecurity of laughing at someone with a disability as anyone could become disabled one day. The second proverb, *Bofu harimemi hunza* (A blind person does not inspect a game pit) illustrates a way of thinking that accepts disabled people's physical limitations. These two proverbs, taken together socialise

community members to see disability as something fearful because it could happen at any time, to anyone and has limitations one might not be able to overcome. The third proverb, *Chirema ndochine zano, chinotamba chakasendama kumadziro* (A deformed person is clever, he supports himself against a wall when dancing) demonstrates that people with physical disabilities are clever at finding solutions for activities that would seem difficult or impossible. Devlieger (1999) stated that this proverb shows that people with disabilities can have unexpected positive experiences, that they also have a drive for survival. These and other proverbs are widely used in the socialisation of Shona community members and may therefore reflect some of the social input that teachers who teach deaf children may internalise about what is normal concerning people with disabilities.

All these proverbs are used within the wider context of *Ubuntu,* the African philosophy of life whose fundamental belief is "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" (a person can only be a person through others) (Mbigi & Maree, 1995). As this philosophy of life advocates embracing others through whom one sees oneself, it fosters acceptance of people with disabilities as well. Edwards, Makunga, Ngcobo, and Dhlomo (2004) explain that *Ubuntu* in essence means being honest, accommodative, sharing, saving life at all costs and respecting young and old. These key aspects of *Ubuntu* resonate with the ideology of UNESCO (1994) on inclusive education whose basic tenet is a respect for diversity.

Ubuntu and proverbs from Shona culture are complemented by teacher-preparation which exposes the teachers to Western constructions of disability that have traditionally been informed by a medical discourse. In Western society what counts as normal or abnormal is medically institutionalised. Foucault (1979) stated that the norm establishes the figure of the

normal as a principle of coercion for the figure of the abnormal. This means that medical science has the power to determine what is normal and to force whatever it perceives as abnormal to try to live up to the standards of the normal. The current study not only uses these Foucauldian ideas about such a norm, but also disability-related Shona proverbs to analyse how an internalised hearing norm might structure and define the meaning of teaching for those who teach deaf learners in a school community. Internalisation of a hearing norm, whether from a medical or Shona culture point of view, would be evident in the knowledge and beliefs teachers espouse about teaching deaf learners in the residential schools for the deaf.

When a hearing norm has been internalised, teachers are likely to have what Lane (1999) called an infirmity model of deafness but which most of the scientific literature calls a pathologic or disability model of deafness (Munoz-Baell & Ruiz, 2000; Rose, 1995; Torres, 1995). Munoz-Baell and Ruiz (2000) wrote that professional intervention from this point of view is concerned with the communicative disability and its implications for the deaf person. This study explores the meaning of teaching for those teachers who adopt a pathological discourse of deafness within the school as a community of practice.

Teachers in the schools for the deaf are what Lave and Wenger (1991) called a community of practice in that as a group they create norms and values and have a shared understanding that binds them together. These are processes that Wenger (1998) said are critical in determining a community of practice. Teachers are socialised formally and informally into the practice of teaching at special schools. Wenger (1998) said they negotiate the meaning of what they do through continuously interacting with others in processes of give and take on a day to day

basis. Give and take implies that teachers negotiate the meaning of their teaching experience with deaf pupils, other teachers in the school and outsiders in a world of both resistance and malleability. When teachers are malleable to infirmity model-based norms, they filter their understanding of deafness through the medical discourse of disability and espouse knowledge and beliefs about teaching deaf learners consistent with this discourse. They might for example think of deafness mainly in terms of hearing loss and deficiency.

Teachers might, however, resist the normalising power of medical science (Foucault, 1975) for example resisting an audiological understanding of 'deafness' as 'hearing impairment'. They might also resist the normalising power of Shona proverbs which Devlieger (1999) stated are containers of meaning on disability. Resisting this normalising power, whether from audiology or Shona culture and language, results in what Foucault (1990) called a 'reverse' discourse. As an illustration of reverse discourse Foucault (1990) gave the example of how the normalising power which made the homosexual person an object of psychiatric medicine also produced the improbable concept of 'gay pride'. In the same way, the normalising power of medicine and culture can be resisted and normality recast. Teachers can transform or rework the normalising power and become able to factor into their work what Baumann and Murray (2009) called Deaf gain. Deaf gain is a reframing or recasting of 'deaf' into a form of sensory and cognitive diversity having the potential to contribute to the greater good of humanity (Baumann & Murray, 2009; Burke, 2006). Using Lakoff's Frame Theory, Baumann and Murray (2009) showed how Deaf gain is a view which recasts Deaf people as normal. Frame theory is a contextual theory of cognition in which at the core of human language and cognition is the ability to learn to relate events under arbitrary contextual control. In this case it looks at how the mind processes information so that we perceive a cup as either half empty or half full. In the same way deafness can be optimistically perceived as

Deaf gain, or pessimistically perceived as hearing loss, deficiency and disability. These differences in perception are divergent paradigms. The following sections discuss paradigms in disability.

2.3 Paradigms in disability

'Disability' literally means one is 'not able'. Andrews, Leigh, and Weiner (2004) said that the term disability logically leads to a response-set in which people view disability as a state of being that is not normal, reflecting loss, weaknesses, helplessness or heroism in the face of adversity. They argue that this frame of reference is bound to encourage ambivalence towards disability, involving both compassion, and not caring as discussed in the following two sections.

2. 3.1 Traditional understanding of disability and deafness

In many cultures the value and meaning of disability in the traditional or moral model is associated with sin, guilt, shame and punishment. Traditional attitudes towards disability are influenced by cultural differences. Firstly many of the world religions have had doctrines conveying messages about disability. Mallory (1992, p. 14) cited the example of Palau where he stated that all disabilities are believed to be caused by some failure on the part of someone to follow tradition, fulfil a responsibility or appease an ancestor. According to Kaplan (2013) in this model disability is regarded as a punishment inflicted upon an individual or family by an external force because of misdemeanours committed by the person with a disability, someone in the family or ancestors. Kabzems and Chimedza (2002) analysed the situation in

Southern Africa and found that disability continues to be associated with maternal wrongdoing, 'sacrificing' a child in exchange for good crops, witchcraft, evil spirits, punishment or a test from God. The latter correlates with ancient Hebrew tradition which taught that each human is an entity created when God's breath entered clay, and that bodily impediments come from God (O'Neill, 2009). Peters and Chimedza (2000) wrote that rituals and spiritual ceremonies are held to cleanse the disabled person and dispel evil spirits from the family. This concurs with Jesus' miracle in Mark 7 verse 32 in which deaf people heard and dumb people spoke (O'Neill, 2009).

Secondly each specific culture influences traditional attitudes as evidenced by the observation that many key concepts about disability in various languages do not easily translate into other languages (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Devlieger, 1998a). For example Charlton (1998) interviewed Ranga Mupindu, the secretary-general of the National Council for Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe, who said that even though Shona culture does not use the awful term 'cripple' an even worse term '*chirema*' is used. Mupindu translated *chirema* to mean 'totally useless', 'a failure' and argues that a child in this culture begins life as a *chirema*.

Thirdly there are differences in the way in which the body and physical characteristics are traditionally given value and meaning in different cultures. Charlton (1998) illustrated this by explaining that a facial scar is considered a deformity in much of Western culture but is considered a badge of honour by the Dahomey of Africa. This concurs with the assertion by Devlieger (1998a) that Western bio-medical definitions of impairment are not universal and Stone (2001) who said that perceptions of the body and mind vary across cultures and also change over time.

Overall this suggests that religion, language and the value given to physical characteristics influence traditional attitudes towards disability. Teachers informed by traditional attitudes could believe that deafness is caused by failure on the part of someone to fulfil certain responsibilities and so might devalue it and give it meaning in light of traditional response sets to disability. Although Kaplan (2013) stated that the traditional moral model is less prevalent nowadays, it is possible that some teachers are socialised to view disability as a punishment inflicted by an external force. Their responsibility to the disabled children may therefore arise from a mystical commitment which sees no difference between what teachers are supposed to do, and what religious leaders do as they cleanse and heal. Teaching based on the traditional moral model could be seen as a vocation commissioned and guided by direct divine intervention (Flanagan, 2003). Such a perception is congruent with attempting to make deaf people hear, and dumb persons speak or, at least offer them an education out of pity, since they are seen as deficient people as discussed in the next section.

2. 3. 2 The Medical / pathological understanding of disability and deafness

The individualistic medical approach to disability is rooted in the work of sociologist Talcott Parsons and his discussion of sickness and sickness-related behaviour (Barnes, 1998; Barnes & Mercer, 2005). Parsons is reported to have argued that the 'normal' state of being in Western society is good health, and therefore sickness and by implication, any impairments are deviations from 'normality'. Foucault said that medicine dictates what constitutes normal, thereby identifying a whole class of deviant individuals. This institutionalisation of the norm, which Foucault called normalisation, indicates the pervasive standards that structure and define social meaning (Feder, 2013). The medical model embodies what Parsons called the

'sick role' which is a view of clients as patients exempt from normal social roles as they are not responsible for their condition. In this view people with disabilities are defined as pathological and in need of cure. The *International Classification of Disease* ICD-10-CM (WHO, 2014)[12] and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (APA, 2013) provide common terminology for medicine and psychiatry respectively, and so a comparable taxonomy of disability was deemed necessary to systematise documentation. The *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps* ICDH (WHO, 1980, 2002) are documents published to accompany the ICD to document the consequences of disease and injury. Central to the ICDH classification is the understanding that impairment denotes any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function while disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. In this thinking, handicap is a disadvantage for any person resulting from impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal for that person depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors. This means that disease can lead to impairment which can lead to disability which in turn can lead to handicap.

Teachers who filter their understanding of deafness through this pathologic model of deafness might believe that deafness is a condition characterised by an auditory deficit. Reagan (1995) stated that many believe that deaf people are, at least in a physiological sense, inferior to hearing people. They are likely to pity and patronise their deaf pupils whom they view as having a hearing loss or impairment. They will naturally try to remediate the deficits, for example through teaching speech, speech-reading as well as using hearing aids (Reagan, 1995). These programmes are followed so that the hearing impairment does not result in a

[12] World Health Organisation

communication disability and handicap in a largely hearing and speaking world. In addition they might believe deaf people to be socially isolated, intellectually weak, behaviourally impulsive and emotionally immature (Lane, 1999, pp. 35-38). Teachers could then believe that such impulsive behaviour was attributable to inadequate social training or mental illness as deaf people are supposed to share the same cultural knowledge, experiences and meanings as hearing people (Siple, 1994). This is a phenomenon which Siple (1994) called an assumption of similarity; hearing service providers steeped in the pathologic model believe that the only difference between Deaf and non-Deaf people is that Deaf people cannot hear. They assume that deaf people's behavioural deviance coupled with the communication disability would result in the disadvantage of not being accorded appropriate social and economic roles. Such a handicap is especially possible in a society dominated by hearing and speaking. This personal tragedy approach (Oliver, 2009) is characterised by perceptions of the dependence of disabled people and stereotypes which evoke pity, fear and patronising attitudes. This approach is contrasted with a socio-cultural understanding of disability and deafness as discussed in the next section.

2. 3. 3 Socio-cultural understanding of disability and deafness

The socio-cultural model is based on the idea that disability is not a result of impairment but a direct consequence of society's failure to take into account the differing needs of people with disabilities and remove barriers they encounter (Oliver, 2009). Disability is something imposed on people's impairments through stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and lack of access. This idea is further developed in Deaf studies so that the socio-cultural model is about viewing deaf people as a linguistic minority using Sign Language. This minority is no more in need of a cure than linguistic minorities anywhere in the world. Reagan (1995) explained

that in this view, deafness is not understood as a disability involving an inability to function audiologically like people with typical hearing, but it is understood with respect to linguistic, social and cultural issues. He noted that Sign Language is the key characteristic of membership of Deaf culture. Sign Language acts as linguistic mediator because its structures and vocabulary provide the framework within which experience is organised, perceived and understood. This means that concepts as understood by Deaf-signing and hearing-speaking people are based on different norms. Padden and Humphries (1988) gave the example that in American Sign Language (ASL) if one signs that a person is VERY HARD-OF-HEARING[13], it means the person has substantial residual hearing, while A-LITTLE-HARD-OF-HEARING would suggest far less residual hearing. This is the opposite of what the words mean in English and Reagan (1995) explained that this means that the concepts themselves are based on different norms, hence the argument that Sign Language is mediating experience in a different way.

Teachers who filter their understanding of deafness through the socio-cultural lens of deafness would espouse the view that some Deaf people, just like members of a distinct ethnic group, do not want to be like those with typical hearing because the abilities to speak and hear are not only unrealistic but also undesirable goals for them. Such teachers would embrace the view explained by Reagan (1995) who said that for Deaf learners the appropriate comparison group is not individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive or other disabilities but members of other non-dominant cultural and linguistic groups such as Hispanics in the United States. Teachers of this mindset are therefore more likely to know about and believe in Deaf learners' visual-gestural language and strengths which they would construe as assets.

[13] Throughout this study words directly from Sign Language are represented in capital letters to differentiate them from words from any spoken language, a practice that is called glossing.

Informed by the socio-cultural model, teachers would perceive deafness as Deaf gain rather than hearing loss. The next section explores how subscribing to the traditional/moral, pathological/medical model or the socio-cultural model of deafness may interact with a teacher's teaching orientations.

2.4 Teachers' theoretical knowledge base and orientations

Theoretical perspectives underpinning teaching come out of teacher-education and might relate to teaching approaches. Research suggests that approaches to teaching range from positivist to constructivist theories of how children learn (Brown & Paatsch, 2010; Snider & Roehl, 2007). Positivist approaches are characterised by direct instruction, have a skills base and are 'owned' by the teacher whereas in constructivist approaches much of the learning is opportunistic, authentic and 'owned' by the learner (Brown & Paatsch, 2010, p. 135). As these authors espoused, the type of approach a teacher of the deaf will adopt is possibly influenced by a number of factors, some of which are internal to the teacher and some of which are external. One internal factor relates to the theoretical knowledge base teachers acquire in teacher-education (Brown & Paatsch, 2010). They say that one's understanding of how and why children learn anything comes mainly from three theoretical perspectives on learning: cognitive (Piaget, 1955), socio-cultural (Vygotsky, 1962) and information processing (e.g. Sternberg, 1985). Each perspective gives teachers a different understanding of how children learn and therefore how they should be taught. Teachers of the deaf who are influenced more strongly by one or other of these perspectives will approach and experience teaching differently.

These theoretical perspectives tend to underpin orientations to teaching in education in general as well as in deaf education. Garberoglio *et al.* (2012) cited research in deaf education in the United States which found that teaching orientations fall on a continuum between custodial, where there is reliance on authoritarian, extrinsic inducements and negative sanctions, to humanist. In humanist orientations there is a focus on the individual student and willingness to meet varying individual needs. Also in the United States, training programmes for teachers of the deaf relied on behaviourist classroom management techniques which encouraged a custodial approach to teaching relying on authoritarian, extrinsic inducements and negative sanctions (Teller & Harney, 2005). This can be related to the finding by Marlatt (2002) that teachers in deaf education exhibit teaching orientations of subordination in which they view their students as subordinates in need of supervision. Such an orientation reflects teacher attitudes and beliefs which emphasise the care-giving aspect of the teacher role and seems to be informed by a deficit rather than socio-cultural understanding of deafness.

A socio-cultural understanding of deafness appears to be congruent with constructivist theories of teaching and learning characterised by humanist approaches. Such approaches are consistent with what Scheetz (2004) espouses as strategies involving communication, interaction and intervention based on respect, thoughtfulness, emotional integrity and authenticity (2004, p. 87). One such approach is Glasser's (1969) strategy of eliciting appropriate behaviour from children by tailoring the learning environments to meet their needs to belong, have power, experience a sense of freedom and have fun (Scheetz, 2004). This would contrast with a deficit-based approach to behaviour modification which is likely to be based on Skinnerian principles which rely on consequences to control, suppress or redirect behaviour. The experiences of teachers informed by either a deficit or socio-cultural

approach to disciplining deaf learners are likely to be different. Similarly the meaning that these teachers attach to teaching deaf children would also differ. The next section explores the meaning of teaching more specifically in relation to the models of deafness discussed earlier (see 2. 3. 1 to 2. 3. 3).

2.5 The meaning of teaching

The meaning of teaching for teachers subscribing to the traditional/moral model, pathologic/medical model or the socio-cultural model of deafness is likely to be different. Teaching deaf learners would mean different things to those in these three main models because the teachers' dispositions towards deafness are different. On the one hand the teacher informed by the traditional model and the pathological model might see eccentric behaviour, inadequate social training or mental illness which needed to be remedied. On the other hand the teacher informed by the socio-cultural model might see a unique set of knowledge, experience, values and meanings which need to be respected and nurtured. The process of arriving at different meanings of experience is explicated by Wenger (1998).

Following Wenger (1998), teaching is a process by which teachers experience the world and their engagement with it is meaningful. He stated that this kind of meaning does not exist in people or in the world, but in people's dynamic relation in the world. As Wenger (1998, p. 54) puts it, "Meaning is not pre-existing, but neither is it simply made up. Negotiated meaning is at once historical, dynamic, contextual and unique." Teachers do not find the meaning of teaching ready-made in the schools for the deaf nor do they simply make it up. They negotiate the meaning of teaching by being amenable to some norms and resisting

certain values of some colleagues and community members so that each teacher comes up with experiences and meanings that are unique. Meaning is therefore in experience where it is located in negotiation. Negotiation of meaning involves participation and reification (Wenger, 1998). Participation means that as members of the community of practice of the school for the deaf, teachers have mutual relationships with other teachers and so shape each other's experiences of the meaning of teaching. Reification means that teachers project their meanings onto teaching and then perceive them as having a reality of their own. For example abstractions such as 'intelligence' or 'quality' might be talked about by teachers as if they were things, active agents. They might talk about quality in deaf education going up or down. Similarly teachers could have fixed quantity or incremental views of intelligence which influence how they view deaf learners' academic potential. As they participate in their communities and reify certain concepts, teachers negotiate the meaning of the experience of teaching as well as their identity as educational professionals. They could view what they do on a daily basis from a traditional, medical or socio-cultural understanding. According to Wenger *et al.* (2002) the individual person is an active participant in the practices of social communities and the construction of his or her own identity through these communities. To put it another way, teachers in a community of practice actively participate in the construction of a professional identity which can be pathological or socio-culturally focussed. The next section explores the construction of such teacher identities within the broader framework of teaching as a profession.

2.6 Teacher professionalism

Ideas about what teaching and teacher professionalism is, emanate from various sources that influence policy-makers, the public and teachers themselves. Sachs (2001) says that as a

result, what counts as teacher professionalism is a site of struggle between various interest groups. Professions are viewed as having a strong technical culture with a specialised knowledge base, shared standards of practice, a service ethic with commitment to client needs, long periods of training and high degrees of autonomy (Hargreaves, 2000a). Being a professional teacher entails the quality of what one does, as well as how one feels perceived by others (Hargreaves, 2000b). The former relates to professionalism while the latter relates to professionalization in teaching. Englund (1996) wrote that professionalism has to do with the conduct, demeanour and standards guiding teaching. Others would argue that the following of standards which guide teaching is not really part of professionalism. For example Evans (2011) said that professionalism is simply a description of a 'mode of being' in a work context, irrespective of whether that translates into practice that is praiseworthy or despicable (2011, p. 855). Professionalization is how teachers feel and how others view them in terms of status, standing, regard and levels of professional reward. How teachers feel about their work and how others view them might contribute to the quality of their work.

In light of the foregoing criteria, are teachers of the deaf in Zimbabwe professionals? Using Evans (2011) understanding of professionalism as qualitatively neutral, it could be argued that they are professionals because the term '*un*professional' is redundant since professionalism is not something merited but is simply an embodiment, a mode of being. However if the quality of what they do (Hargreaves, 2000b) is considered, then different conclusions may be drawn. Becoming teachers of deaf learners in Zimbabwe is not restricted to those with a specialised knowledge base, a key requirement for professions according to Clarke and Newman (1997). In addition, there are no shared standards of practice for teacher-education specific to deaf education in Zimbabwe just as teachers may not possess sufficient knowledge specific to deaf education to be able to claim a specialised knowledge base. These

considerations are compounded by the observation that at the diploma level at least, teacher-preparation is dominated by what Hoban (2005) calls a skills orientation. Such a training orientation indicates a lack of professionalization which is likely to have a negative impact on professionalism. This means that outsiders could think that the teaching of deaf children is an occupation which anyone with no specialised knowledge can do since it has no shared standards of practice. In turn the quality of teachers' performance could also be negatively affected by these considerations.

In contrast to the Zimbabwean context, the United States seems to have an ideal situation as Easterbrooks (2008) said the country has standards that teachers of the deaf should have in the form of specified knowledge and skills. However what weakens the case for teachers of the deaf being professionals anywhere in the world is that they are employees, usually of the state, rather than independent service providers. EPU (2005) pointed out that being state employees severely limits autonomous decision-making in professional matters. It can therefore be argued that teachers of the deaf in Zimbabwe are workers subjected to what Ozga and Lawn (1988) called insecurities and processes of 'proletarianisation'. A counter-argument would be that Zimbabwean teachers are largely autonomous in professional decision-making through the state's defaulting on formulating what Chimedza (2001) called a specific policy that directs teachers on how to teach deaf learners. Teachers of the deaf in Zimbabwe can use whatever knowledge base they might have thereby earning the status of autonomous, professional knowledge workers. In further support of the professional status of these teachers, it is evident that many of them undergo long periods of training which can result in the professional ethic of committed service to meet client needs.

In order to understand the professional status of teachers of deaf learners, it is important to understand teaching in general and the professional learning required in becoming a teacher. The global professional learning associated with teaching in general has changed over time and was documented by Hargreaves (2000a). He identified four broad global historical phases in the changing nature of teachers' professionalism and professional learning as the pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional and the postmodern age. He stated that although these four ages are not universal, they are relatively common in Anglophone and many other nations although not necessarily in the same order. They are landmark stages that are therefore explored in some detail in the following sections.

2. 6. 1 Pre-professional age of teaching

In the pre-professional age, teaching was seen as a demanding though not difficult job. Hargreaves (2000a) explained that in this age the principles and parameters of teaching were treated as unquestioned commonsense, so that one learned to be a teacher through practical apprenticeship and improved through trial-and-error. Good teaching then was about being devoted to one's craft, demonstrating loyalty and gaining personal reward through service. Murray (1992) stated that at this stage, teachers were virtually amateurs who only needed to carry out the directives of their more knowledgeable superiors. Hargreaves (2000a) wrote that this discourse of teaching and teacher development persists in pockets of the profession today.

This discourse about general educators applies to teachers of deaf children. Branson and Miller (2002) explained that in the beginning the education of deaf students was characterised by the autonomy of the individual schools and an in-house mode of teacher training. They cited the example of Thomas Braidwood in the United Kingdom who trained assistant teachers, mostly members of his own family, at the school over a seven year period. In this pre-professional age, untrained teachers learned how to teach deaf learners through practical apprenticeship to more experienced teachers. All that these amateurs needed to do was to carry out the directives of their more knowledgeable superiors. Schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe were founded before independence (before 1980) and during that period most teachers of deaf children in the schools were apprenticed to more experienced missionaries. This system persists in the post-colonial period especially with respect to relief teachers who replace trained teachers who go on leave, as well as teachers with mainstream teacher education who are deployed to special schools for the deaf. It is what Ingersoll (2002) would call under-qualified teaching. Under-qualified teaching in deaf education seems to persist because pre-professional images of teachers might still feature prominently in public perceptions of the teacher of the deaf, as well as among administrators.

Current pre-professional perceptions of teaching in deaf education may also be informed by observations that deaf learners seldom go beyond elementary school (Musengi & Dakwa, 2011). Elementary students are believed to be easier to educate and so less formal training is thought to be necessary for teachers at this level (Guthrie, Springer, Rolle, & Houck, 2007). Such perceptions might be reinforced by low expectations for deaf children in the field of deaf education (Marlatt, 2004; Moores & Martin, 2006). Deaf children's low educational outcomes compared to hearing peers (Brueggemann, 2004; Wauters *et al.*, 2006) would also appear to lend credibility to a perception of teachers of deaf children as pre-professional.

Overall the pre-professional age appears to be more compatible with traditional and pathological models of disability as something to be pitied in that deaf children are charitably offered an education out of pity, as they are considered deficient.

2. 6. 2 The age of the autonomous professional

The age of professional autonomy was marked by increased teacher education and autonomy over curriculum development and decision-making especially where teachers worked in situations that were not constrained by the requirements of external examinations (Hargreaves, 2000a, p. 158). He stated that in this age, the words 'professional' and 'autonomy' became inseparable among teachers who were then granted a measure of trust, material reward, occupational security, professional dignity and discretion in exchange for broadly fulfilling the mandates the state expected of them (2000a, p. 159). The principle that teachers had the right to choose methods they thought best for their own students was accepted but this pedagogical choice was usually polarised and permissive. This could have been because in this age, pedagogy lost its sense of singularity as the knowledge base in teacher education became more academic, with ideological battles between traditionalism and progressivism. However, Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) note that this professionalization in terms of becoming more academic often did little to improve the quality of teachers' work, that is, their professionalism.

The discourse in the age of professional autonomy in general education appears to have parallels in deaf education. Branson and Miller (2002) observed that the centralisation and

formalisation of training for teachers of the deaf in Britain was accompanied by feminization of the profession especially at the primary level. Branson and Miller (2002) found that at Ealing College, out of nearly a hundred trainees during its first ten years in the 1870s, the only two male trainees had to be paid a salary to attend whereas all the women paid fees. In patriarchal societies women have historically occupied subordinate positions within relations of power (Hargreaves, 2000b) and children as a group have had a very low status in society as a whole. This would imply that the involvement of women and not only children, but children with disabilities, could have affected perceptions of the profession of teaching deaf learners. This possibility seems to be supported by related studies which have shown that teaching in elementary schools (Hargreaves, 2009) and teaching children with special educational needs (Cunningham, 2006; Cunningham & Hargreaves, 2007) resulted in a status deficit.

Polarisation and permissiveness in the age of the autonomous professional might be linked to the spread of teacher-education to universities where experts with divergent claims to expertise added weight to the claims of the right to autonomy. These characteristics seem to be reflected in the post-independence period (after 1980) in Zimbabwe, where teachers generally appear to be enjoying the right to choose methods of teaching deaf children. Barcham (1998) observed that as a result of the colonial legacy of overseas teacher-education in Zimbabwe, a great variety of ideas abounds in deaf education in the country. He added that conflicts and struggle characterise the policy development of deaf education in Zimbabwe.

The polarisation of the oral-manual debate is also evident in the polarised choice of methods by individual teachers in Zimbabwe. Branson and Miller (2002) said that the prime movers in

the establishment of formal training for teachers of the deaf in Britain were oralists. Oralism became the traditional approach in many schools for the deaf following the 1880 Congress of Milan which declared that Sign Language had no legitimate place in the education of deaf people (Van Cleve, 2009). The ramifications of this declaration spread to such countries as Zimbabwe so that when special schools were founded there, the question was not whether to teach speech or not, but how to teach it. As Watson (2009) explained, the concentration on the development of spoken language is seen as broadening deaf children's opportunities by enabling them not only to communicate freely with hearing peers but to compete with them on their own terms (2009, p. 29). On the manual side of the debate it is counter-argued that speech is not only unrealistic but also undesirable for many deaf people (Baker, 2008; Lane, 2008). Proponents of manual approaches say that forcing deaf people to communicate orally imprisons them in decades of social frustration, weakens their cultural heritage, renders education ineffective and blocks them from developing their full human potential by robbing them of their natural language (Van Cleve, 2009). Instead of restricting deaf learners to oralism, they advocate using both the Sign Language of the Deaf community and the written language of the hearing community in an approach they call sign bilingualism (Baker, 2008; Pickersgill, 2009).

Teachers in deaf education tended to take one or other side of the polarised debate, usually depending on whether they believed Sign Language was a language that could be used for academic purposes or not. Kiyaga and Moores (2009) found that many teachers of the deaf in sub-Saharan Africa did not believe that Sign Languages were real languages. According to Aarons and Reynolds (2003) many confused Sign Language with sign-supported speech, simultaneous communication and manually coded spoken language (2003, p. 201). This could be because until Stokoe's groundbreaking research in the 1960s (Stokoe, 2005) Sign

Languages were regarded as only adequate to convey basic and concrete ideas, and inadequate for abstract and complex ideas. It was therefore possible that many teachers of the deaf may have been unaware of the research evidence cited by Stokoe (2005) and Petitto (2009) which showed that Sign Languages were real, natural languages. Some of the teachers might have accepted that they were real, natural languages but doubted the feasibility of using them for academic purposes as they engaged in what Aarons and Reynolds (2003) call misplaced debate on what variety of Sign Language should be standard. Despite this shortcoming, teachers of the deaf regarded their position on the oral-manual debate as part of their professional autonomy.

Regardless of which side of the oral-manual debate teachers are on, some pedagogical choices they make might however be considered as permissive. This is evident in situations where teachers underestimate deaf learners' academic potential and accept low performance standards from the deaf learners (Marlatt, 2004; Moores & Martin, 2006). In order to counter this, the deaf education system in Zimbabwe now uses external examinations for deaf learners, and teacher performance appraisals related to performance pay to make teachers accountable.

The use of external, public examinations for deaf learners is meant to ensure accountability in deaf education but it faces an enormous challenge. Many deaf students have an additional disability associated with the cause of their deafness, including various learning disabilities (Cawthorn, 2009). Spencer and Marschark (2010a) reported the presence of multiple disabilities in about 40% of the United States population of deaf and hard of hearing students. Storbeck and Moodley (2009) found that about 30% of deaf and hard of hearing children in

an early intervention programme in South Africa have multiple disabilities. Comparable data from Zimbabwe are not available but it may be assumed that there are similar if not higher numbers of multiply disabled deaf students because of the higher, untreated incidences of diseases causing deafness and related disabilities in a less developed economy. This would be a particularly significant problem because Swanepoel and Storbeck (2008) observe that 90% of all infants with hearing loss reside in developing economies. Expecting those of them who are multiply-disabled to eventually write public examinations, and evaluating their teachers' abilities on the basis of such student outcomes might not be a reliable and valid way of gauging teacher performance. This does not negate the need for teachers and schools for the deaf to be accountable for student outcomes as learners can still be assessed using appropriate accommodations and alternatives as suggested by Cawthorn (2008). Even with those deaf candidates with no other disabilities, if there is no form of accommodation and alternative in examinations, then the reliability and validity of their examination might also be threatened. Similarly appraising such candidates' teachers on the basis of these results would not be fair.

Another measure of ensuring accountability is teacher performance pay which in Zimbabwe involves formative assessments in the form of observations of lessons and teacher's records as well as learner performance. Podgursky and Springer (2007) observed that teacher performance pay is a reward system hinging on student outcomes attributed to a particular teacher rather than on input such as teacher's skills or knowledge. Goldhaber, Hyung, DeArmond, and Player (2005) argued that teaching is not a field that lends itself to performance-related compensation, as it is difficult to monitor teacher performance since output is not readily measured in a reliable and valid way. The reason is that achievement is influenced by many factors beyond the teacher's control. Another criticism is that because teaching is multidimensional, teachers may tend to shift their focus onto only those

dimensions which are measured and incentivized, and away from other important activities (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). This could for example result in what Moloney (2006) calls teaching to the test. As Hargreaves (2000a) argued, accountability which subjects teachers to detailed measurement and control is based on narrowly conceived frameworks which erode autonomy and therefore teacher professionalism.

2. 6. 3 The age of the collegial professional

In the age of the collegial professional individual teacher autonomy is unsustainable because schooling becomes increasingly complex and more and more teachers had to teach in ways that were unfamiliar to them (Hargreaves, 2000a). The age was characterised by increased efforts to build strong professional cultures of collaboration to develop common purpose, cope with uncertainty and complexity in a climate that valued risk-taking and continuous improvement (Hargreaves, 2000a, pp. 165-166). This was an age in which teaching methods proliferated beyond the simple distinctions of traditional or progressive and the course-based expertise coming from outside the school was also questioned because the authority of external scientific expertise had been eroded (Hargreaves, 2000a, p. 162). Many teachers therefore started to turn more to each other for professional learning, sense of direction and mutual support, although some teachers still clung to their autonomy away from the group. Communities of practice developed in the teaching profession.

A parallel of this age in deaf education is that teachers of deaf children are expected to engage in ongoing professional learning by having more within-school, cross-school and international collaborations. Those teachers trained in oral approaches for example might

have realised that these approaches seemed to result in little, if any progress. The overriding concern for these teachers centres on the development of a common purpose; the improvement of the academic achievement of their deaf learners. Teachers in this age might therefore experiment with approaches never used before in the residential special schools. Such experimentation might already be evident, for example in teachers' surreptitious use of Sign Language in schools that have no Sign-bilingual programmes or where official school policy is clearly oralist.

Turning to colleagues and being sceptical of the external scientific and course-based expertise outside the school would be common in a field polarised by the oral-manual debate mentioned earlier. Swanwick and Marschark (2010) said that without exception, one could find strong arguments for the full range of approaches and yet there was little evidence to support any one of them regarding educational outcomes. They pointed out that the research was conflicting. Although some studies suggest that an auditory/oral approach can lead to speech-language gains (Dornan, Hickson, Murdoch, & Houston, 2009; Nicholas & Geers, 2006) they only provided evidence on a limited proportion of pupils whose language and literacy attainments still lagged behind the achievements of hearing peers (Geers, 2006; Swanwick & Marschark, 2010). Such research studies finding a significant discrepancy between the academic abilities of deaf and hearing students were framed within a medical deficit model where deafness was regarded as a handicap and not just a receptive or expressive difference (Lane, 2008). The socio-cultural perspective argues that deaf people's literacy was typically approached as a problem in much of the literature because literacy itself was usually defined and greatly influenced by, the dominant culture's literacy (Brueggemann, 2004). In other words, teaching and research on literacy might view Deaf people as lacking because such research and teaching are framed in a pathological understanding of deafness.

The socio-cultural understanding of deafness offers an alternative because it does not focus on deaf learners' deficits but on what they could do. However the literature on the socio-cultural side which advocates sign-bilingualism also has strong proponents but no evidence as Marschark and Spencer (2010) observed. They said that there does not appear to be evidence in support of the efficacy of bilingual education either for giving deaf children fluency in two languages or enhancing academic outcomes. Enns and Herman (2011) noted that the key premise of bilingual deaf education was the establishment of a first language foundation in a natural Sign Language. The theoretical underpinning for this approach is the linguistic interdependence model (Cummins, 2000) which argued for the existence of a common proficiency underlying all languages. Swanwick and Marschark (2010) pointed out that the challenges to this model centred on the difficulty for deaf children in establishing proficiency in Sign Language commensurate with expert users, and the mismatch of modalities between sign and written/spoken languages. Both these issues question the potential of language transfer from a first (sign) language to a second (written) language as argued by (Mayer, 2009; Mayer & Wells, 1996). As there are no official sign-bilingual programmes in Zimbabwe but children in residential special schools acquire Sign Language and are expected to learn reading and writing, teachers might unofficially experiment with this socio-culturally inclined approach at local level and discuss these issues with colleagues. In a collegial age of teaching, the use of novel approaches such as the sign-bilingual method would no longer need to be furtive, but officially encouraged experimentation as there is no imposition of one-size-fits-all local policies.

2. 6. 4 The postmodern or post-professional age of teaching

The postmodern age in teaching is driven by globalisation and the digital revolution in communications (Hargreaves, 2000a). With globalisation, state policies are less autonomous while the digital revolution in communications has led to instantaneous, globalised availability of information. In the age of the postmodern professional, Hargreaves (2000a) predicts that teacher professionalism would be argued over and pulled in different directions with the result that professionalism would become broader, more flexible and democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching.

This might imply that in deaf education, collaboration which was highly respected as mentioned earlier, would not be restricted to fellow teachers of the deaf but would extend to parents of deaf children, allied professionals and organisations of the deaf such as Zimbabwe National Association of the Deaf (ZIMNAD). Flexibility might also be expected to lead to a broader understanding of the *in loco parentis* responsibility to extend beyond representing the hearing parents who according to Mitchell and Karchmer (2004) constitute the vast majority of parents of deaf children. Van Manen (2006) wrote that teachers have *in loco parentis* responsibility in times in which many families are experiencing difficulty maintaining cohesiveness. While Van Manen (2006) might have been alluding to the global situation of unstable family units and higher divorce rates, his observation would seem to be even more relevant to traditional Zimbabwean families that may experience shame and blame if there is a family member with a disability (Chidyausiku, 2000; Mpofu, *et al.*, 2007). It is not unusual for that disability to be attributed to the mother's presumed infidelity during pregnancy, or unappeased ancestral spirits on the maternal or paternal side which could lead to the family breaking up. Postmodern teacher professionalism might include help for parents in fulfilling

their primary pedagogical responsibility as suggested by Van Manen (2006) or co-opting Deaf adults as surrogate parents. However this role expansion might cause what Hargreaves (2000a) calls role diffuseness, with no sense of where the commitments and responsibilities of teachers should end.

In the uncertainty of post-modernity, globalisation seems likely to influence teacher professionalism because of greatly improved communication. This might facilitate for example the adoption of evidence-based standards and practices in deaf education such as the United States standards outlined by Easterbrooks (2008). The lack of a national policy on deaf education is less important in a global village where technology makes information on best practices more readily available. However if the flow of information on best practices is one way only, then there is the danger of professional hegemony in which under-researched areas of the world such as Zimbabwe become consumers of research-evidence produced elsewhere. It is therefore in this light that the current study is undertaken to understand the experience of teaching in special residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe.

2.7 Conclusion

This study employs a variety of constructs from various theories to examine changes in what teachers know, what they believe and how they think of themselves as professionals and as hearing people who teach deaf children who are potentially members of a culture different from their own. The multidimensional nature of the experience of teaching was illuminated by various constructs from the situated perspective. The situated perspective cast light on the reciprocal relationship between teachers' individual agency and the social context within

which teaching occurs. Both context and self can be informed by one of several perspectives of disability and deafness. Prominent among these are two broad perspectives of deafness which represent bipolar positions: the clinical and the cultural. These two are used to understand how teachers negotiate the meaning of teaching within the context of their communities of practice. Clinical and cultural perspectives of deafness also underpin the teachers' negotiation of their professional identities as either pre-professional, autonomous professional, collegial professional or postmodern professional. The clinical and socio-cultural perspectives of deafness also have an influence on aspects as diverse as the teachers' theoretical knowledge base about teaching, the oral-manual debate and teachers orientations in disciplining deaf learners. As such the clinical and cultural perspectives of deafness pervade the multidimensional experience of teaching and the meaning emanating from it. The way teachers feel they are seen through others' eyes and the quality of what they do are aspects permeated by deficit or socio-cultural perceptions of deafness. In order to fully appreciate the context in which these perceptions occur, the next chapter analyses the Zimbabwean setting of the study.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the socio-cultural setting of teaching deaf learners in Zimbabwe. It explores the historical development of general education in brief and the education of people with disabilities and those who are deaf in some detail. The cultures of the main ethnic[14] groups are used as a basis for the exploration. According to Shumba (1995) the ethnic groups in Zimbabwe stand as shown in table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: Ethnic groups in Zimbabwe

BLACK (98%)			COLOURED	ASIAN	WHITE
Shona	Ndebele	Other			
82%	14%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Most of these ethnic groups are mainly Christian but many practice what Ruzivo calls a syncretic type of Christianity which incorporates their own ethnic beliefs and culture (Ruzivo, 2008). Although the chapter may occasionally allude to the culture of sub-Saharan Africa in general, it highlights the culture of the Shona ethnic group of Zimbabwe to show how this traditional culture might inform a current understanding of disability and deafness. Shona culture is the dominant culture of some 82% of the Zimbabwean population and may be considered a primary culture (see table 3.1). Shona culture is highlighted because all three residential schools for the deaf in this study are in predominantly Shona-speaking areas of Zimbabwe.

[14] The term ethnic is used to conveniently bring together diverse groupings, for example under 'Whites' different ethnic groups such as Afrikaners, British, Greeks, Jews and Portuguese are brought together while under 'Shona' the Karanga, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Zezuru are brought together .

3.2 Zimbabwe: Geographical Location and Demography

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country situated south of the Sahara in southern Africa. It shares borders with Mozambique to the east, South Africa to the south, Botswana and Namibia to the west, and Zambia to the north (see figure 3.1). It has a total area of 390 759 square kilometres and a population of approximately 13 million people in ten administrative provinces (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2012).



Figure 3.1: Map of Zimbabwe showing towns and neighbouring countries

The country was a British colony known as Southern Rhodesia from 1890 to 1965 and was renamed Rhodesia in 1965, when Ian Smith's white minority regime made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). This White minority government formalised racial

discrimination in most aspects of life and insisted that the country was no longer a British colony because of UDI. That government was not recognised by most countries in the world and Rhodesia was subjected to United Nations sponsored international sanctions. As a result of the policy of racial discrimination, Blacks were denied the right to vote and had no access to the mainstream of economic activity. Moyo (2000) explains that most Black people lived in marginal rural lands with poor soils and unreliable rainfall. Black nationalists refused to recognise UDI and asserted that the country was still a British colony. A 15-year guerrilla war led by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe resulted in a negotiated political settlement in 1980. This ushered in universal adult suffrage which extended the vote to all adults and resulted in democratic independence recognised internationally in 1980 when the country was renamed Zimbabwe (Mudenge, 1988).

From 1980 racial discrimination in all facets of life was officially abolished so that Black and White teachers with similar qualifications and experience now earned the same salary. Education expanded dramatically as more people began to access previously inaccessible schools and new schools were built. The economy initially expanded from 1980 to the early 1990s because international economic sanctions were lifted. However, a radical state-led approach to land redistribution led to hyperinflation and a steady collapse of the economy from 2000 to 2009 (Moyo, 2000; Richardson, 2005). Government expropriated White landowners' assets without compensation, so that farming came to a halt. This fuelled inflation. The Zimbabwe dollar eventually became worthless in 2009 when it had to be replaced by a multi-currency arrangement dominated by the United States dollar and the South African rand (Pilossof, 2009). At the height of the hyperinflationary period, teachers earned the equivalent of less than US$10 a month, and were among the very poor. The radical land redistribution programme had the immediate effect of impoverishing the very people it

was meant to benefit. Many impoverished parents of deaf children could no longer afford to send their children to school and enrolment in the residential schools for the deaf fell during this period. It is debateable whether it is coincidence or not that during this period of decline in enrolment, two of the residential schools for the deaf started co-enrolling hearing students from their neighbourhoods. With dollarization, the Zimbabwean economy today has stabilised and teachers' salaries have improved although they are below the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region's average (Tawodzera, 2014). Student enrolments in the residential schools for the deaf have gone back to previous levels although the two special schools continue to co-enrol hearing pupils.

Almost half of Zimbabwe's total population are children of school-going age (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2012). The country has one of the highest literacy rates in the world, at 92% (UNDP, 2010) and 90% of the total school-age population of about 6 million children attend school (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika, 2007). The only National Disability Survey was carried out in 1981 and it identified 22 600 people with hearing impairment and of these 7 500 were children of school-age of whom only 800 (11%) were in school at that time (Charema, 2010; Mpofu & Harley, 2002). One thousand six hundred and thirty-four (1 634) children with hearing impairment attended school in 2007 (Mpofu, Mutepfa, Chireshe, & Kasayira, 2007). Charema (2010) also reported that special schools and integration units for the deaf now had an enrolment of up to 2 600 children with hearing impairment in school. Nearly half of these were in residential schools for the deaf, while the others were in integration units in mainstream schools. Integration units are (usually) self-contained classes of deaf pupils who might attend mainstream classes in specific subjects such as Art or Physical Education. Although current data on deaf children who attend school is not available, it can be assumed that in the absence of any new institutions having been built, or

radical changes made to recruitment in existing schools in the last four years, the attendance figures should have remained fairly constant.

3.3 Historical development of formal education in Zimbabwe

For almost a century up to independence in 1980, a dual system of education existed in colonial Zimbabwe, one for Blacks and the other for Whites (Nziramasanga, 1999). These two systems derived from the socio-political philosophy of racial discrimination which was legally and rigorously enforced. Education for Blacks was provided by Christian churches in mission schools and Zvobgo (1994) said it produced poorly educated children who became cheap labourers who could not compete with White children in the job market. Education for White children was provided by the state. This scenario in general education has parallels in the development of education for children with disabilities in Zimbabwe.

Education of children with disabilities in Zimbabwe, which was traditionally called Special Education and is now called Special Needs Education, has had a long history stretching from the establishment of the first special school for the blind at the Dutch Reformed Church's Chivi Mission in 1927 near Masvingo (at that time Fort Victoria). The manner in which this first school was founded could cast some light on the treatment of children with disabilities in the period leading up to colonization in 1890 and beyond. Addison (1986) told the story of how, during a drought in 1915, a MuShona woman was driven away from home for her refusal to obey her husband's orders to drown their blind child in a nearby river because the boy was viewed as a burden. She took refuge at Chivi Mission with her nine year-old blind son, Dzingisai (literally meaning 'chase away'). Although the reverend's wife had no expertise to teach the blind child Braille, she responded to her husband's suggestion that she

should teach Dzingisai by saying she would try. “I will try” became the motto of that first special school which was subsequently named after her. This story of the opening of the Margaretha Hugo special school for the blind would seem to suggest that in the not-too-distant past in Zimbabwe, conditions for children with disabilities resembled those that the international literature calls the era of extermination (Hallahan, 1986; Scheer & Groce, 1988). It is also clear that establishing a special school was based on Christian charity. The pattern of charity repeated itself in the subsequent establishment of the later residential special schools (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998).

3.4 Residential schooling for the deaf

Three special schools for the deaf were established on the basis of charity during the pre-independence era. The first two schools were opened simultaneously in 1947 by Christian missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The Dutch Reformed Church established Henry Murray School for the deaf initially at Pamushana mission but later relocated to Morgenster mission near Masvingo for logistical reasons. In the same year the Dominican Sisters (Roman Catholic) established a school for the deaf, initially at Loreto mission but relocated to Emerald Hill suburb in Harare in 1979 to escape the guerrilla war of liberation. The school was renamed after the suburb. A Zimbabwean charitable organisation, Jairos Jiri Association, established Jairos Jiri Naran School in Gweru in 1968 (Musengi, 1999). In line with international trends at the time, these three schools were established as boarding institutions for deaf children who were officially known as children with hearing impairment while the schools were called schools for the deaf.

Initially the special schools for the deaf were concerned with the provision of care and basic training, so not much teacher expertise would have been necessary. Chitiyo and Wheeler (2004) stated that the focus in the special schools tended to be on practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing and cookery. It was not surprising therefore that Chimedza (2001) found that deaf people in Zimbabwe were usually employed in crafts rather than in mainstream professions. Leakey (1993) described a similar historical situation in the United States, where deaf learners underwent mostly vocational education. Padden (1998) also found that until the 1960s in the United States the primary occupations for deaf people were in trades like shoe repair, upholstery or as dormitory supervisors at residential schools for the deaf. Peresuh and Barcham (1998) explained that in Zimbabwe the missionaries and humanitarian organisations like the Jairos Jiri Association considered their work more as a moral and religious obligation than a concern for the right of deaf children to receive an education.

In contrast to the American trend of closing residential special schools (Moores, 2009) which has resulted in the Gallaudet Research Institute (GRI, 2011) finding that 57% of deaf students are currently being served in mainstream day schools, Reilly and Reilly (2005) acknowledged residential schooling as still the most prevalent arrangement in deaf education worldwide. In Zimbabwe Nziramasanga (1999) and Chimedza (2008) found that many parents chose the residential special schools for the deaf. This is most probably because the school and not the family, was regarded as the major socialisation agent for most deaf children (Padden, 1998). Padden explained that the traditional means of schooling in the first part of the century was the residential school where deaf children were introduced to classes with other deaf children and lived in boarding arrangements for long periods of time. Padden and Humphries (2005) observed that residential schools were a unique environment providing a deaf child with

immersion in interaction and experience, as well as a critical mass of visual learners. The large number of visual learners in the school is very important in terms of learning the visual language itself (Sign Language) and also for learning about the world through using this language. Reilly and Reilly (2005, p. 1) found that most of the invaluable things that institutionalised deaf children learned about their school, society and the world, they learned from one another on the playgrounds and in the dorms. However Padden (1998, p. 82) stated that these residential schools have served as 'island communities' with the typical ones fulfilling the 'asylum' prototype of a walled-in 'minimum security prison'. Travel outside the walls was carefully controlled to protect the deaf children from outside hearing people. She described the typical residential school for the deaf as a bounded community headed by teachers and school administrators. Padden and Humphries (2005) cautioned against the dangers of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect when such institutions claimed the entire lives of deaf pupils, separating children from home and family. As a result of these and other fears about segregation, there was a decline in residential school attendance for deaf children, and an increase in mainstream school attendance for the deaf in the United States (Moores, 2009; Padden, 1998). Although he does not provide the precise dates, Moores (2009) indicated that at the time he was writing several residential schools had been closed in the past decade and several more would be closed in the near future (2009, p. 3). In contrast, in Zimbabwe the preferred placement for deaf children remains the residential school for the deaf as the findings by Nziramasanga (1999) and Chimedza (2008) indicated.

3.5 Zimbabwe's responsiveness to disability

Zimbabwe has been referred to as "one of the most disability accessible countries in Africa" (Devlieger, 1998b, p. 26). Mpofu and Harley (2002) explained that the country had greater

disability-friendly public transportation policies, disability legislation and vocational training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities than many other African countries. People with disabilities were entitled to free public transport and a government disability allowance. Ordinary schools enrolling learners with disabilities were paid a higher grant for each disabled child they enrolled and if the number of students with disabilities reached seven for students with visual or hearing impairment, the government deployed a teacher with special needs education training to assist with the teaching (Mpofu & Harley, 2002). In principle the grant was meant to cover the increased costs associated with special needs but in practice this may be used for costs that have nothing to do with the learner with special educational needs. The Disabled Persons Act (1996) was intended to enhance the educational, social and occupational interests of Zimbabweans with disabilities. The legislation mandated a 15-member National Disability Board, 10 of whom represented organisations of people with disabilities. The spread of disabilities represented on the board and whether there had to be any disabled people on the board were aspects not specified by the law. The board advises government on issues relating to people with disabilities.

Zimbabwe's prominent regional standing in disability issues was also attested by the fact that the country had 56 organisations for and of people with disabilities (Chimedza, 2000). These included disability-specific organisations such as Epilepsy Support Foundation of Zimbabwe (ESFZ); organisations of people with disabilities in general, such as National Council for Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ) and support organisations such as Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association (ZPHCA) (Mpofu & Harley, 2002). Barcham (1998) said that the Deaf community in Zimbabwe had been formally organised as the Association of the Deaf (ASSOD) since 1987. The organisation promoted the use of Zimbabwean Sign Language (ZSL) in schools and on television and also lobbied government

about their preference for special schools for the deaf rather than inclusion in ordinary schools. The rise of these disability rights movements seems to have been directly instigated by the introduction of formal education for people with disabilities in the country.

As described earlier, formal education of people with disabilities started with institutionalisation in missionary schools in 1927. Peters and Chimedza (2000) stated that these residential schools were often too far away from home for learners to be able to return more than once or twice a year. As a result of the isolation from their families and social interaction, the young people with disabilities developed strong ties with each other and formed a support system of their own. Initially inspired by the need to entertain themselves, the Jairos Jiri Institution for the Disabled 'inmates' (as they called themselves), formed a club called *Kubatsirana/ Ncedanani* (meaning 'to help each other') which organised excursions to places of interest outside the institution (Peters & Chimedza, 2000). They were able to discuss their fate freely on these excursions and felt that if they were given a chance, they would be able to manage their own affairs better than their patrons. Despite opposition from their patrons, they drafted a constitution and proceeded to register an organisation representing their interests in 1975. The organisation, now known as the National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe (NCDPZ), earned national attention for fighting strongly for disabled people's rights. However the NCDPZ came under heavy criticism from the deaf for representing blind, physically disabled and developmentally disabled people while marginalising deaf people (Peters & Chimedza, 2000).

The perceived marginalisation of deaf people by the NCDPZ led to the formation of an organisation specifically for the Deaf community. Peters and Chimedza (2000) observed that

the formation of this organisation has two parallels with other disability groups, both of which arose from institutionalisation. Being housed together in residential schools created a climate in which deaf people developed bonds of togetherness by using a Sign Language they developed naturally out of the need to communicate with each other (Anglin-jaffe, 2013). The second parallel to the disability movement was that deaf people's coming together as a political community also had its origins in the need for socialisation and community. As there was no secondary education for the deaf in Zimbabwe during colonial rule, the many elementary school dropouts sought each other out and formed a soccer club. This provided opportunities to discuss their plight and by 1987 they had formed and registered the Association of the Deaf (ASSOD). Internal leadership problems led in 1995 to the formation of a rival organisation called Zimbabwe National Association of the Deaf (ZIMNAD) (Sithole, 2013). Like the ASSOD, ZIMNAD defended deaf people's rights and looked out for their welfare.

3.6 Traditional Shona culture of Zimbabwe and its responses to disability

In Shona culture children are treasured and are considered a gift from God. Childlessness is considered a misfortune, an acceptable reason for divorce or polygamy (Chiswanda, 1997). When a child is safely delivered the midwife (*nyamukuta*) makes a joyful salutation (*mhururu*) and all within hearing take it up. Soon after the child's birth a cord (*mutimwi*) is tied around its loins to ward off evil spirits and sterility. On the fifth day the child is brought out and given a name by its father, mother or midwife.

Traditionally, if the newborn had imperfections, the midwife being the first to see it would inform the family elders who would decide to allow it to live, leave it to die of neglect or dispose of it in some way (Gelfand, 1978). Twins and malformed babies were killed by old women or the midwife who put them in a large pot and choked them to death with hot ashes (Bullock, 1927) in much the same way that infanticide and invalicide were practised globally (Scheer & Groce, 1988). After the infant had been killed, a fine of a beast was payable to the village chief by the father of the deformed child to appease the ancestors (*vadzimu*) whose land had been desecrated by such an abomination (Bullock, 1913). Gelfand (1959, p. 4) observed that in Shona society "... everyone should be the same. Even the newborn babe should be as others. It should not be a twin. The ideal society is constituted by compulsory uniformity."

If the newborn did not have any obvious defects, Gelfand (1978) observed that the Shona family took great interest in the newborn and that it would not be long before the child learnt the importance of the extended family. The child was raised among many siblings and adults from the maternal and paternal families. Gelfand (1978) said that the infant spent the first two years almost always on the mother's or another female family member's back. Chiswanda (1997) observed that the extended family system was strong. Members of the extended family were expected to eat communally from the same plate, support each other in every way and learn the values of cooperation, sharing and respect.

The Shona rules of respect and etiquette that the child has to acquire are elaborate. Chiswanda (1997) reported that the child had to learn respect as expressed in particular body postures and this included rules of eye-contact. The child had to greet (*mhorosa or mutsa*)

elders and peers differently as well as learning how to clap in the different hand-shapes for different purposes. Gelfand (1978) stated that the rules of conduct included elaborate phrases, handshakes and use of politeness terms. Since deafness would not be readily apparent at birth it is reasonable to assume that deaf infants escaped infanticide because they were presumed to have the compulsory uniformity that Gelfand said was mandatory. When the time came for the deaf child to learn the correct way of behaving and did not conform, then the child would be considered rude and stubborn, or mentally retarded. Generally if a child were able-bodied he or she was considered an economic boon because of the labour he or she could provide. Deaf children can perform such labour and it is therefore doubtful that they were treated in the same way as blind children and others with physical disabilities.

People with disabilities who had somehow escaped infanticide were largely treated as burdens to be tolerated. To this day, in apparent contradiction to the accolades about Zimbabwe being one of the most disability-accessible countries, Shona culture might still be perceived as viewing disability negatively. Many Zimbabwean people experience shame and blame if there is a person with a disability in their family (Chidyausiku, 2000; Mpofu, *et al.*, 2007). This is evident in the everyday language used to refer to people with disabilities. Chimedza (2008) pointed out that language is the vehicle of our thoughts, feelings, attitudes and ideas towards objects, ideas, relationships and people. The Shona language spoken in Zimbabwe is part of a larger group of Bantu languages spoken throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In this family of sub-Saharan Bantu languages, Devlieger (1998a) found that the word '*lema*' or '*rema*' is prefixed by the object or animal-referent '*ki*', '*chi*' or '*isi*' as in '*kilema*' (e.g. in Kiluba, Kisanga, Songye languages of Angola, Congo, Zambia respectively) or '*isilima*' (e.g. in Ndebele/Nguni languages of Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe). If the language people use to describe other people is negative, it shows that the inherent

negative attitudes and stigmas have been accepted as the norm (Chimedza, 2008). In Shona, nouns referring to people and indicating kinship usually begin with prefix '*mu*'- in singular (Noun Class 1) or '*va*'- in plural (Noun Class 2). However, for people with disabilities Shona uses the prefix chi- for singular (Noun Class 7) and *zvi*- for plural (Noun Class 8). Noun Classes 7 and 8 are for objects and things and are considered pejorative when used for human beings (Dale, 1981; Devlieger, 1998a). Mpofu and Harley (2002) confirmed that in contemporary Shona the word for a person with a disability, *chirema,* uses the prefix (*chi-*) for 'it' which indicates that people with a disability are perceived as having a thing-like quality which sets them apart from full humans. The morpheme '*-rema*' means being heavy, failing or lacking competence all of which imply being a burden. The apparent contradiction between Zimbabwe's ranking as one of the most disability-accessible countries in Africa and the negative perceptions of people with disabilities has two possible explanations. First the ranking of disability-accessibility is likely to mostly consider macro issues the state looks into, such as infrastructure and legislation rather than micro-level person to person relations. The latter are subjective and more difficult to research. Second, Shona society has been influenced by modernisation and so perceptions about disability might not be static. While Shona vocabulary might reflect the traditional perceptions, these perceptions might no longer be as rigidly or consciously held as in the past.

Shona traditions have undergone changes like all other societies as Shona people have become exposed to non-traditional ways of life as a result of urbanisation. Most babies in modern Zimbabwe are now delivered in hospitals by nurses trained as midwives, and infanticide is now a crime. However the Shona language now spoken in modern Zimbabwe might indicate that the negative perceptions and treatment of people with disabilities may not be historical. In addition to the prefixes mentioned earlier, Chiswanda (1997) pointed out that

many among the VaShona view deafness primarily as a lack of speech, rather than a direct hearing problem. She stated that Shona terms used to refer to deaf people include *chimumumu* or *mbeveve* (the silent), *chiurinzeve* or *matsi* (with defective ears). As Super and Harkness (1986) observed, not all subsystems of a culture are affected by change. Many traditional perceptions of disability and deafness could still affect the way in which teachers relate to deaf learners in residential special schools for the deaf today. Language and vocabulary sometimes stay the same even if general perceptions change and this could therefore be the reason that some attitudes linger on.

3.7 Aetiology of deafness

Traditionally, Shona culture has regarded disability in children as a misfortune which can be explained in the context of witchcraft (a bad spell from enemies or unappeased ancestors) or as a punishment directly from God (Jackson, 1990). The mother of the child with a disability was usually blamed for the disability because she was accused of being promiscuous during her pregnancy (Addison, 1986; Chiswanda, 1997). It was generally felt that one should not laugh at a person with a disability or the curse would be transferred onto oneself and that pregnant women should not associate with those who were disabled or even look at them in case they give birth to children with disabilities (Barnatt & Kabzems, 1992). Some disabilities were also regarded as possession by evil spirits and Chimedza (1998) stated that deaf people's speech defects perpetuated this viewpoint. This generally implies that Shona society traditionally considered the aetiology of disability in general, and deafness in particular, as metaphysical. Such beliefs are quite likely to be perpetuated in modern Zimbabwe where Ruzivo (2008) stated that 85 % of the population are Christians, and many of these mix their Christian beliefs with indigenous-traditional beliefs.

In an effort to determine the scientific causes of deafness for the children in the major centres for the education of deaf children in Zimbabwe, Viljoen *et al.* (1988) carried out a clinical and genetic evaluation of children in the special residential schools. Of the 885 children aged 5 to 21 who were examined, the following aetiological categories emerged: 40% disease or accident after birth; 5.3% genetic (syndromic) deafness; 11.9% undifferentiated genetic disorders; 42.8% deafness of uncertain origin. This landmark survey of the residential special schools in Zimbabwe found a preponderance of Shona children with deafness because of genetic syndromes or undifferentiated familial deafness. Viljoen *et al.* (1988) reported that the ethnic distributions of the institutionalised children were such that there were three Shona children to every Ndebele child. These researchers however found that the proportion of Shona to Ndebele children with autosomal recessive genetic syndromic deafness was 12 to 1. In the general population, the Shona to Ndebele proportion is 6 to 1 (see table 3.1). This finding is particularly surprising as Gelfand (1978) observed that consanguinity is strongly discouraged in traditional Shona culture. Consanguinity is enforced through totemism. Totemism is very important as all MaShona have their particular totem (*mutupo*) which can be regarded as family names used in ceremonial greetings (Bullock, 1927). The totem is usually a clan name derived from a revered wild animal and it has a much greater significance than a family name as it regulates the rule of exogamy, prohibiting marital unions of the same totem or clan. So among the Shona where the terms 'brother' or 'sister' (*mukoma/hanzvadzi*) are the same as cousin, unions between cousins and members of the same totem are forbidden. Such strict prohibition of marital unions even between distant cousins continues to be widely enforced in Zimbabwe and makes the high incidence of autosomal recessive genetic syndromic deafness found in the Viljoen *et al.* (1988) study rather inexplicable.

3.8 Deafness and disability in pre-colonial Shona society

It is uncertain whether deaf people were considered as disabled and therefore a burden in traditional, pre-colonial Shona society. In the socio-cultural perspective, disability is a social construct, not an objective condition (Armstrong & Barton, 1999; Trent, 1994) which implies that the social context helps define disability and related concepts. Chimedza (2008) cited Tugstaad and White (1995) as pointing out that anyone attempting to universalise the category 'disability' runs into conceptual problems, because such definitions take into account the social and cultural contexts. Mpofu (2001) gave the example of Zimbabwe's indigenous Shona and Ndebele languages which do not have words which match the Western meaning of mental retardation. The category 'mental retardation' might not have existed because it was not necessary in a society where people with 'intellectual challenges' were accepted with all others.

In the same way Mpofu (2001) cited Talle (1995) who observed that the Maasai of Kenya have no word for mental retardation and the Western conceptualisation as captured in the Maasai term *olmodai* translates into 'fool'. In this context where there appears to be no cross-cultural carry-over of such a construct from Western to African countries, Devlieger (1998a) argued that a term such as 'disability' does not have ready equivalents even in some European languages such as French. He pointed out that the practice of grouping people together in a recognizable category as 'disabled' could be traced back to the histories and cultural contexts of specific Western societies. In Shona society with its emphasis on compulsory uniformity, the deaf could contribute economically by working like everyone else and so the morpheme '*-rema*' could hardly have applied to them because they were not a

burden in an agricultural society. According to Nhundu (1995) in pre-colonial times in southern Africa, personal development was community-driven; it found meaning only when the individual was able to contribute to the development of the community. Kabzems and Chimedza (2002) interpreted this as meaning that individuals were pragmatically accepted according to what they could contribute to the life and welfare of the community. Children with disabilities participated in varying ways as their roles might have been to fetch water, to herd cattle or to assist with domestic chores (Kisanji, 1995b). Based on the argument by Devlieger (1998a) on the absence of a universal 'disabled' category, it is possible that the experiences of being deaf in Shona society would not have necessitated the lumping together of the deaf and the physically disabled. Devlieger (1998a, p. 53) pointed out that the establishment of colonial languages brought with it much of the disability-related terminology translated into local languages, with the term for physical disability usually becoming generic by acquiring broader meanings which incorporate people with a variety of impairments.

Viewed in this light, it is possible to attribute the Western influence of colonisation as having a negative effect on the pre-colonial harmony existing between Deaf and hearing community members. It is therefore important to try and understand the Western influence in Zimbabwe regarding disability concepts and how these are infused into teacher-education. The following sections explore Zimbabwean developments in teacher-education in special education in general and in deaf education in particular.

3.9 Teacher expertise

The teachers in the early special schools were not experts at teaching deaf children, just as Margaretha Hugo had not been an expert at teaching the blind boy. As recently as 1985 Addison (1992) found that of the 38 teachers at one residential school for the deaf, only four had trained as teachers of the deaf. This was not unique as the lack of access to teacher-education must have been the same for all the schools in the country at the time. Chitiyo and Wheeler (2004) noted that these schools perennially suffered from a lack of teachers trained in Special Education. More and more teachers who had a primary schoolteacher's certificate joined the special schools for the deaf. These teachers had what Nziramasanga (1999) called a Primary Teachers' Lower certificate (T4) or a Primary Teacher' Higher certificate (T3). The T4 teachers were the early education teachers who earned lower salaries and probably had lower occupational prestige than the T3 teachers in the higher primary grades. These T3 and T4 teachers had only basic training in teaching hearing learners in ordinary classes.

It soon became apparent that these ordinary primary schoolteachers were quite out of their depth as the challenge of deaf children was much more complicated than their training could ever have prepared them. These teachers had been trained to teach children who had been exposed from the time they were born to spoken language which happens naturally in conversation with fluent users of that language; parents, siblings and other people close to them. However for most deaf infants, ensuring that they experience enough language to activate their natural language acquisition processes is hampered by the fact that they are not physiologically equipped to process incoming speech signals. Even children with relatively mild hearing losses are at risk of spoken language development (Herman, 2014). As the literature is generally agreed that more than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing (and

therefore speaking) parents (Hauser & Marschark, 2008) this suggests that, without early intervention and support for the parents, most deaf children would fail to easily access the spoken language of their parents and therefore would come to school without any knowledge of his or her mother language. Furthermore, a seminal paper by Johnson *et al.* (1989) explained that upon entering school, deaf children are already well behind hearing age-mates in their acquisition of the knowledge and information expected from children of their age. With such a delay, deaf children fall further behind hearing children with each subsequent year in school, especially if they do not have access to the language used in school.

In order to try to meet these foregoing challenges in Zimbabwe, the ordinary primary schoolteachers who were teaching in the special schools for the deaf had to acquire specialist expertise through training which took one of two forms. In the early years of Special Education, either visiting professionals would offer on-the-job training at the special school (Nziramasanga, 1999) or a few teachers would be sent outside Zimbabwe, particularly to Malawi, South Africa or further abroad (Barcham, 1998). It is uncertain what their newly acquired training meant to them in terms of status, prestige and expertise. Cunningham (2006) found that in England teachers in Special Education experienced a status deficit compared to those teaching in ordinary schools. Standard International Occupational Prestige Scales (SIOPS) cited by Ganzeboom and Tremain (1996) also found that the early years teachers had lower prestige and status than those at the higher end such as in high school. As these special schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe were all at primary level, by implication all these teachers in the special schools would have had less prestige and status than secondary schoolteachers who according to Nziramasanga were classified in the higher grades as T2 and T1. This concurs with the finding by Guthrie *et al.* (2007) that elementary schoolchildren have historically been perceived as easier to teach and so less training is said to be necessary

for their teachers. It is therefore vital to try and understand the impact of this association between the historically lower prestige, status and different training on the one hand, and the current professionalization of deaf education on the other.

3.10 School placement and teaching approaches for deaf learners

Prestige and status aside, the foreign-trained primary schoolteachers in the special schools for the deaf acquired expertise which subscribed to their training institutions' particular communication methods, such as oralism or total communication (Barcham, 1998). As Kiyaga and Moores (2009) explained the majority of special schools in sub-Saharan Africa followed the example of schools for the deaf in Britain and France which were strictly oral-aural. The Zimbabwean schools followed international trends on approaches to teaching as determined by the various foreign-trained teachers. In an effort to standardise the training of specialist teachers of the deaf, the post-independence era saw many primary schoolteachers in the special schools for the deaf receiving 16 months additional training specialising in 'hearing impairment' at diploma level at the United College of Education (Nziramasanga, 1999). This Diploma in Special Education is used by many teachers in the special schools to enter Bachelor of Education (Special Education) degree programmes offered by various universities in the country. These teachers are called specialists but it is not clear what this means to them as they tackle the challenges of deaf education in Zimbabwe. Despite this advanced teacher-training, the academic outcomes in the education of deaf pupils remain below those in mainstream education for hearing pupils.

There is no national policy to guide special schools for the deaf on teaching methods and Chimedza (2001) attributed this absence of policy to the Zimbabwean government's on-going search for information on which to base such a policy. Barcham (1998) argued that conflict and struggle in the policy development of deaf education was rife. He cited conflict between ministry staff, principals, teachers and ASSOD. ASSOD lobbies government concerning their preference for special schools for the deaf, and the use of ZSL in them. While the conflict and struggle continue, in the meantime there is no specific, coherent policy on teaching methods. Each school interprets in varied ways government's ordinary schools' policy that a first language be used to learn another in the first three years (Education Act, 1996) and that until the end of primary school (grade seven) schools could choose to continue using this first language as the language of teaching and learning (Education Act, 1996). The dilemma Chiswanda (1997) and Mayer (2009) noted, relates to the schools' determination of deaf children's first or preferred language, and thus the language of learning and teaching.

Some of the Zimbabwean special schools resort to using English and what Chimedza and Mutasa (2003) called signed English, or pidgin English to teach signs, Shona or Ndebele and the various subjects. Others use English as the medium of instruction from the first day, arguing like Mayer (2009) that these children have no identifiable mother language. So they consider it is better for the children to begin learning the language that would be used to teach all the other subjects straight away. Some teachers resort to what they call 'Total Communication' which is variously interpreted to mean either simultaneous use of signs and spoken language or the use of whatever method the individual teacher is capable of. This contrasts with Baker and Knight (1998) who understand total communication as the use of whatever the individual child needed. Within individual schools there is a great deal of internal variability in implementing these school-based policies as many teachers depend on

their own capability to decide on such issues as language of teaching and learning, as well as different teaching methods. As observed by Storbeck and Magongwa (2006) it is important that teachers' values, beliefs, prejudices and misconceptions be understood if teaching is to be an agent of liberation and empowerment. This study attempts to understand Zimbabwean teachers' convictions and beliefs about deafness and teaching which underlie their experience of teaching in these residential special schools for the deaf.

As noted earlier, the special residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe began by subscribing to their training institutions' particular communication methods such as oralism and later total communication (Barcham, 1998; Kiyaga & Moores, 2009). This following of international trends on approaches to teaching does not appear to have moved on to the current international trend of sign-bilingual approaches possibly for a variety of reasons. As observed by Rudser (1988) the most immediate impediment to bilingual education was the educator's inability to sign. Woodward, Allen, and Schildroth (1988) reported that Deaf people make up less than 20% of teachers in the special schools for the deaf in the United States. In Zimbabwe where none of the teachers are deaf, the barriers to bilingual education would be greater. These hearing teachers use ZSL dictionaries (Chimedza, Sithole, & Rinashe, 1998, 2007) in order to learn Sign Language. However as stated by Rudser (1988) native-like skills in Sign Language are unlikely to result from using just the dictionary, which is a list of common everyday signs used by deaf people. This list cannot capture the complex and rich structure of Sign Language first discovered by Stokoe (2005). The current study looks at the hearing teachers' beliefs about the use of Sign Language and the dictionary in order to understand that aspect of their experience in teaching deaf learners.

Successful education of deaf children presupposes successful communication between teacher and learner. Kiyaga and Moores (2009, p. 149) reported that generally, teachers of the deaf in Africa are mostly hearing, lack appropriate training, cannot sign and do not view Sign Language as a complete language. With specific regard to Zimbabwe, the *Report of the Presidential Commission on Education and Training* (Nziramasanga, 1999) found that specialist[15] teachers for the deaf had to be taught ZSL by their pupils before they could teach them. One view, supported by evidence of the successes of auditory/oral approaches such as Lewis (1996) suggests that the teachers' knowledge of ZSL might be unnecessary, after all the deaf learners needed to be taught a spoken language which could be written and so facilitate their inclusion in a hearing, speaking society. The current study looks at how this need to include deaf children into society mediates the meaning teachers give to their non-native signing skills.

Although government set up various integration units in mainstream day schools after independence in 1980, special residential schools remain a very popular form of educational provision for deaf learners in Zimbabwe. Ladd (2003) and Reilly and Reilly (2005) buttressed the UNESCO (1994) position on the importance of special schools for the deaf when they argued that these residential schools are a unique environment immersing a deaf child within a critical mass of visual learners with whom to interact and from whom they could learn, making rapid gains in such areas as language.

[15] Specialist teachers are teachers who, in addition to mainstream teacher-education, have also undergone training in Special Needs Education either at diploma or degree level whereas non-specialist teachers are teachers with mainstream teacher-education who teach at special schools for the deaf.

There are no official sign-bilingual programmes in any of the residential schools in Zimbabwe. However, it is reasonable to expect that the deaf children acquire Sign Language from the environment which has many other children using Sign Language. Rudser (1988, p. 105) argued that "... in a Deaf community such as a residential school, deaf children typically acquire (ASL) to a sophisticated level of communication without a single hour of formal instruction." Reilly and Reilly (2005, p. 12) argued that deaf children have "an indomitable will to learn and communicate which helps them make the best of the otherwise isolated and intellectually barren situation of the residential special school for the deaf". Their study at a special residential school for the deaf in Thailand found that institutionalisation allowed rapid gains in language, cognition, and social participation. Without any knowledge of these research findings, parents of deaf children in Zimbabwe were found by Nziramasanga (1999) and Chimedza (2008) to be in favour of separate residential schools rather than integration into mainstream education. These parents felt that their children would learn better in separate institutions.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has described the geographical location of Zimbabwe in southern Africa, its demography and its responsiveness to disability. It has shown how residential special schools for the deaf which were established by missionaries and a non-governmental organisation have remained popular in spite of the establishment of integration units for deaf pupils at mainstream schools. The chapter explained that the country is considered to be disability-friendly because of the existence of disability legislation and 56 organisations of people with disability. Local culture, however, has many negative terms which reflect that people with disabilities might not be accepted as full humans. It is uncertain whether this lack of acceptance was originally extended to deaf people in pre-colonial times as there is tentative

evidence that deaf people may be functionally considered as ‘not disabled’ in this culture. In this light it is uncertain how far the Western classification of deaf people as disabled and their consequent education in residential schools founded on charity influences teachers in their teaching of these learners. What is certain is that the teaching approaches used in the schools have historically been borrowed from Western schools for the deaf because teacher-education and therefore teacher-expertise has been strongly influenced from there. It is therefore in this general context that teachers attribute meaning to their teaching experiences in the residential schools for the deaf. In the next chapter details of how teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching deaf learners were elicited are outlined.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and justifies the methods, instruments and techniques employed in illuminating the meaning of the experience of teaching in residential schools for the deaf. In order for the justification to make sense, the chapter briefly explores the nature of the reality of teaching and deafness assumed in the study, and relates this to the way of knowing aimed at in this study. The chapter also relates this to the methodology and design chosen for use in the collection of data in this study. The first two sections discuss the research sites and how the participants were selected.

4.2 The research sites

The study was conducted in Zimbabwe at three residential special schools for the deaf: Henry Murray School at Morgenster Mission near the city of Masvingo; Jairos Jiri Naran School in the city of Gweru and Emerald Hill School in the city of Harare (see figure 3.1 in chapter 3). These schools which were established exclusively for deaf learners have been coded as A, B and C in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. However, in light of specific practices at each school, it might not be entirely possible to mask the identity of institutions as these may become evident in teachers' descriptions of everyday practices. Data were collected through focus group and individual interviews from the teachers and principals in these institutions in order to explore their first-hand experience of teaching in these residential special schools for the deaf.

In addition to data collected from the schools, data were also collected from two types of documents from various institutions. First, data in the form of teacher-education policies (syllabi) were collected from Great Zimbabwe University, Morgenster, Masvingo and Bondolfi

Teachers' Colleges in Masvingo, University of Zimbabwe in Harare and United College of Education in Bulawayo. Great Zimbabwe University and University of Zimbabwe train specialist teachers of deaf children to degree level while United College of Education trains specialist teachers of deaf children to diploma level. These institutions were chosen because they are the ones which train specialist teachers who are in the special schools for the deaf. The intention was to analyse the extent to which the teacher-education curriculum influenced the teachers' experiences in the field. Bondolfi, Masvingo and Morgenster Teachers' Colleges offer general teacher-education diplomas that have a component of Special Needs Education which was in the process of being renamed Inclusive Education at the time of data collection. Collecting data from these mainstream training institutions was meant to examine the baseline curriculum which is provided to all teachers before they proceed to specialise in the teaching of deaf learners (see table 4.4 in this chapter). Second, data in the form of legislation and policy documents affecting the education of children with special needs were also collected from Parliament and the head office and regional offices of the government of Zimbabwe's Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture (see table 4.3 in this chapter). Analysis of these documents was meant to highlight what Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011) called the hermeneutics of policy, that is, the ways in which policies in schools are subject to the complex processes of interpretation and translation rather than mechanical implementation. In light of Foucault's assertion that power and knowledge are linked in the sense that all knowledge is contextually bound and produced within a field of shifting power relations, it is important to reveal traces of the dominant worldview embedded within the artefact (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). The purpose was to analyse the dominant worldview in the policy documents, and use that as a background to understand the experience of teaching deaf learners.

4.3 Research participants

The participants in this study were 46 purposively selected teachers of deaf learners, the three principals of the residential institutions (see table 1.1 in chapter 1) and me. It was judged that these participants would yield first-hand and therefore trustworthy data about the meaning they attach to the experience of teaching deaf learners in residential institutions. Thirty-four of these teachers were divided into specialist and non-specialist categories and engaged in focus group discussions. This meant that two focus group discussions were held at each school: one for five to six specialist teachers and another for the same number of non-specialist teachers. The remaining 15 participants were key informants who included the three school principals and 12 teachers who were not part of the focus group discussions. As with the focus group participants, these were specialist and non-specialist teachers from whom in-depth data was collected through individual interviews in order to complement the focus group interview data. Osborne (1990) stated that the number of participants needed in a study seeking 'perspectival understanding of a phenomenon' is variable, as it is important to involve as many participants as necessary to illuminate the phenomenon of interest. I involved as many teachers as would illuminate the meaning specialist and non-specialist teachers attach to the experience of teaching deaf learners in residential institutions. Non-specialist teachers are teachers trained in mainstream (general) education while specialist teachers are those who, in addition to mainstream training, are also trained in special needs education to diploma or degree level.

The phenomenon dictates the methods used, including the type of participants (Groenewald, 2004). Selection of the 46 teachers and three principals was based on what Welman and Kruger (2005) have referred to as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, that is, purposive sampling. I used my judgement, based on the research purpose, to select non-specialist and specialist teachers teaching at the residential schools for the deaf. I felt that

specialists and non-specialists might have different experiences while principals would also add a third dimension, which could be administrative. Specialist and non-specialist teachers were grouped separately to try to capture their different perspectives. With the principal's permission at each school, I addressed teachers at tea-break informing them of the purpose of the study and inviting them to participate (see Ethical Considerations in this chapter and appendix B1). After the address, appointments for the interviews were set up for at least one week after the initial address. More teachers showed interest in participating than could be accommodated in the group discussions and so the first six in each of the two categories were registered to take part in the group discussions. Similarly for the individual interviews, the first two specialist teachers and first two non-specialist teachers who had expressed interest after the initial address at each school participated in the individual interviews.

My personal involvement in the provision of research data was not only meant to yield data from my first-hand experience as a teacher at a residential school, but was a form of reflexive bracketing in van Manen's (1997) tradition cited in Gearing (2004). The process of such reflexive bracketing is to make my personal values, background and cultural suppositions transparent and open so that those who read this research report could judge how the phenomenon of interest had been illuminated from a particular perspective. Such personal involvement in the provision of research data is supported by Ahern (1999). Osborne (1990) acknowledged that knowledge coming from such research is not objective but perspectival. In support of such a position Gearing (2004) pointed out that no single truth exists, and it is improbable for any researcher to be totally objective. Acknowledging one's suppositions makes one consciously self-aware of their influence on the phenomenon under investigation (2004, pp. 1448-1449).

4.4 Methodology

This study recognises that some teachers will take deafness and the ability to learn as socially constructed realities, while others will take them as objective givens. In light of this, the study acknowledges that each teacher's experience of teaching deaf children will depend on whether the teacher is more inclined towards an objective or a socio-cultural reality of deafness, learning and teaching. Based on this idea of the possibility of multiple realities, the study assumes after Guba (1990) that "realities exist in the form of mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them," (1990, p. 27). As a direct result the study takes the position that "social reality is based upon the actor's frame of reference within the setting" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 80). These positions are based on a conceptualisation of teaching as a socially organised activity occurring in a community of practice, a notion congruent with the situated perspective which orientates this study (see Chapter 2).

As the study assumes that knowledge is socially constructed, it therefore employs an interpretivist, subjective research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). According to Henning *et al.* (2004) the interpretivist paradigm informs a discursive qualitative methodological approach. The study argues that the teachers' reality of teaching deaf learners is based on their frame of reference in Shona society, teacher-education and daily work within residential special schools founded on a charitable ethos. A qualitative approach should therefore lay open the teachers' experiences and inferred meanings in the natural setting in which they work. Special residential institutions for the deaf are the natural setting, and the interactions of hearing adults with the deaf children within them are the social realities. This study intends to understand the social reality of the experience of teaching in the schools by

building a rich, holistic picture in words as detailed by the teachers themselves. All these considerations indicate qualitative rather than quantitative research methods.

Qualitative research methods have been selected in this study because it recognises, in concurrence with Leedy and Ormrod (2013), that the issues being studied are multidimensional and layered. These need to be revealed in their multifaceted and dense form (Merriam, 2002). In addition, the basic premise on which this study is based is that reality is constructed by teachers interacting within their social world. As Merriam (1998, p. 6) put it, qualitative research is interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. The current study is interested in the meaning hearing teachers have constructed about teaching deaf children, how they make sense of their residential special school world, and the experiences they have in this world. The teachers' realities would be varied which should lead to an examination of the complexity of holistic views rather than just narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. Based on the foregoing considerations, the study employed what Swanson-Kauffman (1986) called combined qualitative methodology.

4.4.1 Combined qualitative methodology

Various qualitative strategies were selected to elicit the experience of teaching deaf learners. A combination of various aspects from phenomenology and social anthropology were employed in order to give effect to the idea of multiple strategies. Phenomenology not only lent the study its goal of understanding the meaning of the experience of teaching, it also informed aspects of data analysis which sought to understand the essence of the experience of teaching. The study borrowed its direction for collecting data from social anthropology; using interviews, document reviews and autoethnography. The selection of aspects from each of

these methods is justified by Swanson-Kauffman (1986) who argued that it is inappropriate to simply receive and use a methodology because it had worked elsewhere. Each of the borrowed aspects is discussed in detail in the following sections.

4.4.2 Phenomenology in the study

This qualitative study is informed by phenomenology which as Groenewald (2004) stated is a science of beginnings in that it calls for a return to the foundations of meanings and experiences in order to describe or understand those foundations accurately and clearly. Phenomenology appeared to provide a close fit conceptually with pedagogy and with the types of research questions posed in the current study. As Beck (1994) pointed out, the emphasis in phenomenological research is on the meaning of experience. Rose, Beeby, and Parker (1995) added that the purpose of phenomenological inquiry is to explicate the structure or essence of the experience of a phenomenon in the search for unity of meaning. To explain this unity of meaning which they call 'essence' Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook, and Irvine (2008) cited the example of changing the material of a chair from plastic to wood, and still having a chair, but not being able to call something a chair once the back-rest had been removed. Bradbury-Jones *et al.* (2008) wrote that similarly, there are invariant features that make all human experiences what they are. There are therefore potentially as many phenomenologies as there are events and experiences. This study focussed only on the invariant features which make hearing teachers' experience of teaching deaf children in residential schools what it is. As there are many phenomenologies, there is no one absolute way of conducting a phenomenological study as it can be conducted in many different ways.

In light of the foregoing, the present study employed aspects of Heideggerian or interpretive phenomenology (Bradbury-Jones *et al.*, 2008) to understand the invariant features of teaching

deaf children. Heideggerian phenomenology is the strand of phenomenology compatible with trying to understand teachers' group interaction within their community of practice. Heideggerian phenomenology is not concerned with trying to collect 'uncontaminated' participant accounts (Bradbury-Jones *et al.*, 2008). Krueger (1995) stated that the interaction of participants in groups allows them to hear the ideas of others and helps them to formulate their own opinions. Participants could also elaborate their views in response to encouragement from others or defend them when challenged by other group members (Wilkinson, 1998b). It was envisaged that the interaction of teachers in groups would serve these purposes. In addition to focus group discussions, the phenomenological thrust also used individual, in-depth interviews for key participants including the principals of the schools, an approach also suggested by anthropology (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Details of these data collection procedures are elaborated in the next section.

4.5 Data collection procedures

Data were collected from teachers in group and individual interviews as well as from training and other government policy documents before I engaged in my autoethnography. The time frame for data collection from teachers in the schools for the deaf was the two month period from May to June 2012. Interview sessions were done at the teachers' preferred times and locations but usually during the teachers' free afternoons and within the schools. The process of collecting data from each of these sources is explained and justified in detail in the following sections.

4.5.1 Focus group discussions

Focus groups are a form of group interview which capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data (Kitzinger, 1995). I used these interviews not merely as a quick and convenient way of collecting data from several people simultaneously (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010), but encouraged group interaction so that teachers talked to one another: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes and commenting on each other's experiences. Kitzinger (1995) explains that the idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview. It has been argued elsewhere that the goal of phenomenological research is to seek the essences of phenomena, and a phenomenological approach requires an individual to describe their experiences in an uncontaminated way, so interaction in focus groups is therefore incompatible with phenomenology (Webb & Kvern, 2001). Bradbury-Jones *et al.* (2008) counter-argued that such an argument was only valid for the Husserlian or descriptive strand of phenomenology which seeks to describe phenomena in a manner free of 'contamination'. Paradoxically, Heidegger's interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology is enhanced by group processes. Krueger (1995) and Wilkinson (1998a) found that interaction in groups enhanced participation, by allowing those taking part to hear the ideas of others in the group and so formulate their own ideas. Cote-Arsenault and Morrison-Beedy (2001) used focus groups in an interpretive phenomenological study to understand women's experiences of pregnancy after peri-natal loss. They reported that the focus groups enhanced the credibility of their study by providing an environment which encouraged interaction and clarification among participants. This is the same kind of environment fostered by focus group discussions in the current study.

A group of six specialists and another of six non-specialists participated in focus group

discussions at school A and school B, while five specialists and five non-specialists participated in similar discussions at school C. Altogether 34 teachers participated in a total of six focus group discussions (see Table 4.1). Bender and Ewbank (1994) pointed out that small groups allow a greater contribution from each individual participant and recommend groups of as few as five when one interviews people who are known to be loquacious or persistent in their desire to be heard, like the chiefs in their own study. Given the social standing of teachers, which the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2005) said is quite high, I expected them to talk a lot, and they did express themselves quite openly in these small groups. Krueger and Casey (2000) observed that individuals will tend to censor their ideas in the presence of those who differ greatly from them in power, status, income, education or personal characteristics. That was the reason why small groups of teachers with relatively homogeneous backgrounds as either specialists or non-specialists were interviewed separately. Morgan (1988) averred that it was necessary to select participants who will have something to say to one another and who would be comfortable talking to one another. It was useful that these teachers knew each other fairly well so that they prodded one another to tell their individual stories. The prodders, in a sense, became my assistants as I facilitated.

In conducting the focus group discussions, my initial job was to create a non-evaluative environment in which the teachers felt free to express their opinions without concern for the agreement or disagreement of others in the group, as advocated by Morgan and Spanish (1994). This allowed me, as a quasi-observer, to assume a posture Bender and Ewbank (1994) called 'sophisticated naivety' which involved asking questions such as "Why is that?"; or "Can you tell me more about why this is so?". My primary purpose was to stimulate interaction and encourage the quieter group members to speak up. There was one talkative teacher whose contributions also needed to be managed. Whenever she responded first to a discussion item, all

the other group members tended to keep quiet or simply affirmed what she had said. In order to try to deal with this, I asked each of the other participants directly to respond to discussion issues first. I also asked the others to respond to specific aspects of what the talkative member had said. These turned out to be effective ways not only of encouraging others to respond to discussion items in a more substantive way, but also of balancing the group by eliciting responses from everyone. I was largely non-directive in all the other groups because I wanted to avoid the pitfalls of over-involvement. Knodel and Pramualratana (1987) stated that the over-involved facilitator gets results reflecting his or her own interests rather than those of the participants. Although a standard one-page focus-group set of six discussion items was used as a means of guiding and directing the discussion (see appendix A1) the groups did not discuss every item in equal depth. My focus was on eliciting details in response to each of the five main items rather than standardising the responses. The sixth item on the discussion guide was meant to raise issues that may have been missed in the discussion of the first five items. Each discussion session lasted between one hour and one and half hours. Focus group discussions were complemented by phenomenological in-depth interviewing of key informants such as principals and other teachers as described in the next section.

4.5.2 Individual in-depth interviews

In order to develop intensive patterns and relationships of meaning, 15 educators who included the three principals were individually interviewed. These 15 could not be accommodated in the focus group discussions as doing so would have made the groups too large and also the presence of the principals might have stifled free discussion among teachers. These 15 therefore participated as key informants in the in-depth individual interviews. From a phenomenological perspective the interview is described as "... a specific type of in-depth interviewing grounded in the theoretical tradition of phenomenology" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 82). Wimpenny

and Gass (2000) cite Munhall and Oiler-Boyd (1993) who said that phenomenological interviewing is reflective whereas in quantitative research it is observational and in other qualitative research it is dialogical. Reflectivity is higher order than mere observation and dialogue as it encompasses the latter. Being reflective in an interview, the researcher observes both what is said, and how it is said in order to engage in a meaningful dialogue. The researcher has to ask questions which require the interviewee to reflect on his or her experiences. Wimpenny and Gass (2000) stated that this acknowledges the importance of the researcher in the phenomenological research process. The interview is the main method of data collection in phenomenological research because it provides a situation where the participants' descriptions can be explored, illuminated and probed (Kvale, 1996; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Seidman (1991) wrote that a basic requirement for phenomenological interviews is the interest that the researcher has for others' stories. Such interest enables the exploration, illumination and probing that Kvale (1996) mentions as important in individual interviewing. The present study employed phenomenological interviewing using what Seidman (1991) called a three-stage structure beginning with the establishment of the context of the interviewee's experience, followed by a construction of the experience and lastly a reflection on the meaning it holds. However this formal structure was not rigidly maintained as the progression of each interview was influenced by the nature of the interaction which occurred in each particular situation.

The 15 educators were individually interviewed in line with the suggestion by Moustakas (1994) that phenomenology requires the intensive engagement of a small number of participants to gain understanding of a phenomenon. The individual interviews were necessary because as Bender and Ewbank (1994) pointed out, at times people are more willing to reveal personal behaviours or events that have occurred to them if there are no others present to repeat the story to neighbours or friends. Boyd (2001) cited in Groenewald (2004) regards up to ten participants

as sufficient to reach saturation in individual interviews in a study focussing on understanding a phenomenon. Recruitment for individual interviews went up to 12, as this was the point at which I became confident that preliminary data analysis was no longer showing any more new perspectives emerging from the participants. After the twelfth interview, I decided that I had adequate data to explore the experiences of teachers of deaf children in residential special schools. Four teachers from each of the three schools were individually interviewed. The interviews were in-depth and face to face to elicit their knowledge and beliefs about deafness, teaching as well as deaf children's ability to learn. The principal of each school was also individually interviewed using the same instrument as the teachers because they were teachers before they became principals. Principals' interviews tended to evoke recollections of their past teaching experiences as well as their current perspectives as leaders of residential special schools for the deaf. Each audiotape-recorded individual interview lasted about one hour. The interview schedule had a total of five open-ended main questions, each with probes to follow-up teachers' ideas so that they could elaborate on what they had said. Using the three stage structure of interviewing (Seidman, 1991) the preliminary questions aimed to establish the context of the teacher's experience while the three following were aimed at fully constructing the experience. The last two questions focussed on reflecting on the meaning that the experience held for the teacher (see appendix A2). The principals and the 12 teachers made up a total of 15 individually interviewed educators (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Summary of main data collection instruments used for specific participants

Institution	Focus group discussions		Individual interviews			Total
	Specialist	Non-specialist	Specialist	Non-specialist	Principal	
A	6	6	2	2	1	**17**
B	6	6	2	2	1	**17**
C	5	5	2	2	1	**15**
Sub-total	**17**	**17**	**6**	**6**	**3**	**49**
Grand total	**34**		**12**		**3**	**49**

Pseudonyms are used in reporting the data to ensure the participants' and schools' anonymity. I obviously could not use a pseudonym in my account of my teaching experience which is described in the next section.

4.5.3 Autoethnography

In addition to the focus group discussions and individual interviews of teachers, I decided that as I am also an experienced teacher of deaf learners in residential settings, I should turn the research lenses inward and let my own voice be heard through autoethnography. Autoethnography gave me insights into how my own experience of teaching deaf learners related to the other teachers' experiences. An autoethnography is a highly intimate, personal account which draws on the researcher's experience for the purposes of extending either sociological understanding (Sparkes, 2000) or understanding of a discipline (Holt, 2003). Therefore this autoethnography involved reflecting upon my story as a teacher of deaf children,

analysing and interpreting the story within the broader socio-cultural context and within education as a discipline. According to Reed-Danahay (1997) autoethnographers vary in their emphasis on *auto-* (i.e. self), *-ethno* (i.e. culture, the socio-cultural connection), and *-graphy* (i.e. the application of the research process). Holt (2003) pointed out that whatever their emphasis might be, autoethnographic researchers use their own experiences in a culture in a reflexive way to look more deeply at 'self-other' interactions. This study employs an analytical self-narrative (Anderson, 2006; Pace, 2012) which recognises the self as empirical data for systematic analysis (Chang, 2008). This means that although I am an insider whose personal experiences of teaching are the empirical data, I am relying on analytic reflexivity and traditional analytical methods especially content analysis to analyse this autoethnographic work. As suggested by Badenhorst, McLeod, and Joy (2013) I seek dialogue beyond the self by also collecting data from others to avoid 'autobiography' and 'self-indulgence'. By placing myself as the main actor within the "play" of autoethnography (Butler, 1997) I hope to encourage readers to experience what it was like in that crucial period of my academic life (Tayeb, 1991) in order to help them to reflect on their own experiences. Like Humphreys (2005) my intention here is to provide access to some of my natural and spontaneous reactions to the data and dispel any notion of me as an independent, objective researcher.

Attention to 'self' in research is not new to social scientists (Chang, 2008) but self-reflexivity and author's voice have not been readily embraced in academia. Sparkes (2000) pointed out that criticism has largely been based on misapprehensions because autoethnography is located at the boundaries between fiction and the scientific disciplines. It has, for example, been considered too self-indulgent and narcissistic (Coffey, 1999). In counter-arguing the self-indulgency charge Stanley (1993) and Mykhalovskiy (1996) pointed out that autoethnography was not necessarily limited to the self because people do not accumulate their experiences in a social vacuum and so

to write of one's personal experience is to write of social experience. Wall (2006) also argued that an individual person is more able to describe his or her own experience more accurately than anyone else. This removes the risk inherent in the representation of others.

Autoethnography is supported by Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang (2010) who argued that even though most researchers have been trained to guard against subjectivity (self-driven perspectives), and to separate self from research activities, this is impossible, as scholarship is inextricably connected to self; personal interest, experiences and familiarity. Sparkes (2000) explained that this type of research does not sit comfortably with traditional criteria used to judge qualitative inquiry while Wall (2006) pointed out that this is a new genre linked to growing debate about reflexivity and voice in social science research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) added that autoethnography allows for the production of new knowledge by a uniquely situated researcher and offers local knowledge which can inform specific problems and specific situations. By writing myself into my own work as a major character I am challenging accepted views about silent authorship, where the researcher's voice is not included in the presentation of findings for example Charmaz and Mitchell (1997).

In practice, the collection of autoethnographic data involved the use of personal memory. Chang (2008) stated that 'recalling' in auto-ethnography is no different in principle from its practice in other ethnographies. The difference is that autoethnography utilises and openly values my personal memory as a researcher whereas other ethnographies rely on informants' personal memory and the researcher's recent memory of what was heard and observed in the field (2008, p. 71). In the latter, researchers avoid mixing their personal memories with their data collected from fieldwork. Memory may be a foe in autoethnography because it could be unreliable and unpredictable as it selects, shapes, limits and distorts the past (Chang, 2008, p. 72). Despite its

precariousness, personal memory taps into the wealth of information on self, allowing what is extracted from memory to be written down as textual data. To facilitate recollection of data from my personal memory I followed advice by Chang (2008) to employ interactive introspection, inventorying techniques as well as creating an autobiographical timeline.

Interaction in individual and focus group interviews with other teachers was the main activity which triggered recollection and introspection of my own story as a teacher of the deaf. Chang (2008) explained that collecting the stories of others through conversations and interviews with them in order to respond to their self-narratives is an autoethnographic data collection technique. Immediately after each focus group discussion and individual interview I would make notes in a field journal highlighting similarities and differences between the teachers' experiences and my own. Ellis (1991) called this 'interactive introspection' and said it could be taken further and become a situation where the researcher and other participants can interview one another, helping to recreate and describe their recollection of experiences. My being interviewed by the teachers in the schools for the deaf happened spontaneously rather than by design. In the focus group discussions and individual interviews, several teachers asked me about my experiences in a special school from the mid-1980s to late 1990s as well as how local practices compared with what I had experienced in a 2010 study tour of deaf education institutions in Washington, DC. I used this as an opportunity to take up the interactive introspection suggested by Ellis (1991). I made notes in my field journal on what I was experiencing during these interactions with the teachers in both focus group discussions and individual interviews and how it related to the past. I was careful to defer answering the teachers' questions until the end of the discussions or individual interviews in order to remain non-directive and avoid being over-involved. In this way I tried to avoid getting results that reflected my personal interests rather than those of the teachers, as advised by Knodel and

Pramualratana (1987). In addition to this autoethnographic data collection technique I also chronicled an autobiographical timeline into my field journal. This timeline included the following: my educational history, typical day, week, favourite and disliked activities as well as life cycle during my teaching career in two special schools for the deaf. In coming up with this timeline I was guided by, but not restricted to items on my autoethnography guide (see appendix A6). This self-reflective process which collected data on the past from personal memory was triangulated as suggested by Chang (2008). To triangulate, I inventoried six of my supervisors' critique-reports on lessons they had observed me teaching. I retained the original reports and analysed their content as work artefacts in order to re-create conversations with my principals and inspectors who wrote them. These conversations are highlighted as part of the autoethnography presented in Chapter Six. Table 4.2 shows the documents that were used as instruments for interactive introspection for autoethnography.

Table 4.2: Documents used to facilitate autoethnography

Source	**Document description**	**Details**
Interaction with teachers in interviews	1 Field journal	12 pages
Autobiographical timeline		6 pages
My own experiences at school A and C	6 Lesson critiques	9 pages

4.5.4 Document review

In order to understand the setting that might inform the teachers' experiences and also to further triangulate the data from teachers' interviews and my own autoethnographic account, I collected and reviewed the course syllabi used in general and specialist teacher-training, as well as legislation and policy documents regulating education and disability in Zimbabwe (see tables 4.3 and 4.4). The documents were related to national laws and policies, local interpretations of the laws and policies and staffing guidelines on mainstream and special education in general or where available, the education of deaf learners in particular (see appendix A5). In analysing

these documents I was guided by a document review guide (see appendix A7). Document review was vertical i.e. starting with national laws and policies and moving to local Education Directors' policies which are usually interpretations of national legislation. Policy documents referring to how teachers should relate to their deaf pupils, such as those dealing with the language of teaching and learning, were selected. Also targeted were documents describing educational rights and provisions for additional support for learners with disabilities and where possible, deaf learners. Documents were either current or archived, and were sourced by searching relevant government agency websites and consulting policy experts in the Ministry of Education as well as lecturers in the colleges of education and universities. Documents were mostly sourced from these experts and from the stationery office selling government statutes at parliament. I was interested in documents describing, envisioning and constructing teacher-pupil relations so that I might see how this could influence the experience of teaching. In reporting these data, the names of the institutions and government departments are used because these are public documents.

Documents are generally called texts as they rely on nonliving forms of data and are frequently used in multi-method qualitative designs to augment data from interviewing (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). The major advantages of working with these unobtrusive forms of data are that they are non-interactive, and exist independent of the research process (Reinharz, 1992). This adds a built-in dimension of authenticity to the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). The reason for this is that the researcher does not produce data specifically for research but investigates existing cultural texts ranging from historical archival documents to current cultural texts.

These data were deemed useful as the compilers of college course syllabi, for example, would

have given thoughtful attention to what type of teacher for deaf pupils they wanted to produce (see appendix A4). Government legislation and policy documents provided a useful context within which to understand the teachers' experiences. The documents served, for the most part, to provide a context rather than to cross-check the teachers' experiences because as stated by Ball *et al.* (2011) teachers are actors who assume different positions in relation to policy, including positions of indifference or avoidance or irrelevance. There might therefore not be much of a match between the teachers' everyday experiences and the policy documents I reviewed, but the documents should still shed light on the extent to which the teachers' experiences are a reflection of their interpretation of policy. Table 4.3 summarises the government documents used in data analysis.

Table 4.3: Summary of government documents reviewed

Source	Document description	Document details
Parliament	Children's Protection and Adoption Act (1996)	25 pages
	Disabled Persons Act (1996)	4 pages
	Education Act (1996)	14 pages
Ministry of Education	Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provisions (Secretary's circular 7 of 2007).	2 pages
	Special Education Placement Procedures (Secretary's circular P36 of 1990).	3 pages
	Guidelines on Over-aged Learners in Special Education (Director's circular 6 of 2006).	2 pages
	Special examination arrangements for learners with special needs (Education Secretary's circular 2 of 2007).	12 pages
	National Curriculum Policy for Primary and Secondary Schools (Education Secretary's circular 3 of 2002).	15 pages
	Guidelines for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in school competitions (Director's circular 7 of 2005).	3 pages
	Guidelines on providing equal access to education for learners with disabilities (Director's Circular 3 of 2006).	8 pages
Total	10 documents	88 pages

Table 4.4 summarises documents analysed as pertinent to Special Education in teacher-education institutions in Zimbabwe.

Table 4.4: Reviewed teacher-education documents pertinent to special education

Source	Document description	Document details
University of Zimbabwe	Synopsis for B. Ed (Special Needs Education) degree for in-service courses EFSE 202 (Curriculum management for Hearing Impairment), EFSE 205 (Aetiology of Hearing Impairment), EFSE 206 (Language and Assistive devices), EFSE 207 (Rehabilitation for Integration) from university prospectus[16].	2 pages
Great Zimbabwe University	Syllabi for B. Ed (Special Needs Education) degree for in-service courses SNE 105 (Hearing Impairment), SNE 201 (Visual and Hearing Impairment).	6 pages
	Synopsis for B. Ed (Special Needs Education) degree for in-service courses SNE 101 (Foundations of Special Education), SNE 102 (Curriculum issues), SNE 103 (Introduction to Disability and Special Needs) from university prospectus.	2 pages
United College of Education	Syllabus for Diploma in Education (Special Education) Hearing Impairment Main Subject for in-service teachers.	4 pages
	Syllabus for Diploma in Education (Special Education) Hearing Impairment Professional Study course for in-service teachers.	4 pages
Morgenster Teachers' College	Syllabus for the Theory of Education (Special Needs Education) course for the pre-service Diploma in Education (Primary).	5 pages
Bondolfi Teachers' College	Syllabus for the Theory of Education (Special Needs Education) course for the pre-service Diploma in Education (Primary).	4 pages
Masvingo Teachers' College	Syllabus for the Theory of Education (Special Needs Education) course for the pre-service Diploma in Education (Primary).	5 pages
Total	9 documents	32 pages

[16] A prospectus is a document that is distributed to prospective and current students in order to describe the university and briefly outline its degree programmes, courses and course aims.

4.5.5 The researcher's role

I paid particular attention to gaining access to the special schools through people who could provide entrance to the research site, people Wolcott (1994) calls 'gatekeepers'. I gained relatively easy access to the special school community as I had been a teacher of the deaf at one of the institutions for 15 years and at another for half a year. I presented myself to the gatekeepers at each of the schools as a former teacher of the deaf who intended to carry out research which could enhance understanding of teaching practices in the schools. In line with the advice by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) to present a brief proposal to these gatekeepers, I made a brief presentation explaining what the study was about, and how I thought the gatekeepers would gain from the study (see appendix B1). In contributing to the collection of data by recounting the story of my own experiences as a teacher of the deaf, I accepted the argument by Louis (1991) that I am an instrument of my inquiry and that the inquiry is inseparable from who I am. My intention was to provide access to some of my natural and spontaneous reactions and dispel any notion of a researcher as an independent, objective observer as highlighted by Stacey (1996).

4.6 Data analysis

This study follows what Miles and Huberman (2010) call the social anthropological and interpretive approaches of data analysis. Social anthropology fits the naturalist profile of the data which are concerned with unusual and mundane day-to-day events focussing on individual teachers' perspectives and interpretations of their world. As Berg (1995) explained, researchers employing social anthropological approaches to analysis are usually interested in the behavioural regularities of everyday life, language and language use, rituals and ceremonies and relationships. A social anthropological analytic process also seemed to be fitting in respect to the multiple sources of data in the form of focus group and individual interviews, artefacts

(policy and training documents as well as lesson critiques), and a field journal capturing reflexive autoethnography. In this regard, my analytic task was to capture the teachers' behavioural regularities through identifying and explaining the ways teachers operated in residential special schools for the deaf; how they came to understand what they did there; how they accounted for deaf children's academic performance and generally managed their day-to-day life.

Notwithstanding the richness of the cultural narrative that is likely to result from the foregoing social anthropological analytic process, there was also a need to understand what was constant in the teachers' experiences across their manifold variations. To capture this essence of teaching, my analysis incorporated a phenomenological bent from interpretivism, which Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 9) said might at first appear to be irreconcilable to social anthropological analysis. In this study however, the phenomenological uncovering of the essence (*telos*) (Berg, 1995) of the experience of teaching was used to complement the social anthropological thrust of searching for teachers' behavioural regularities. As the experience of teaching is multidimensional, it seemed appropriate to analyse it using more than one lens. On the one hand, the results are reported in terms of relatively simple categories to uncover the essence of teaching, and on the other hand these same data are put before the reader in extensive quotations enabling the rich flavour to come through. The overall idea was to see the essence of teaching as cultural stories by examining how teachers deploy narratives to make their actions, knowledge and beliefs explicable and understandable.

Content analysis was used as a technique to give effect to the social anthropological approach of data analysis. Berg (1995) cited Holsti (1968) as saying that content analysis is any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of

messages. Content analysis may focus on either quantitative or qualitative aspects of a communication. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explained that the first descriptions of content analysis were predominantly quantitative. Silverman (2000, p. 128) wrote that quantitative analysers try to analyse written material in a way which will produce reliable evidence about a large sample which is why they establish a set of categories, and then count the numbers of instances falling into each category. The quantitative focus in content analysis has, over time, expanded to apply to qualitative research where it has been applied to various depths of interpretation. There is a danger that a quantitative focus could turn content analysis into a reductionist, positivistic approach, which emphasises "counts" of textual elements (Berg, 1995). This would be contrary to this qualitative study which presumes that a text always involves multiple meanings, and whose focus is on small numbers of texts and documents which should be analysed in relation to the participants' categories to understand how these are used in describing teaching. Policy and training documents, lesson critiques, a field journal and transcribed interviews were thought to be amenable to qualitative rather than quantitative content analysis in this study. The following is a detailed description of the analysis process.

Data collection and data analysis were done simultaneously, as advocated for qualitative data by Marshall and Rossman (1989) cited in Creswell (2009). In the first stage of analysis, I made notes and wrote memos after each interview on the topics discussed in that particular interview. Field and Morse (1985) indicated that this preliminary way of categorising data serves as a memory jogger as well as a record of the ideas and theories that the researcher has as he works with the data. At this initial stage I also began affixing codes to the interviews and would identify similar phrases, patterns and preliminary themes and differences between specialist and non-specialist teachers. I would take these commonalities and differences out to the field in the next round of data collection. Several such analyses were made.

Another layer of analysis took place after I had completed fieldwork when I personally transcribed all 15 individual interviews, and six focus group discussions. Listening to the tapes and transcribing the interviews and discussions helped me become more familiar with the data. At this stage I read through the transcripts making notes on general themes within them. The aim was to become immersed in the data in order to become more fully aware of the 'life-world' of the participating teachers, to enter their 'frame of reference' as suggested by Rogers (1951) cited by Burnard (1991). In this process, patterns within the data – matters which were surprising, questions, inconsistencies and contradictions were noted. An example of such notes follows:

- These interviews are dwelling on the need for more time needed to teach and to learn;
- A major category seems to be emerging to do with 'deaf inability to learn incidentally'.

The patterns within the data were meaning units which were extracted from repeated reading of transcripts, and analyses of significant statements made by the teachers. I freely generated categories or issues in a process that Berg (1989) called 'open coding'. Coding became more comprehensive as it entailed the assigning of labels to bits of data so that all the text could be retrieved and brought together (Froggatt, 2001). I generated the initial codes from the words and phrases used by the participating teachers themselves as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In practice this involved making comparisons of specialist and non-specialist focus group discussions and individual interviews. It might be important to state here that the major difference between the analyses of focus group discussions and individual interviews was the unit of analysis. In the focus group discussions the unit of analysis was the group, in analysing the individual interviews the unit of analysis was the individual. An example of the open coding done at this stage is shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: An example of open coding done during and after transcribing interviews

Interview transcript	Open coding	Theme	In-between & outliers
Personally I feel maybe the syllabus that we are using was designed for the mainstream. **I think** that is one of the obstacles. **You know** – you are required to complete the syllabus in the same period that **somebody in the mainstream** is required to complete the syllabus yet **we are saying** our children here are disadvantaged. So that's one of the hindrances that affect their learning (Aripo, School B non-specialist FGD).	Syllabus designed for mainstream... Same time to complete syllabus... Deaf children are disadvantaged... Hindrances or obstacles affect deaf children's learning.		Personally I feel maybe I think You know Somebody in the mainstream We are saying
The problem with the deaf is that **you introduce a topic at the beginning of the week**, let's say **addition**. If you **ask them later in the week** you have to repeat because they have forgotten most of the stuff (Fadzai, School B specialist FGD).	Problem with the deaf… Have to repeat… Forgotten most of the stuff…	Deafness as cognitive deficit	Introduce topic beginning of week… Addition… Ask them later…
I think the problem **is that the** books they use are meant for children in the mainstream. **Now** to take that detail and try to give it to the HI children **it** becomes very difficult (Tema, School A specialist FGD).	…the problem… …books they use are meant for children in the mainstream… …to take that detail and try to give it to the HI children… …becomes very difficult.		I think… Now… …is that the…
That problem **is** natural to them. **It's** natural (Svayaz, School C specialist explaining problem of forgetfulness in individual interview).	That problem… …natural …natural.		…is… It's…

The analysis of the transcriptions could have been done on computer, using programs such as Atlas.ti or the 'search' feature of Microsoft Word in order to enforce consistency as pointed out by Bender and Ewbank (1994). However computer analysis would have posed the risk of yielding results which were flat and oversimplified as computers are not capable of gleaning the qualitative meaning embedded in the rich narrative data (Becker, 1993). Bearing this in mind, I

was convinced that manual analysis would respect the complexity, subtlety and detail of human transactions more than computer programmes. The analysis was manual because not only could I do what the computer could do, but I could do even more. In order to manually make the comparisons, 13 matrices were devised on very large sheets. There was one matrix each for the non-specialist focus group discussion at each school; one each for the specialist focus group discussion at each school; one each for the two non-specialist individual interviews at each school; one each for the two specialist individual interviews at each school and one for all three principals' interviews.

On each matrix, comprising numerous squares, the interviewees' pseudonyms were inscribed vertically and the questions asked in the interview were inscribed horizontally in condensed form. An abbreviated version of the interviewees' answers to the questions was recorded in the corresponding squares. Basit (2003) proposed that such an arrangement provides an anatomic framework of the data thereby showing instant inter-interviewee and intra-interviewee comparisons and contrasts. A total of 1 082 meaning units were identified from the transcripts of all the interviews and documents. Meaning units were excerpts thought to be representative of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and experiences in the teaching of deaf children in residential institutions. Altogether the specialist focus group discussions generated 312 meaning units, non-specialist focus group discussions generated 298, specialist individual interviews generated 157 meaning units, non-specialist individual interviews generated 148 meaning units while the documents generated 67 meaning units. This accounted for almost all the interview and document data. Transcript material that was not coded was initially categorised as 'other themes'. All the 1 082 meaning units were then paraphrased and this resulted in the creation of 62 first order sub-themes or categories.

After the first order sub-themes were identified from these paraphrases, I then re-read the interview transcripts alongside the list of categories to establish the degree to which the categories cover all aspects of the interviews. Each interview transcript was worked through and 'coded' according to the list of themes and categories. I used coloured highlighting pens and crayons to distinguish between each piece of the transcript allocated to a category. Examples of the way such colours were used are as follows:

- Shona language as an impediment: yellow
- Sign Language inferiority: blue
- Examinations for deaf learners: red

Multiple photocopies of the transcripts were used in order to ensure that the context of the interviews was maintained when the different coloured sections were cut up. The multiple copies allowed the cut-up sections to be juxtaposed to the complete interview so that the wholeness of the interview was not lost. Burnard (1991) advises that since everything that is said in an interview is said in a context, merely cutting out strings of words devoid of context risks altering the meaning of what is really said.

At this stage, I also made adjustments as necessary by incorporating some of the initial outliers and in-betweens that were under 'other themes' into categories and themes. These adjustments also reduced the number of categories by 'collapsing' some of the ones which were similar into broader categories as suggested by Burnard (1991). This process resulted in the emergence of 16, more abstract second order themes. Two PhD students were then invited to generate category systems independently without seeing my own list of second order themes. These two students were fellow members of a reading group which was focussing on 'situated learning' and Foucault's work so I was confident they would be familiar with the basic concepts therein. The three of us discussed the lists of categories resulting in my making necessary adjustments

which yielded 10 themes. As Burnard (1991) says, the aim of such an exercise is to enhance the validity of the categorising method and to guard against researcher bias. Most of the themes emerged from what the participants had said, but many of these are captured in the language of the extant literature. All these themes and categories relate to the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about deafness and are what Bender and Ewbank (1994) called 'emergent themes'. The themes are emergent because they are unexpected insights into the participants' beliefs and knowledge. It is these 10 second order themes resulting from this stage which are used as sub-headings to frame and present ethnographic details of teachers' knowledge and beliefs in Chapter 6, 8 and 9. The transcripts were perused several times in order to identify and highlight illuminative quotations under each of the emergent themes that had been identified. A number of these quotations were chosen to be used in the report write-up.

Finally the 10 second order themes were consolidated into four higher levels of thematic abstractions. These four higher levels of thematic abstractions were used as a framework to guide the presentation of four broad narratives of teaching in Chapter 7 in what Moustakas (1994) cited in Creswell (2009) would call an essence description. Teachers' narratives about their experiences with deaf children became an essence description of teaching deaf learners and are presented separately in chapter 7. The narratives themselves do not correspond precisely to the accounts given by individual teachers but they employ details derived from the 10 second order themes. The narratives provide insights into beliefs about the teachers' role in the schools through an essence description of the experience of hearing teachers of deaf children in special residential schools. The 67 meaning units that originally emerged from policy documents were similarly collapsed as was done with the interview data. This resulted in six overarching themes which are used to present the policy context in Chapter 5. The analysis process itself followed the same steps that were used for interviews. It is also the same process that was used for write-

ups of six lesson critiques and field journal notes. This resulted in the autoethnography reported separately in Chapter 6. This means that from Chapter 5 to Chapter 9 a total of 20 themes are reported. A visual representation of the whole analysis process is presented as an example in Figure 4.1.

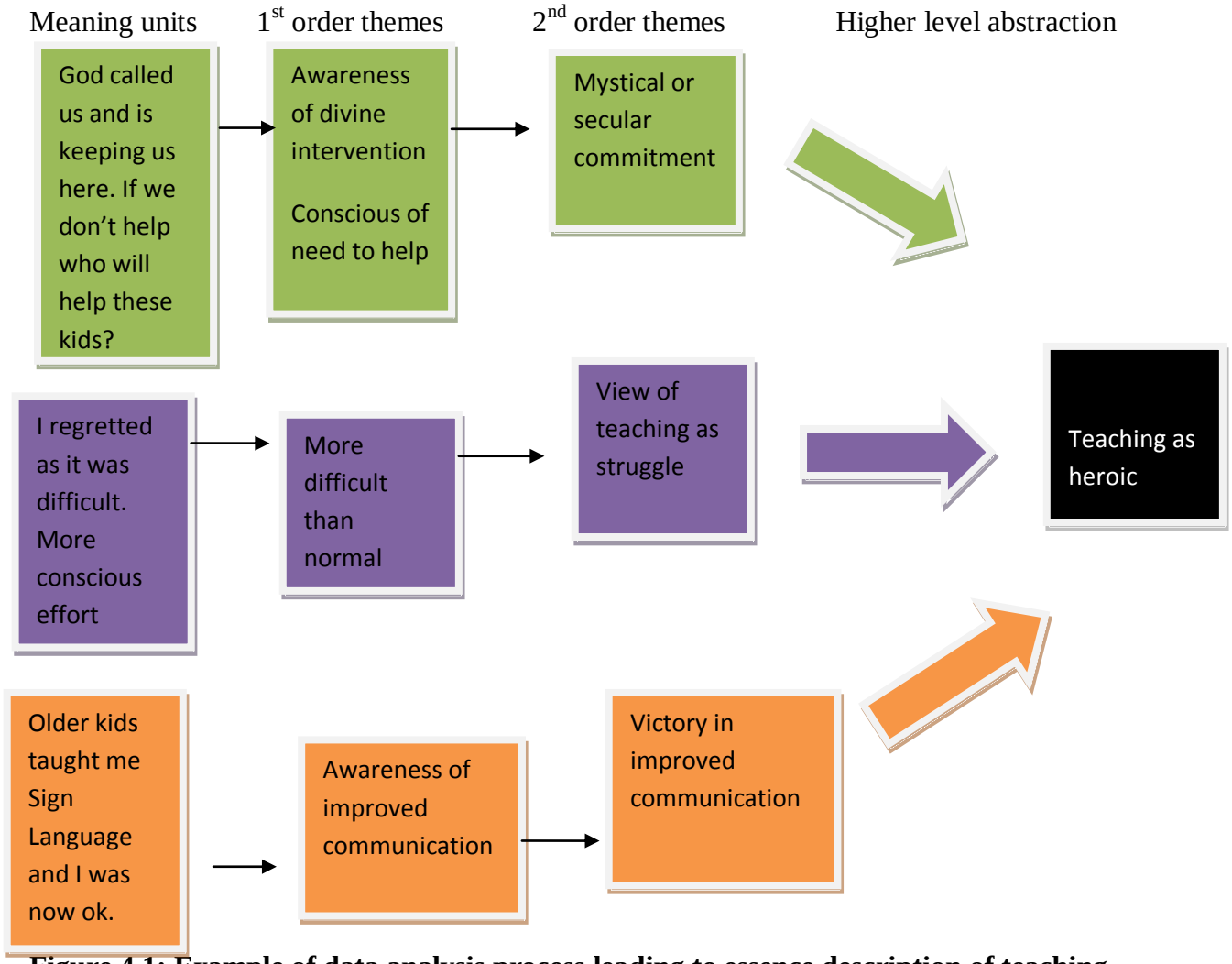


Figure 4.1: Example of data analysis process leading to essence description of teaching

In the actual writing up I decided to link the data examples and the commentary to some literature so that in this way the presentation of results and comparison with previous findings were blended for easier readability as suggested by Burnard (1991).

4.7 Trustworthiness

Reliability and validity are central in any discussion on the rigour in a research study (Silverman, 1993). Validity, which is often called trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility in the qualitative research literature, is one of the main strengths of this type of research (Creswell, 2009). It involves determining whether the findings are accurate from my standpoint, the participants or the readers of the research report as suggested by Creswell and Miller (2000). With this in mind specific cultural descriptions and themes were taken back to some of the teachers to determine whether they felt that they were accurate. Using the initial draft of the research report, these teacher-participants checked the appropriateness or otherwise of the category system as suggested by Burnard (1991). They were given time to ask questions about the accuracy of quotations attributed to them as well as the appropriateness of the category system in the results chapters. A total of 19 teachers were asked whether specific quotations from their interview fit the final category or theme. No adjustments resulted from this exercise. This is a process that Creswell (2009) called member checking and Silverman (1993) named respondent validation. Due to time and logistical constraints it was not possible to do member-checking with all the participants. In addition, throughout the data analysis process peer debriefing sessions occurred between two fellow PhD students and me. In this process the other students questioned my interpretations of the data in order to minimize the influence of personal assumptions which could bias the data analysis process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) averred that peer debriefing is used in qualitative research to increase the trustworthiness of the results as the account would resonate with someone else other than the researcher. It is only after these steps had been done that a final research report was written. The original tape recordings and complete interviews were kept at hand during the writing up process so that if anything was unclear I went back to the original interview transcript or the actual recording. The rich, thick

descriptions provided should transport the reader back to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences, and together with the triangulation of data sources should enhance the validity of this study.

With respect to reliability, the detailed documentation of all the steps of the procedures carried out in this study should help enhance reliability, which in qualitative research is termed 'dependability'. This is concerned with whether the approach is consistent and reproducible across different researchers and projects. In addition to detailed documentation every effort was made to triangulate in the data collection process. Triangulation illuminated the same issues from different sources: official policy documents and training documents; data from personal memory and from others about the self; data from others individually and in groups about their teaching experiences. Decrop (1999) wrote that by combining data sources, methods and theories, triangulation opens the way for richer and potentially more valid interpretations.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Permission to carry out the study was sought from and granted by the Zimbabwe government's Ministry of Education (see appendices C2 and C3) and the University of the Witwatersrand's Research Ethics Committee. Clearance by the university was granted under protocol number 2011ECE154C (see appendix C1). Ethical considerations obliged that I had to inform the teachers; the school principals and the Ministry of Education of the nature and purpose of the research study (see appendices B1 and C2). Following Creswell (2009) who advocated guidelines for safeguarding participants' rights where the participant's position and institution might be inadvertently identified: I articulated the research objectives verbally and in writing so that they were clearly understood by the potential participants; I received written permission from the participants to proceed with the study as articulated; I informed the participants of all

data collection devices and activities, and made available to participants verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports. Participants were advised that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time and were promised access to the final research results. I also considered the participants' rights, interests and wishes first when choices were being made regarding reporting the data. The fact that all the residential special schools for deaf pupils were included in the study should help in fostering the anonymity of the schools and principals. However in reporting the data, institutional identity might be revealed inadvertently when a participant describes characteristics peculiar to a school. Despite the potential for such inadvertent institutional identification in the report, I am confident that the nature of the identification would still leave the integrity of the institution intact. I am also confident that individual participants are not identifiable because there is no identifying information such as gender and institution's name or location in the results. Transcriptions of the interviews were kept in a secured drawer during data collection and analysis. Informed consent for the interviews was sought from the teachers and principals (see appendices B1, B2 and B3). Informed consent was sought from the responsible government ministry (see appendices C2 and C3). With all these safeguards in place, the participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in reporting the study in order to maintain the integrity of each institution and individual participant.

4.9 Limitations

Evidence about human experience has inherent limitations as experience is not directly observable therefore making data on it dependant on the participants' ability to discern aspects of their own experience reflectively and communicate effectively what they discern (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 2). Despite this challenge of transforming the teachers' experiences of teaching into language, language remains the main window into those experiences. An insight

into this limitation is that in responding to the interview questions in the individual interviews and focus group discussions, some of the participants consistently reverted to their mother language, Shona. Even for teachers trained in the English language, using English is a limiting factor as some might not be able to express their experiences in that language fully and freely. English is not their mother language and so they cannot be expected to be both fluent and spontaneous in expressing their inner feelings and thoughts in English. Many of these teachers only opened up in the interviews when speaking Shona. I myself am a native speaker of Shona and so I had no problem in understanding what they were saying and responding to it appropriately.

The code-switching to Shona in itself appears to be a strength because according to Derrida, experience is a construction of the language one speaks and language is also the primary means to access people's experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). Wierzbicka (1999) explained that the way people interpret their own experiences depends to some extent on the lexical grid provided by their native language. On the one hand, the teachers' reverting to Shona is strength in as much as the study is an attempt to understand how they perceive their situation and act in their residential school-world within the Shona cultural context. On the other hand, the study needs to be in English to access a wider range of reading audiences than would otherwise be the case if the research report were in Shona. The limitation in changing from Shona to English is that the meaning of the original message might be lost in translation. Polkinghorne (2005) explained that to capture the richness of experience in language often requires the use of figurative expressions which expand the meanings contained in literal language to those which more closely indicate experienced meanings (p.3). Lakoff and Johnson (2003) explained that figurative expressions such as metaphors are understood and structured not merely on their own terms but rather in terms of other concepts. The extent to which a translation can capture the

real voice of participants is therefore a point of some discomfort in this study as translation raises validity and ethical issues. Speaking for the teachers through translations increases their silence and invisibility. My study would fall short if it did not represent the actual language of the participants as it is through that language they have expressed themselves fully and freely.

In the reporting of results, Shona is shown by the use of italics in-text with the closest meaning in English in brackets. Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) and Fetterman (1998) supported the use of verbatim accounts from participants in order to enhance internal validity. I am therefore reasonably confident that this remains the story of teachers of deaf children who participated in the study, rather than mine alone. Translation losses were minimised through several strategies. As a native speaker of Shona, I am bilingual in English and Shona and so was able to reproduce as accurately as possible the source text (Shona) to the natural form of the target language (English) retaining all the aspects of the possible meaning in a manner that is understandable as suggested by Larson (1991). A competent translator then blindly translated the target language into the source language. Two 'raters' examined the original target language versions and back-translated into the source versions. I then checked for inconsistencies which might lead to differences in meaning and made adjustments as necessary. This minimised rather than eradicated the losses because as Regmi, Naidoo, and Pilkington (2010) showed, if one were to insist that translation must not involve any loss of meaning whatsoever, then not only translating, but all communication is impossible.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed and justified the choice of procedures and methods used in this study. It discussed a combined qualitative approach, using aspects of phenomenology and social anthropology. These methods suggested the use of individual in-depth interviews, focus group

discussions and autoethnography to give voice to the teachers of deaf children in residential schools. Legislation and policies on disability, as well as documents used in the training of these teachers were discussed as sources of data in the study. Attempts to make the study valid and reliable were outlined. Limitations to the validity and reliability of the study were observed. Ethical considerations in carrying out this study were outlined. The data collected through focus group and individual interviews as well as analysis of various documents is presented starting from Chapter Five to Chapter Nine. The next chapter, which is Chapter Five, presents the policy context of teaching deaf learners in Zimbabwe in order to set the stage for the presentation of data from teacher-participants in Chapter Six to Nine.

CHAPTER 5

POLICY CONTEXT OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE

5.1 Introduction

In order to understand the context-sensitive experience of teaching in residential schools for the deaf, the policy context within which teachers work needs to be understood first. This chapter therefore discusses the six main themes emerging from analysis of 10 government policy documents and 7 teacher-education policy documents. The government policy documents guide teachers' work while the teacher-education policy documents guide the development of teachers in Zimbabwe. The six context themes emerging from analysing these documents are *Organisation of learning, Staffing of the special school, Teacher education, Access to instruction, Access to assessment* and *Parental involvement in education.* The next sections present and analyse these themes.

5.2 Organisation of learning

Children learn different subjects for varying lengths of time depending on their grade level, and the kind of institutions in which they learn at a particular point in history. These various arrangements for organising learning have a bearing on the experiences of teaching and learning in the schools. The way learning is organised in Zimbabwe emerged as a theme from four of the 17 policy documents analysed. The first of these documents, *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* (Secretary for Education, 2002), outlines the curriculum to be followed in primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe. Of particular interest to this study are the subjects which should be offered up to grade 7, and the minimum time allocations for each subject in hours and teaching periods per week. A teaching period in the

primary school is normally 30 minutes. All languages have equal time allocations of four and half hours per week. ZSL is referred to as a subject 'for the hearing impaired' and this indicates that it is to be offered on condition that there are deaf and hard of hearing learners who need it in the school. Table 5.1 shows the mainstream school subjects as listed in the document *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* (Secretary for Education, 2002). ZSL is presumably subsumed under 'other local languages' which include languages spoken in Zimbabwe other than English, Shona and Ndebele.

Table 5.1: National Primary School Curriculum (Secretary for Education, 2002)

Subjects	**Grades 1 and 2**		**Grades 3 to 7**	
	Hours per week	Periods per week	Hours per week	Periods per week
Shona / Ndebele / Other local languages	4	8	4 ½	9
English	4	8	4 ½	9
Mathematics	2 ½	5	3	6
Content subject: Environmental Science	2	4	2	4
Content subject: Social Studies	1 ½	3	2	4
Content subject: Religious and Moral Education	1	2	2	4
Practical Subjects[17]	1	2	2	4
Art	1	2	1	2
Music	1	2	1	2
Physical Education	1	2	1	2
Co-curricular activities[18]	1 ½	3	2	4
HIV and AIDS Education	-	-	½	1
Total	20½ hours	39 periods	24 ½ hours	51 periods

It is evident from table 5.1 that Zimbabwean education policy advocates bilingual or multilingual mainstream education in which English is taught alongside Shona, Ndebele or

[17] These are subjects in which learners are taught practical, handicraft skills that the school can offer in light of the resources at its disposal. Such subjects include Woodwork, Metalwork, Fashion and Fabrics, Cookery etc.
[18] These are usually sporting, dramatic and related activities done in the afternoons after academic lessons in order to teach learners how to spend their leisure time positively.

other local languages. If Shona, Ndebele or another local language is the dominant home language this becomes the language of instruction for the first three years of primary school while English is taught as a second language. From the fourth year onwards, English becomes the language of instruction, and the other language is only taught as a subject. This kind of bilingual education policy is based on what Baker (2008) called a developmental maintenance model as it aims at developing a student's local, home language skills to full proficiency, and full bi-literacy in English. The subjects shown in Table 5.1 are the national mainstream curriculum which is also followed by deaf learners in residential special schools. This is because another policy document, *Curriculum to be followed in Special Education Institutions* (Chief Education Officer, 1989) stipulated that children undergoing special education programs should follow the mainstream curriculum. For hearing students the choice of local language to use in education is usually a straightforward matter because this is the language used in the home. On the other hand, deciding which language is the first, home or local language for deaf learners is complicated by the diversity of deaf learners, and the need to make decisions within the optimal period of language acquisition yet their predisposition to language is not yet certain. Mitchell and Karchmer (2011) stated that the population of deaf students is more diverse than the population of hearing students. Deaf students' individual needs, strengths and experiences are so varied that Baker (2008) wrote that deaf learners could become bilingual in various ways. Some learn to sign first, and then learn an oral form of a hearing language, while others learn to speak from hearing parents followed by learning to sign (2008, p. 371). As Mahshie (1997) explained, the deaf child should be the guide regarding his or her disposition toward a more oral or more visual (sign) language. Mahshie (1997) pointed out that decisions about degree of exposure to signed and spoken language to be used as the deaf child's first language have to be made very early, at a time when there is rarely enough information to determine the child's predisposition. Many

deaf children in Zimbabwe are identified rather late (Director, 2006a) and arrive at school without any language at all, spoken or signed (Musengi, Ndofirepi, & Shumba, 2013) therefore further complicating decisions about predisposition towards a first language. All three schools for the deaf interpret the bilingual policy to mean the teaching of English and Shona, in the same way that mainstream schools teach hearing learners. ZSL is not taught as a subject in any of the schools despite the policy *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* which says that it is a subject for the hearing impaired. The teaching of Shona, rather than ZSL indicates that the schools have decided that Shona is the first language of deaf learners although most teachers say Shona is too difficult, and should not be taught to deaf learners (see Chapter Eight). There are several reasons why teachers do not comply with the policy on teaching ZSL but one reason appears to be inherent in the policy document and will be discussed here, while the other reasons will be discussed in the section presenting the teachers' views on language in Chapter Eight.

One reason for non-compliance with the policy emanates from an internal inconsistency of the policy. In its explanation of how bilingual or multilingual education is to include previously marginalised languages in Zimbabwe, the policy provides a clear time-frame for the gradual and systematic introduction of all locally spoken minority languages starting from 2002 up to 2005. The introduction of the spoken minority languages in phases, such as up to grade four in 2002 and then up to grade five in 2003 and so on, indicates that human and material resources were incrementally availed to ensure success at the various levels. An inconsistency in this otherwise well planned introduction of previously marginalised languages, is that there is nothing about when and how ZSL is to be introduced. The silence concerning how ZSL is to be introduced might suggest that the policy-makers assumed that

human and material resources were already in place in the schools for the deaf and so the language would be introduced with effect from the date of the policy document in 2002. Whatever the actual reason, the net effect is that the language has not been adopted as a subject in any of the three schools for the deaf. None of the participating teachers and principals said ZSL was a subject of study for the pupils at the schools.

In addition to the internal inconsistency of the policy, there might also be lack of sufficient expertise to teach Sign Language beyond a level Cummins (2000) called basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS). In the context-reduced academic situations of the upper primary grades, many hearing teachers who do not have native-like competence in Sign Language would not be able to teach the language properly. Sign Language has therefore not been introduced as a subject in the schools as a result of an incomplete policy which lists it as a subject to be taught, but does not show who is to teach it or what skills, fluency and qualifications they should have. The manner that the learning of ZSL is supposed to be organised has not been made clear by policy, and therefore the formal teaching and learning of the language as a subject had not even begun, more than 10 years after the policy was issued.

The *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* indicates that children in all primary schools in Zimbabwe should be taught 'practical subjects' for a minimum of one hour per week in the first two grades, and a minimum of two hours per week from the third grade up to grade seven as shown in table 5.1. These practical subjects are usually technical-vocational subjects aimed at providing learners with trade-related skills for their economic survival. Some schools might include such subjects as Art, Music and Physical Education as practical

subjects but generally subjects such as Agriculture, Carpentry and Sewing are considered practical subjects. The policy advocates that each school expand its technical-vocational curriculum to levels above the minimum requirements, depending on its resources. Schools for the deaf have taken advantage of this to expand their technical-vocational curriculum to more subjects than in mainstream schools. A tension is however evident at the schools for the deaf between the mainstream academic curriculum, and a technical-vocational curriculum. The expansion of the technical-vocational curriculum at the schools for the deaf tends to encroach on the time allotted for the rest of the academic curriculum. This means that deaf students in Zimbabwe spend a lot more time than hearing peers learning trades such as carpentry and concurs with findings by Leakey (1993) on the historical situation in deaf education in the United States. The technical-vocational curriculum on which deaf learners spend so much time is not part of the school-leaving public examination, which is academic. Emphasis on learning trades is therefore contrary to the academic thrust of the policy on *Special Education Placement Procedures* (Secretary, 1990) which required that all children should be presented for public examinations at the usual time. The dilemma for teachers is how to balance the schools' technical-vocational curriculum and the academic curriculum so that deaf learners can still be presented as viable candidates in the academic examinations.

In addition to stipulating that all learners will sit the public examinations, *Special Education Placement Procedures* stipulated that special schools are for those children with severe or multiple disabilities, or those with less severe disabilities but whose home environment necessitates a boarding placement. This policy is meant for all categories of disability and is based on the notion that the more severe the disabling condition, the more incapacitated the child, for example, in the case of physical disabilities. When this is applied to deafness, it means that hard of hearing children can only be placed in residential institutions if it has been

decided that their home environment is, for example, not conducive to the acquisition of language. It also means that teachers in schools for the deaf teach both hard of hearing and deaf learners. The same policy stipulated that learners with disabilities should not continue to be held at primary school beyond the normal transfer age, unless the disability warrants an extra year or two to cover the school curriculum. This stipulation is explicitly justified by the *Guidelines on Over-aged Learners with Special Educational Needs* (Director, 2006a). The guidelines stated that learners with special needs were often identified late, and were so much older than non-disabled peers in the same grade so that keeping these learners for much longer than a year or two in the school system might be a source of stigma for them. The retention of learners for two or more years per grade therefore contradicts policy and stigmatises learners as the policy document points out. However promoting learners to the next grade when they have not understood current content is a problem because the child is not provided with a curriculum that suits his or her needs in the next grades. Schools are faced with the dilemma of whether to follow the spirit of the policy and just promote children regardless of academic performance or retain them for longer in grades thereby violating policy.

To sum up this section, attendance at residential institutions for the deaf is meant for deaf rather than hard of hearing learners however both groups are in these institutions as the latter can be shown to benefit more from them than from their home environments. Policy stipulates that no deaf learners may be kept for longer than nine years in primary school. Hearing learners take seven years. Policy also requires that schools for the deaf must implement the mainstream curriculum and present learners as examination candidates at the normal time. This academic thrust of policy contradicts the strong vocational training focus of the special schools. Another paradox is that although the mainstream academic curriculum

schools for the deaf must implement is bilingual the teachers have not implemented sign-bilingualism for the deaf learners. The non-implementation of policy is not only because the policy is unclear on how to introduce ZSL but also because of staffing issues as discussed in the next section.

5.3 Qualifications, skills and competencies of teachers of deaf learners

Teachers of students with low incidence disabilities such as deafness face unique challenges in translating education policy into sound practice because there are very few teacher preparation programmes; often teachers learn specific strategies on the job (Cawthon, 2009). This situation in the United States applies to many other countries including Zimbabwe. To remedy this the Zimbabwean government put in place a policy describing the skills and competencies a teacher of deaf learners should have (*Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provisions*) and also started local training of these teachers in 1986 (Mavundukure & Thembani, 2000).

5.3.1 Staffing of special schools for the deaf

The government policy document *Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provision* (Secretary for Education, 2007a) provided guidelines on staffing of special schools. It stated that in order to provide quality education to all learners including those with disabilities, there was a need to staff centres for such learners with appropriately qualified teachers. The policy statement observed that in some cases special schools were staffed with inappropriately qualified teachers, not necessarily because there were no suitably qualified teachers but that for example, a specialist teacher in Visual Impairment was allocated to a school for the

Hearing Impaired. The policy circular offered guidelines on the deployment of teachers to schools for the Hearing Impaired. It stated that in addition to mainstream teaching skills, the teacher had to have "skills to communicate in Sign Language and Total Language Communication Teaching Skills". These skills in Sign Language and Total Communication were not defined or explained in the policy document.

Without specifying the qualification required, the policy document went on to state that "A teacher with any other qualification would not be effective because he or she will not have Sign Language hence will not effectively communicate with the children. Sign Language is a critical pre-requisite skill for anyone to teach children with hearing impairment". The document *Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provision* is clear that only in the absence of an appropriately qualified teacher would a specialist in another area be deployed to a school for the deaf. According to the policy, it is only if that alternative specialist is not available that any mainstream trained teacher without specialist training can be deployed to a school for the deaf. Untrained teachers would only be deployed as a last resort where all the other kinds of trained teachers were unavailable. This means that the teachers currently teaching in the schools for the deaf are considered non-specialist if they have undergone mainstream teacher-education only or have no teacher-education at all. The teachers are considered specialists if they have undertaken any course(s) in special needs education after mainstream teacher-education.

The staffing policy document deplored what Ingersoll (2002) called out-field-teaching such as the case where a teacher specially trained to teach visually-impaired learners is teaching hearing impaired learners. The policy states that teachers with a specialisation in Deaf

Education should be given first preference in deployment to schools for the deaf. It is clearly stated that in deployments to these schools, teachers with other Special Education specialisations would have second preference while those with mainstream training would be the third preference and those with no teacher training would only be deployed there as a last resort. The policy considers specialists in any area of special education other than Deaf Education to be out-of-field when teaching in a school for the deaf. However the policy does not clearly spell out the skills and competencies required of a teacher with a specialisation in Deaf education. For example the level of ZSL proficiency required of these specialists is not specified. The next section discusses the qualifications, skills and competencies that are acquired in teacher-education by teachers in these various categories, particularly those who specialise in Deaf Education in Zimbabwe.

5.3.2 Teacher-education in deaf education: deficit aspirations and deficient attainments

Teachers who train to teach deaf learners in Zimbabwe have to undergo mainstream teacher-education first before they can undertake this specialisation. In many training programmes specialisation in the generic Special Needs Education area is considered adequate for one to teach in a school for the deaf, contradicting the policy *Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provision* which considers this as less than adequate (see previous section). Table 5.2 shows seven documents used in the education of mainstream teachers and specialist teachers in the area of deaf education. As suggested by the title, courses in this area of specialisation focus on impairment, that is, anatomy of the ear, physiology of hearing, physics of sound and aural-oral communication methods for teaching deaf learners. At both diploma and degree level focus is on such courses as "*Aetiology and Medical Aspects of Hearing Impairment;*

Curriculum Management, Assessment and Teaching Techniques for Learners with Hearing Impairment; Language, Communication and Assistive Devices''.

Table 5.2: Pertinent documents used in the education of teachers in Zimbabwe

Document name & Institution	Date	Level of study & Course	Reference to Special Needs Education	Dominant worldview
1. Theory of Education syllabus – Morgenster Teachers' College	2012	Diploma in Education (Pre-service Mainstream)	Refers to learning disorders, mental retardation, giftedness, visual impairment	Sensitivity and flexibility in meeting diverse needs
2. Theory of Education syllabus- Bondolfi Teachers' College	2012	Diploma in Education (Pre-service Mainstream)	Refers to inclusive education, physical challenge, maladjustment	Equipping with skills in handling special needs
3. Theory of Education syllabus- Masvingo Teachers' College	2012	Diploma in Education (Pre-service Mainstream)	Refers to visual impairment, hearing impairment, learning disorders	Develop appreciation of pupils with special needs and methods to facilitate their learning
4. Hearing & Visual Impairment syllabus- Great Zimbabwe University	2012	Bachelor of Special Needs Education (In-service Hearing & Visual Impairment Course)	Refers to visual and hearing impairment	Develop awareness of psychological and sociological effects of visual and hearing impairment
5. Hearing Impairment Professional Study Syllabus – United College of Education	2012	Diploma in Special Education (In-service Hearing Impairment Specialisation)	Refers to psychology of deafness, conversations, speech and auditory training	Designing appropriate remedial programmes for children with hearing impairment – deficiency focus
6. Main subject Syllabus: Hearing Impairment – United College of Education	2012	Diploma in Special Education (In-service Hearing Impairment specialisation)	Refers to anatomy and physiology of hearing, speech and oral versus manual systems	Aural-Oral: deficiency focus
7. Hearing Impairment: Principles and Practices Syllabus – University of Zimbabwe	2012	Bachelor of Special Education (In-service Hearing Impairment specialisation)	Refers to aetiology and medical aspects, rehabilitation	Aural-Oral: deficiency focus

In table 5.2 only one of the mainstream teacher-education courses makes reference to hearing impairment alongside many other areas of special educational need. Its intention is stated as the development of appreciation of special educational needs. Similarly, teachers undergoing Special Needs Education are expected to develop awareness of the effects of hearing impairment (see number 4 in table 5.2). Such appreciation and awareness of effects of special

educational needs fall far short of *Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provision* which require knowledge of Sign Language. Both mainstream and special education programmes are therefore too generic to meet the requirements of the staffing policy guidelines. This explains why the staffing policy considers teachers with mainstream training and those with specialisations other than deaf education to be out-of-field in deaf education. Ironically, even for teachers who the policy would consider to be specialists and in-field, none of their courses makes reference to the development of Sign Language (see 5, 6 and 7 in table 5.2). Reference is only made to the development of sensitivity to Deaf culture. The specialist courses generally have an aural-oral focus. Each of the specialist courses shown in table 5.2 has a title consistent with the deficit-outlook of the course-content. The aims of the courses are also consistent with this focus, for example the Diploma level Hearing Impairment Professional Study syllabus has the following aims (see appendix for full syllabus):

- To develop in students a sound knowledge and understanding of various methods of teaching children with hearing impairment;
- To equip students with specialised techniques used in teaching children with hearing impairment;
- To develop sensitive and flexible specialist teachers who appreciate and assist children with speech and communication problems;
- To equip students with counselling and consultancy skills on issues related to children with hearing impairment;
- To produce teachers who are sensitive to Deaf culture.

Analysis of these aims indicates that four of the five aims have an implied deficiency frame of reference for deaf learners. The term ‘hearing impairment’ is used consistently throughout the first four aims and is consistent with the course title ‘Hearing Impairment Professional Study’. The implication of such a frame of reference is that the learners are in need of hearing and so

the course proceeds to outline as some of its content the following:

- Needs of the deaf
- Psychology of deafness
- Speech training
- Auditory training
- Remedial programmes

Focussing trainee teachers on the 'needs' of deaf learners and a 'psychology' of deafness suggests deviance from the norm which necessitates a means of remedying these deficiencies as suggested by the remedial programmes in the course content. Even though the third aim deals states that the course tries to develop sensitive and flexible specialist teachers, this sensitivity and flexibility is only mentioned in relation to assisting the learners with speech and communication problems. Training teachers to use speaking and listening exercises has the same focus of trying to remedy what they cannot do. In light of the overwhelming deficiency-focus of the course syllabus, the last aim would appear to be an afterthought which in any case is inadequate because it refers to producing teachers who are 'sensitive' to Deaf culture. It is unclear how such sensitivity to Deaf culture would be inculcated, given that the rest of the course content itself is silent on this aspect, but focuses on topics such as task analysis, before dwelling on how to teach various subjects such as Mathematics and Science. This 'Hearing Impairment Professional Study' course is complemented by another with the title 'Main Subject – Hearing Impairment' (see appendix A4).

The syllabus for the Main Subject – Hearing Impairment aims to:

- Develop teachers who have sound knowledge and understanding of the nature of hearing impairment;
- Develop teachers who are conversant with the speech and language problems of children

with hearing impairment;

- Equip teachers with assessment skills and intervention strategies for hearing impairment.

These aims are addressed by such course content as "*Anatomy and Physiology of the Ear; Hearing Disorders and their Treatment; Electroacoustic Equipment; Audiometric Assessment; Anatomy and Physiology of Speech System; Speech Reception; Speech Production; Language Acquisition; Oral versus Manual Communication Systems* and *Total Communication*". All these topics, except possibly the last three, focus explicitly on the deficit of not hearing and how to remedy it, just as in the previous course.

The last three topics are not explicitly deficit-focussed but closer analysis of the sub-topics within them suggests an implicit bias towards the deficit perspective. The first sub-topic under *Language Acquisition* compares the language acquisition of hearing and non-hearing children. The second sub-topic compares the language acquisition of hearing impaired children of hearing and non-hearing parents. In the first sub-topic 'non-hearing' children would be children with the deficit of not hearing and these are compared in terms of their language acquisition deficits with hearing children who develop language normally, without deficits. In the second sub-topic the apparently deficient or abnormal language acquisition of hearing impaired children on 'non-hearing' parents is compared to that of children with hearing parents. Calling one group of parents 'non-hearing' indicates that the focus is on their lack of hearing and so strongly suggests that their offspring's language acquisition will be analysed in terms of what it lacks as compared to that of the offspring of hearing parents. The concluding sub-topic on this section, i.e. *Effects of language on the development of cognitive skills*, appears unlikely to deviate from this deficit theme of the section because it is meant to conclude and summarise the *Language Acquisition* section.

Under the topic *Oral versus Manual Communication Systems* the sub-topic *Sign Language* is described as an *Alternative non-vocal communication system*. The terms 'alternative' and 'communication system' suggest an artificial system in the tradition of augmentative and alternative communication systems used with those with multiple disabilities. In the same vein the term 'non-vocal' describes the system in a negative sense, that is, in terms of what it is not rather what it is. This suggests that it is second best to the more desirable vocal system, something only to be used when the vocal cannot be used. In light of these possibilities it is consistent therefore that the student teachers learn signed systems such as Signed English. It is only the last sub-topic on *Bilingualism* which suggests a cultural rather than a pathological understanding of deafness. Under this sub-topic it is likely that Sign Language would be treated as a real language, while a spoken language is treated as the other language in a bilingual approach. However this one isolated sub-topic cannot be expected to undo the pathological perception of deaf learners that the other 41 deficit-inclined sub-topics instil in the trainee specialist teachers of the deaf. In any case, none of the lecturing staff in these institutions of higher learning has sufficient competence in Sign Language to present it to trainee-teachers as a real language in a sign-bilingual approach.

The last of the three topics with an implicit bias towards the deficit perspective is *Total Communication* and it has two sub-topics. The first of these traces the history of Total Communication and offers a philosophical justification for the approach. The second sub-topic which deals with how to use combined communication strategies would seem to provide an indication of what the philosophical justification in the first sub-topic would be. The reason is that the focus on combining communication strategies would seem to be most readily justified by pointing out that a combination gives learners access to more than one strategy. Learners are therefore expected to benefit from the strategy in which they are stronger or from the two

strategies either presented simultaneously or sequentially.

To sum up this section, the qualifications, skills and competencies required of teachers in the schools for the deaf remain undefined and unexplained while in in-service teacher-education programmes specialising in special needs, there is a tendency to aspire to cover more than one special need rather any one special need in depth. The aspirations of pre-service teacher education for mainstream education are at the level of sensitisation to special educational needs and how to handle some of the more common challenges in mainstream settings. The in-service programmes for teachers of children with hearing impairment are in greater depth. However they deal with deficit, oral approaches to teaching. This means that special educators in Zimbabwe are either generically informed about special needs of which deafness is a part or specifically informed about the deficiencies of not hearing and how to try to restore hearing and speech. There is a mismatch between the training policy vision and staffing policy vision. The deficit emphasis in teacher-education has implications on teachers' interpretation of policies meant to facilitate deaf children's access to education in residential special schools as discussed in the next section.

5.4 Access in education

Analysis of Zimbabwean legislation related to education and people with disabilities reveals that access is an overarching theme. Two legislation and five national policy documents are concerned with various types of access especially in education. Table 5.3 shows the various government documents which yielded sub-themes on access. For purposes of analysis and interpretation, these sub-themes have been synthesised into two: *Access to instruction* and *Access to assessment* and are elaborated in the next two sections.

Table 5.3: Zimbabwean Government Documents Reviewed

Document name	Date	Description of Engagement	Additional Support	Dominant worldview	Sub-theme
Education Act	1996	All children entitled to enrol at schools	None	Children's rights	Formal access to education
Disabled Persons Act	1996	Entitlement to access public premises, services and amenities	Adjustment of public premises, services and amenities	Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of inaccessibility	Physical and epistemological access
Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools	2002	Learning Sign Language in primary schools	Provision of Sign Language is a national goal	Bilingual education (Any L1 + English)	Linguistic access
Special Examination arrangements for learners with disabilities and other special needs	2007	Facilitating access to examination items through signs and speech-reading	Candidates not allowed to sign their answers	Oral and Manual	Access to assessment
Guidelines for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in all school competitions	2005	Facilitating participation in competitions	Poetry, storytelling and music through Sign Language	Prohibition of discrimination based on inability to participate	Participation in sport
Guidelines on providing equal access to education for learners with disabilities	2006	Whole school screening, identification and placement	Provision of disability-friendly facilities; counselling	Needs and deficits	Access to instruction
Guidelines on over-aged learners in special education	2006	According equal number of years as non-disabled peers	Allowed to remain in school up to 23	Prohibition of discrimination based on age	Access to instruction

The Education Act and Disabled Persons Act provide the legal basis on which children with disabilities access school education in Zimbabwe. These national laws are given effect by the rest of the policy documents in table 5.2. These policy documents are meant to guide teachers in various areas of engagement such as what subjects they should be taught and how they can be included in examinations and sports.

5.4.1 Access to instruction: formal, physical and epistemological access

Two pieces of Zimbabwean legislation assert the right of people with disabilities to access public services such as education and training. From a legal point of view, the Education Act (1996) asserts the right of every child in Zimbabwe to attend school, but it is contestable whether this facilitates the right of children with disabilities. One view is that children with

disabilities are first and foremost children so their right to school education is also entrenched in this law. This view, espoused by Muchemwa (2009) argued that even though the Act does not specify disability, the law prohibits discrimination in education on any grounds. He argued that such an interpretation is in accordance with Article 24 (1) of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities UNCRPD (2006) to which the Zimbabwean government is a signatory. Article 24 (1) stipulated that the State Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education … without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels.

Another view is that because Section 4, subsection 2 of the Education Act (1996) specifically listed grounds on which a child may not be refused entry and the list clearly omitted disability, this omission could therefore deny children with disabilities access to school education. Section 4, subsection 2 stated "No child in Zimbabwe shall be refused admission to any school on the grounds of race, tribe, colour, religion, creed, place of origin, political opinion or the social status of his parents". Although the omission of disability from this list could be used as a loophole to deny children with disabilities access to school education, such denial would appear to be contrary to the education-for-all spirit of the law. This spirit was more explicitly captured in another piece of Zimbabwean legislation, the Disabled Persons Act (1996). This law expressly outlawed the denial of people with disabilities access to public premises, services and amenities in clear accordance with UNCRPD (2006). Section 8 of the Disabled Persons Act (1996) stated, "No disabled person shall on the ground of his disability alone be denied the provision of any service or amenity ordinarily provided to members of the public… ." If it is agreed that education is a service, then this section of the Disabled Persons Act (1996) would appear to be complementing the Education Act (1996) in ensuring that children with disabilities have a right to school education. The Disabled Persons Act (1996) in section 7, "Where

premises, services or amenities (are considered) inaccessible to disabled persons by reason of any structural, physical, administrative or other impediment to such access the provider of the service (may be required) to undertake such action as may be specified in order to secure reasonable access by disabled persons …".

What this implied is that this law safeguards the right of people with disabilities to access public buildings, services and amenities and where these are considered inaccessible, service providers must rectify this. For example people with physical disabilities who cannot access public buildings which only have stairs, can take the owners of such buildings to court using this legislation in order to get the buildings altered so that they can access them. Reference to 'other impediments to access' appears to be an open, catch-all phrase which can be used to the advantage of people with disabilities besides physical impairment. This phrase appears to allow wide interpretation which recognises not only physical and structural impediments to physical access but also various other impediments to accessing services such as instruction as shall be seen in the ensuing discussion.

Student enrolment in the special schools for the deaf has more than trebled since independence in 1980 (Charema, 2010). This means that physical access to education has improved. The policy guidelines on the *Education of Over-aged learners in Special Education* stipulated that learners with disabilities should be allowed at least the same number of years as non-disabled peers per grade level up to the age of 23. They may also be allowed an extra year or two depending on their needs but should not be kept at school without justification as this could become another source of stigma for them. Increased enrolments even of these late identified children would indicate improved physical access to schools which can be associated with the formal legislation which outlaws discrimination. Lotz-Sisitka (2009) and Morrow (2007)

explained that access in education can be conceptualised as either formal, physical access or epistemological access. The legislation is not restricted to ensuring the right to formal, physical access but can also be interpreted as facilitating epistemological access as suggested by the phrase 'other impediments to access' in the Disabled Persons Act (1996) section 7.

Epistemological access to education is underwritten by the Disabled Persons Act (1996) in its reference to "other impediments to access". This interpretation of the law is supported by the policy document on *Providing Guidelines on Equal Access to Education for Learners with Disabilities* (Director, 2006b). The policy stipulated that children with disabilities be provided with disability-friendly facilities so that they are able to access instruction. Once they have physical access to schools, learners with disabilities need only to indicate how they are impeded from accessing knowledge in the schools in order to get redress from the law. Even though both the law and the policy do not mention specific categories of disability, it is up to the people with various disabilities to determine the ways in which they are impeded from accessing particular services. For example Deaf people could employ this provision of the Disabled Persons Act (1996) to observe as Marschark (2014) did, that no one will be helped by any one-size-fits-all approach to deaf education. The existing legislation could be used to argue that teachers who employ a one- size-fits-all approach to teaching deaf children are impeding the epistemological access of the learners. It could be argued that reasonable access would only be possible if teachers made adjustments in their teaching. Adjustments could involve streaming the deaf learners so that those who understand ZSL better could be taught using ZSL in a sign-bilingual approach, while those who would benefit from spoken language could be taught using the aural-oral approach. Inappropriate teaching approaches could therefore be cited under the Disabled Persons Act (1996) as 'other impediments' to epistemological access while appropriate adjustments could be cited as disability-friendly under the policy *Providing Guidelines on*

Equal Access to Education for Learners with Disabilities. The Disabled Persons Act (1996) and the Education Act (1996) complemented each other in asserting the right of formal and physical access to such services as education and also epistemological access through what Johnson *et al.* (1989) call linguistic access to the curriculum. Legislation therefore has attempted to improve formal, physical access and could potentially facilitate epistemological access.

To sum up this section, formal physical access to the special residential schools for the deaf has improved with the enactment of appropriate legislation and supporting government policies. Even though the existing legislation and policies mandated it, epistemological access in the schools still requires the teachers to interpret the policy framework properly in order to put it into practice. The following section discusses how the policy framework with specific reference to assessment was meant to enable epistemological access but needs the teachers' interpretation in order to come to fruition.

5.4.2 Access to assessment

Government policies mandated various accommodations to enable deaf candidates to access assessments through the provision of extra time, sign interpretations of examinations, speech-reading and finger-spelling in examinations as well as modification of syntax and vocabulary among others. A policy document, *Special Education arrangements for learners with Disabilities and other Special Needs* (Secretary for Education, 2007b) outlined the various arrangements to enable learners with disabilities and other special needs to access examinations. With specific regard to time allowances for candidates with Hearing Impairment, the circular said that the needs of most candidates would be covered by an additional allowance of up to 25% of the time set for the examination paper. The policy said: "The head (principal) may recommend additional extra time in situations where the candidate is undertaking an orally or

sign-administered examination which requires written answers because he or she may not be able to lip-read or receive signed communication and write at the same time". Extra time was also built in for rests to enhance concentration and avoid fatigue.

In order to enable access to examination questions, the policy stipulated: "Modifications can be made to general vocabulary and syntax by approved teachers of the deaf well in advance of the examination date. Such modifications may not be done to vocabulary specific to the subject". The policy also allowed the principal to ask for the signing of questions to candidates who were normally taught through signing if access to questions was not possible through other means. The deaf candidates are not allowed to sign their responses to the examination items. Modifications mandated by the same policy circular for signed examinations were that the principal should provide for Sign Language interpreters to sign examination instructions or questions to deaf learners in each paper. These interpreters are specialist teachers with experience in teaching deaf learners and they become special invigilators who carry out signed examinations and also become markers for the candidates' scripts. These modifications are in the spirit of removing linguistic impediments to accessing public examinations.

The policy specifies that the signing of examinations is meant for candidates who are normally taught through signing. This policy ideal might not be matched by the reality on the ground. The reality is that there is restricted input of Sign Language in formal learning situations where children are taught by teachers who are not fluent signers (Schick, 2011). In oral and total communication-inclined schools, the teachers are unlikely to have the fluent signing skills that come with regular use, let alone the native-like competency that Napier, McKee, and Goswell (2010) said is necessary for interpretation. Therefore there appears to be a mismatch between the policy's idealistic notion of signing for the deaf candidates and the reality. The reality is that

there are no learners who are formally taught through fluent Sign Language. A related reality emanating from the lack of regular, consistent use of signing is that the schools might not have teachers with sufficient competence to interpret examinations into Sign Language. It can however be argued that as the policy advocated the signing of general words and phrases while maintaining the key words of the written language, this is compatible with what some of the teachers do, and so they can be expected to have the competence. The efficacy of signing general words and phrases while retaining key words of the written language has, however, been strongly contested (Johnson *et al.*, 1989; Power, Hyde, & Leigh, 2008).

The policy position advocating the signing of general words and phrases while maintaining the key words of the written language also appeared to contradict in principle, another provision in the same policy which allowed the modification of syntax. Modification of syntax shows acceptance of the principle that the examination is being interpreted into another language: a Sign Language. This principle was contradicted by the policy's stipulation that subject-specific vocabulary from the written language must be maintained and not modified. As changes in general and subject-specific vocabulary are a necessary part of any real interpretation from one language to another, the policy's outlawing of modifications to subject-specific vocabulary is inconsistent with the basic principles of interpretation. The policy therefore has internal inconsistency as it is based on two incompatible philosophies. On one hand, it allowed signing and changes to syntax, both of which are concessions based on a philosophy of the acceptance of human diversity hence interpretation into a more accessible language. On the other hand, the policy outlawed changes to subject-specific vocabulary and candidates' signed responses to examination questions, which are stipulations that could be viewed as based on a philosophy that places a higher value on sound-based, written languages over signed ones in what Baumann and Murray (2010) called audism. This may be based on fears of diluting the essence of the

subject under examination because Sign Language is not recognised as a real language capable of being used to examine academic subjects. It could also be based on the observation that ZSL is not sufficiently developed for academic purposes. In any case, the prohibition of changes to subject-specific vocabulary results in internal contradictions to the policy. This might defeat the purpose of enabling access to the examination. It is understandable that the policy does not want the examination content to be changed. What the policy-makers may be unaware of is the possibility that teachers who are able to interpret correctly can still maintain the subject-specific content intact even if the language and the form presenting the material changes. The policy's choice of the word 'modifications' instead of 'interpretation' or 'translation' in reference to the written language is a telling example of the hidden bias towards sound-based language. In an explicit show of audism the policy went on to state, "For aural tests, special amplification may be used or tests may be read to enable candidates to lip-read. In addition to speech-reading the content of the tape in an aural test, the presenter may finger-spell the initial letter of words which are easily confused." In this excerpt the earlier preference for sound-based languages over Sign Language becomes quite clear. It is uncertain how this bias in favour of sound-based languages would be affected if other stakeholders in deaf education were involved in policy formulation. The next section discusses policies that say something about the role of parents as stakeholders in deaf education in Zimbabwe.

5.5 Parental involvement in education

Parental involvement in the education of their children in Zimbabwe is mandated by law, specifically Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992. The statutory instrument gave legal force to the formation of School Development Committees (SDCs) and outlined the roles, responsibilities and powers of elected SDCs comprised of parents of children attending particular schools. These provisions of the law are as applicable to schools for the deaf as they are to mainstream

schools. An elected SDC not only represents the interests of parents in the school but also raises parents' interest in the teaching and learning activities of the school. In Zimbabwean community which Mpofu, *et al.* (2007) says traditionally stigmatises children with disabilities, the SDCs can be expected to play a more active role in interesting parents in the activities of the special school. According to Charema and Eloff (2011) in some cases in Zimbabwe parents of deaf children abandon their children in the special schools and only come during the final year. Such practices turn the teachers of deaf children into surrogate parents. It would appear that it is for these extreme cases of child abuse that legislation such as the *Children's Protection and Adoption Act* (Child Protection and Adoption Act, 1996) was put in place. This law in section 7 stated if any parent or guardian neglects or abandons a child for a period in excess of a year, he or she shall be guilty of an offence. A parent may be deemed guilty of abandoning or neglecting a child if he or she leaves the child in the care of some other person or institution and thereafter shows inadequate interest in the well-being of the child. While such legislation is meant to deter parents' neglect and abuse of children, this is reactive, and is therefore an inadequate approach. A year is also a rather long time in which to determine neglect because in the meantime teachers would continue to play the surrogate parental role. Teachers might pre-empt playing the surrogate role by proactively involving parents in the life of the residential schools as mandated through the SDCs. Charema and Eloff (2011) reported that parents generally go to the school for the deaf for guidance after failing to cope with the day-to-day life of their deaf child. More proactive guidance and counselling would help make the teachers less of surrogate parents because there would not be any abandoned deaf children in the schools.

It is widely held in education generally, and in special education in particular that a partnership between parents and teachers is desirable because it is beneficial to the child's education (Dantas & Manyak, 2010; Linder, 2003). For example Karim (2010) said that when parents

involve themselves in their children's education the children achieve much better. Calderon (2000) found that parental involvement and maternal communication skills were significant positive predictors of early reading skills and language development in deaf children's school-based education. Among its many benefits, parental involvement in the schools for the deaf supports and encourages parents in coping with the child generally (Charema & Eloff, 2011). Improved interaction starting with home signing with their children would help parents appreciate the academic potential of their deaf children. This would also help to eradicate negative attitudes towards disability that Mpofu, *et al.* (2007) said are characteristic of traditional Zimbabwean society. Teachers might need to involve parents in an empowerment model such as the one proposed by Bloom (1992) which moved from basic involvement, participation to advocacy. The abandonment of deaf children by some parents indicates pockets of child abuse based on negative attitudes towards disability, and could be alleviated by instituting parental empowerment programmes.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to discuss the policy context in which teaching is experienced in the schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe. It was found that government legislation prohibits discrimination of learners with disabilities. This legislation was complemented by national education policies which were meant to ensure the rights of children with disabilities were fulfilled through equal access to instruction and examination. Government policy mandated various accommodations for deaf learners particularly in the area of interpreting public examinations into ZSL. However this particular policy instrument has internal inconsistencies which might detract from achieving its goal of equal access to the examination. ZSL is currently sidelined, not only in examinations, but also in teaching as teachers follow the bilingual mainstream curriculum but do not re-interpret the mainstream bilingualism to include ZSL as allowed by policy. Another policy

instrument tried to ensure access to instruction by stipulating that only personnel with skills in Sign Language and Total Communication should be appropriately qualified to teach in schools for the deaf. However most locally trained teachers with qualifications in Special Needs Education do not have such skills as teacher-education policies does not include this in their programmes. Most teachers in the schools for the deaf are therefore teaching out-of-field because of the dislocation between teacher-education policy and school staffing policy. It was also found that the same policy framework which ensures physical access to instruction has the potential to be interpreted by teachers to unlock epistemological access to content knowledge for deaf learners through individualised instruction. In addition it was found that teachers have to navigate the dichotomy between academic curriculum policy and examinations on the one hand, and vocational curriculum policy on the other. Finally, as the legislation meant to deter child abuse and neglect is inadequate, it needs to be complemented by extended teacher professionalism in which teachers are proactive in guiding and counselling parents rather than having to assume the role of surrogate parents to neglected deaf children. In the next chapter, I engage in an autoethnography in which I explore my experiences of teaching in a residential special school for the deaf within this policy context.

CHAPTER 6

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY of TEACHING DEAF CHILDREN in RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

6.1 Introduction

In my search to find out the meaning of teaching for hearing adults who teach deaf children in residential institutions for the deaf in Zimbabwe, of which I was one, I thought it necessary to explore my own knowledge and beliefs. This chapter is therefore an analytical self narrative (Anderson, 2006; Pace, 2012) in which I present a highly personal account of my teaching experiences and engage with these data reflectively. As an insider, I have used my personal experiences as the empirical data to introspect about my teaching. As the reader may recall from the methodology chapter (see chapter 4) two main mechanisms are used for recalling data on my experiences. First, an inventory of six lesson critiques is used to reconstruct dialogues between me and my superiors who wrote the critiques. I considered this method trustworthy because the lesson critiques are what Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) called artefacts existing independent of the research process, thereby adding a built-in dimension of authenticity to the research process. Second, interactive introspection occurred in that I used my field journal record of reactions in teacher-interviews to recollect my own experiences. This approach was particularly useful in that other teachers' anecdotes in the field journal triggered recollections of episodes in my own experiences and also my beliefs as a teacher. On the basis of these two main mechanisms of recall, I present in this chapter episodes from my teaching experience in the residential schools. Each episode is briefly described, then illustrated by a detailed excerpt followed by autoethnographic analysis and interpretation of the experience. To begin with I present an excerpt on how I became a teacher of deaf pupils, as well as information on the lesson observation process which resulted in the critiques.

6.2 Becoming a deaf educator

I first decided I would teach deaf children during a government-organised in-service workshop on Special Needs Education attended by deputy principals of regular schools. In a session titled "Hearing Impairment" the principal of a school for the deaf presented a paper on the ear, the physiology of hearing, aetiology of hearing loss and how so many things could go wrong when one is deaf. He explained basic teaching principles such as facing the class to facilitate lip-reading, speaking normally and so on. "Unfortunately we do not have trained teachers and have to rely on unqualified teachers as none of you want to come to teach deaf children" he said in conclusion. "Why is it that no qualified teachers want to come and teach at your school?" I asked during question time. "A lot of people believe that if they associate closely with such disabled children they will give birth to children with disabilities," was his reply. At break time I went to speak to the principal and made initial plans to leave my mainstream school and join the school for the deaf the following term. "I am not superstitious and so I do not fear that deafness may catch onto my offspring," I assured him.

In no time many of my colleagues and friends heard about my plans to teach at the special school for the deaf. "Will you be able to use karate then?" someone teased me. I did not understand until he explained that teaching at a school for the deaf would involve karate-like hand movements. We laughed and I forgot about this until a few weeks after I had started teaching at the school for the deaf.

Once I was at the school for the deaf it did not take me long to realise that I had probably taken on a task for which I was not equipped. Many of the deaf learners spoke in a torturous manner and I felt pity for them especially during the first few months. I could however not help them because I did not know what to do. I could not communicate with the class I had been allocated.

I was sharing a classroom with an experienced teacher of the deaf because there were not enough rooms for each class to have its own. He became my mentor and advised against feeling pity for the learners. He taught me such basics as ensuring all hearing aids were switched on, speaking normally and teaching about the here and now, in what he called situational teaching. In a typical week I would repeatedly use the same few words in different contexts so that the deaf learners could learn to pronounce them, speechread them, detect and understand them.

I made such slow progress and found that the children would have forgotten by the following morning. I had to repeat the same material over and over again, taking a great deal of time and making very little progress. It was disheartening. The glamour of having come to teach at a special school where technology such as hearing aids was used wore off very quickly. I realised early on that even though every one of my seven pupils wore a hearing aid, only one or two of them seemed to be able to detect sounds. Even for these, understanding what I was saying to them was extremely difficult. None of the more experienced teachers at the school could give me a satisfactory explanation of why this technology did not seem to be working.

I learnt some signing from the deaf pupils and from observing my mentor communicate with deaf pupils out of class. This came in handy in my class, but still my deaf class could not seem to grasp concepts the way my hearing classes had. I began to believe that in addition to the rumoured quick temper, deaf children also had learning difficulties. I was assured by my mentor that they had serious problems learning but that all I needed to do was keep on repeating things in a variety of interesting ways. Although I was worried about my lack of progress, I now had the reassurance of my colleagues that the problem really lay with the learners. So I began to view their progress as necessarily slow, after all they needed 12 years to learn the elementary school course which took their hearing peers seven years. Although I had

no evidence that they were any more quick-tempered than their hearing peers, I now added this to the idea that they had learning-difficulties. I now realise with hindsight that such stereotyping probably prejudiced my interactions so that I most probably started treating them as I would slow learners, rather than learners with impaired hearing. I now emphasised the repetition of simple exercises to get by on a day to day basis, and would teach some of these as demonstration lessons for newcomers, visitors and supervisors. I would drill weekly lists of words for auditory-training, speech-reading and speech production. I would sandwich these exercises into any lesson. This usually impressed most of the observers of my lessons. Deep down I was uncomfortable with the immense contrast between what I showed the visitors and what was achieved in class normally. I felt guilty about the minimal content I was delivering. I was acutely aware that I usually did not deliver higher order subject content and the few times that I did, it was ineffective. This was enormously embarrassing for a career teacher. I became confused about what I had volunteered to do at this school. It was unclear whether I was there to teach these deaf learners to listen and speak, or teach them various subjects. The more I taught these learners the more these two goals became increasingly incompatible. The signing which outsiders like my colleagues in the mainstream had jokingly called karate was not officially accepted as a teaching approach at this school and when I tried to use it, it was not much more effective. The service that I was supposed to render became less and less clear to me.

My introduction to the education of deaf learners had been through a captivating presentation on anatomy of the ear, physiology of hearing and aetiology of deafness which had allayed my initial fears about deaf people. This deficit-inclined presentation made me pity deaf learners who were shunned by trained teachers as they were said to be unpredictable. My motivation was a charitable one. Despite my charitable intentions, communication with the class was very

weak: the ‘karate’ I was using and the hearing aids they were wearing were not effective; my pride as a good teacher was more than dented, I was hurt. Serious communication challenges threatened to derail my noble quest to assist. I was acutely aware of the very low level learning in my class. My superiors explained that it was natural for deaf learners to perform poorly. This explanation provided me with some relief, at least initially. It meant that that I was not the one who was deficient but the deaf children who naturally performed poorly. In these early days of my teaching career I was observed and supervised by more experienced educators several times while I was teaching my classes.

It is a government requirement that every teacher in the schools be observed and assessed while teaching his or her class. The observer-assessor is usually a more experienced educator who is supposed to be able to guide the teacher. The purpose of the initial assessment early in the teaching career is to formally confirm a teacher after the mandatory two years probation so that a teacher becomes ‘established’ or tenured. For this probationary purpose, the assessor is a schools-inspector. After the probationary assessment, more routine assessments are carried out at least once a year in order to give teachers ongoing guidance. These routine assessments can be done by a teacher-in-charge, deputy principal, principal or the schools-inspector. The assessor would typically walk in unannounced and ask for lesson-plans, other record books and a sample of pupils’ exercise books. He or she would sit at the back of the classroom and observe whatever lesson was in progress, writing detailed comments about it. At the end of the 30-minute lesson, the assessor would discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the just observed lesson with the teacher. A written critique of the observed lesson was given to the teacher so that he or she could constantly refer to it in order to improve practice.

I was supervised in this manner at least 12 times during 15 years of teaching at one school, and

three months of teaching at another school for the deaf. However I was only able to locate six lesson-critiques for research purposes. Vignette 1 is based on early-career assessments while Vignette 2 is based on later assessments. These vignettes are reconstructions of dialogue between me and an assessor. This means that the ideas from the assessor are mostly verbatim quotes from the six available lesson-critiques with some paraphrases of what was written while my responses are reconstructions of my reactions to the comments. Following Rushing (2006), I have shaped some of what the principals and school-inspectors told me into the voice of a composite character who has just observed a lesson I was teaching. This means that I condense several principals' and inspectors' critiques into one character in order to reduce the number of actors I am asking you to know and also to protect participant identities.

6.3 Vignette 1: The probationary lesson review

Inspector X: *It is good that there is communication between you and the learners. You also make deliberate efforts to infuse speech-training exercises in your lessons which results in more voicing from your hearing impaired pupils.*

Me: *Thank you, but now my lessons take longer and I can hardly achieve stated lesson objectives. My class performs poorly.*

Inspector X*:* *That is normal. It is their nature. You will get used to them with time. That is Special Education. It is good that you have rapport with this class – you just need more confidence and greater control of your class in order to do very well.*

Inspector X*:* *Communication is important here as they are language-handicapped. You must be able to face them squarely as you speak and sign at the same time so that they lipread and also follow your signs.*

Inspector X: *You need to master sign language very quickly in order to do that. Learn from the children. They will teach you.*

My reflections of the lesson critiques started with an initial focus on the teacher's ability to communicate. This is probably because communication appears to be the main issue when a hearing teacher like me comes to teach deaf learners. As I reflected initially on this reconstructed dialogue of an early career probationary assessment I kept thinking that this reflected my superiors' views of deaf education. When I tried to critically reflect on the impact the dialogue had on me, I struggled emotionally to go back to the past and identify how I had felt at the time. It took me a long time, but I then grudgingly admitted to myself that yes, I had initially agreed with my superiors that it was good that I was able to communicate with deaf children. It seemed that this encouragement from my superiors propelled me on into continuing merely speaking with my class because I must have reasoned that if my superiors could see the rapport between my deaf class and me then I must be doing something right. I reasoned that surely there would not have been any rapport within my class without communication. I knew the importance of being able to communicate with my learners as a new teacher of the deaf, and was happy that my superiors appreciated I was now able to communicate with deaf people.

As I kept on reflecting on communication and rapport, I realised the issue was deeper as some observers commended deliberate infusion of speech into lessons, while others urged me to learn Sign Language. My reflections became more specific and I looked at the different emphases on speech and sign. I reflected that I must have taken speaking and listening for granted as every lesson had a speaking-listening focus. It did not matter what subject I was teaching, I would routinely select a few words from the day's topic and engage the learners in speech and auditory training before trying to teach the day's content. I see now that the measure of my success in doing this seems to have been captured in the inspector's observation that there was more voicing from the pupils. What mattered then appeared to have been the production of voice by

these previously silent children. It did not seem to matter that these speech and auditory-training activities infused into every lesson actually made my lessons longer, and the achievement of the stated subject-related objectives, that much more difficult. This emphasis on speech was supported by insiders like the principal and the more senior teachers. Speaking was natural because it was the way in which I normally communicated and so it is possible that there was a self-serving bias in my emphasis on speech. I agreed with the idea of teaching deaf children speech as it seemed to make sense; we wanted these children to fit into a hearing-speaking society. I was comfortable with this view of teaching as I did not know any other teaching method. I had been taught in this way and was trained to teach in the same manner, so I found nothing amiss with this view of teaching. I might not have thought of it in exactly those terms, but it seemed logical to correct what was deficient in order to facilitate inclusion into society.

As I turned my reflections onto the signing emphasis I realised I was encouraged to learn 'Sign Language' so that I could speak and sign at the same time, rather than to teach subject matter only through signs. It would appear that the signing I was encouraged to learn was meant to help me to teach speech. As the inspector observed, "*You must be able to face them squarely and speak and sign at the same time so that they lipread and also follow your signs*." It might therefore appear that even though it was called a language, the signing must really have been English-language or Shona-language based as I was expected to sign at the same time that I was speaking either of these languages. This implies that the signing itself was never supposed to be a real language on its own. I must have been satisfied with this because it was in agreement with the overall goal of enabling the deaf children to learn speech and a spoken language so that they could be included in a speaking society.

Further reflection on the signing showed that I was supposed to learn Sign Language from my

class. These same children regarded as language-handicapped were now supposed to teach me a language. I did not realise this contradiction at the time. When I accepted this advice I quickly learned basic signs which I would use as I spoke in class. The children were eager teachers from whom I managed to learn signs and my communication with the class improved. I took it for granted that the language being referred to when my superiors made reference to 'language-handicapped' was the majority spoken language, so again I found no contradiction in averring that deaf children were language-handicapped and then saying they could teach Sign Language to an adult like me. Looking back now, I think it is likely that I easily accepted this because I did not regard Sign Language as a real language.

After lengthy reflection, I realised that underlying the different emphases on speech and sign were beliefs about deaf children's ability to learn. I remember that as a novice teacher I agreed with my superiors' views of deaf education. I believed that my pupils had learning difficulties, and that this was a natural part of their disability. I had no problems with this mindset. I agreed that it was normal for the deaf learners not to be able to achieve stated lesson objectives because I believed they had learning difficulties. It became normal not to complete most lessons that I taught since I believed they had learning difficulties. I became quite adept at teaching them slowly, setting lower level objectives, speaking while facing the class and using signs for those concepts I could sign. I was assured that this was what Special Education was all about and this explanation helped me to continue teaching deaf learners in this way for many years.

This teaching approach was reinforced when I underwent in-service workshops and specialist training initially at diploma and then at degree level. All this training focused on the inherent limitations of deaf learners related to their impaired hearing. At a theoretical level, I could now explain the limitations of deaf learners using what was popularised by Myklebust (1964) as the

psychology of deafness. I was now a very experienced teacher of the deaf. It was therefore as an experienced teacher of the deaf that I was observed teaching in the episode in vignette 2.

6.4 Vignette 2: The veteran's lesson reviewed

Principal: *I must congratulate you on a noticeable improvement in your signing. It is clear that you are in control in this class.*

Me*: Thank you, but I still cannot sign beyond basic greetings and issuing instructions. As I speak to my class, I skip rather a lot of signs which I do not know.*

Principal: *That is normal. Remember they are language-handicapped. You should however use more concrete media in order to allow them to see. They are visualisers and will learn better from seeing real things. It is also important to keep talking about the here and now. Otherwise keep up the good work.*

On analysing these comments, the emergent patterns are very clear. As in the first dialogue, more than 10 years earlier, there were some comments which show that an observer was impressed by whatever level of communication appeared to have happened between myself as a non-deaf teacher and my class. It seemed that nothing had really changed in 10 years. The comments might now have changed to signing rather than speaking but I was still basically being commended for being able to engage in rudimentary communication. In retrospect, I think I was vaguely aware that these observers did not know Sign Language any more than I did. This would explain why they were unable to immediately tell that there was a mismatch between what I saying and what I was signing since I missed so many signs. The spoken part of my lesson that my superiors had access to was nearly perfect, while the signed part was a shambles as I omitted so many signs. The deaf learners nevertheless tended to nod quickly and sign that they understood even though the messages must have been garbled and unclear. Observers of

my lessons had no option but to commend me for communicating with my class. I felt more and more like a fraud in this situation.

The view that deaf pupils were learning disabled was constantly reinforced by remarks such as those made by the principal that the learners were visualisers who relied on concrete objects and who had to be taught about the here and now. In order to maintain my own mental balance and self-image, it was easy to accept the superiors' advice and attribute the impasse between me and my class to something external, the learners. Largely because I was coming across emergent child-centred pedagogies in which learners were 'customers' who could never be at fault, I had the nagging feeling that I was not doing something right. In continued efforts to remedy the untenable situation of pupils who were not learning, I underwent further teacher training. I was first trained at the only college training teachers in Special Needs Education in Zimbabwe in 1988, United College of Education. When the University of Zimbabwe started offering Special Needs Education degree programmes which included a specialisation in 'Hearing Impairment', I enrolled and was trained there in 1998. There was still not much improvement after I had completed my studies. My communication with the learners remained slow and ineffective.

With time I became disillusioned with just being able to communicate rudimentary ideas. I probably had a growing realisation that being able to communicate is something that should be taken for granted when one sets out to teach someone anything and so the commendations for communicating were hollow. I had accepted my weak communication with the class 10 years earlier as something temporary because there was always the possibility of improvement in future. With the passage of time however the continued ineffective communication became really demoralising which is why I felt like a fraud. In conversations with colleagues, I realised that some of them felt the same way. I cannot really pinpoint the exact stage at which I became

most uncomfortable about the easy satisfaction we all had with the rudimentary communication we managed to have with deaf learners. It must have been a gradual process. There was however a critical incident in my teaching which brought me face to face with the realisation that deaf learners were not necessarily learning disabled.

The critical incident which disabused me of my notion that deaf pupils were learning disabled occurred while I was teaching a science lesson in which I could see from the faces of the pupils that they were more blank than usual. They really could not to understand what I was trying to put across. I was using all kinds of concrete objects and repeatedly explained in a very animated way, but still they did not seem to understand. I became very frustrated. In my frustration, I looked out through the large windows, and saw a Deaf sports coach who was following my lesson from outside. He must have been closely watching my struggle all this time. When my eyes met his, he left his position outside the window and came into the classroom where he abruptly took over my science lesson. He did not utter a single word throughout as he was signing silently and pointing to key words I had already put up on the chalkboard as well as the materials on my desk. In a very short time the entire class understood. The learners signed that they now understood. When I eventually asked them to do the written exercise on this lesson most of them did very well. This incident shocked me into realising that it was not so much the pupils who were deficient, but me their teacher. The belief that it was normal and natural for deaf learners to perform poorly, and that I should just get used to this poor performance was crushed in a few minutes.

Instead of feeling embarrassed I was relieved. It was as if a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. Now I had more than just a strong suspicion of what was wrong. I had observed the Deaf coach quickly and successfully deliver key scientific concepts using only signs, and I now

knew without any doubt that the problem was my deficiency in signing. I set about learning as many of these signs as I could in order to use them in my teaching. I would still utter the appropriate spoken words, but this was now more to guide my own thoughts. I reached the point where I would learn the signs for key concepts beforehand and emphasise these in the lesson. Having made this adjustment I was rather surprised that I was not as successful as the Deaf coach had been. If there were an improvement in my class's performance it was not all that remarkable. I remember thinking that there was still a missing piece. I had to do further work in order reach the same level as the Deaf coach.

I got a breakthrough in this puzzle because of two events in my life. The first was a visit to Gallaudet which is the only liberal-arts University of the Deaf in the world. The second was my subsequent association with a PhD supervisor who steered me towards literature in the socio-cultural perspective of deafness. These occurrences woke me up to the possibility of using signs within Sign Language as a real language. I became certain that one needed to master, not signs, but Sign Language in order to be able to teach deaf learners as well as the Deaf coach had done. In the next excerpt I describe an episode in which I initially encountered a Deaf scholar at Gallaudet University. My discovery of this university came about when I stumbled on literature indicating that in developed countries many deaf people received university education. It said that there was a university for them, Gallaudet, which Gearheart, Mullen, and Gearheart (1993) called the world's only separate, accredited university for students with a specific disability. This liberal arts university for the deaf is in Washington, D.C., United States of America. I was sceptical about a university for deaf people because of my experience in special schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe. After all in Zimbabwe, deaf pupils who make it into high school are an exception as typically, deaf learners undergo elementary education after which most of them are then taught practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leatherwork, sewing and cookery

(Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2004).

I decided to discover what they were doing in the United States which enabled deaf learners to attain university education while we only managed to offer them low level craft skills in Zimbabwe. I applied for and got a Fulbright grant to go on a three-month study tour of Gallaudet and its feeder institutions, the Clerc Centre comprising an elementary school for the deaf and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD). The following are recollections of thoughts of my first day and the following weeks at Gallaudet. The setting is the Gallaudet office of the professor with whom I had been communicating through email about my travel plans and itinerary.

6.5 Vignette 3: The Deaf as normal

Welcome to Gallaudet – where the authors teach. But wait a minute, what is this? There must be some mistake! Why would Professor Sally [name altered] *need a Sign Language interpreter in order to talk to me? Is she deaf then? But she is a professor?! There she is signing away. In my shock and uncertainty I can hear the interpreter saying welcome to Gallaudet and the Clerc Centre. I hope you will learn a lot from this visit. Can you please tell me about your work in Zimbabwe? I start replying to the interpreter who embarrasses me by interjecting that I should address the professor directly and look at her rather than at him. (I am culturally trained that it is disrespectful to look anyone squarely in the face, so I wonder what the deaf professor thought of me studiously avoiding her eyes throughout). So there I am in this strange situation where I am speaking to and occasionally glancing at the professor while she is looking at and sometimes signing to the interpreter who is sitting by my side. She nods her head and makes appropriate responses through signs. Amazing! We are having a normal conversation. In no time at all she is talking about bilingual-bicultural*

education and I am lost. I have to tell myself time and again that it is not the interpreter who knows these things, but the Deaf professor. Now she has lost me! I am in danger of having flown all this way (my very first flight anywhere) only to make a fool of myself so far away from home! I must read up on these bilingual-bicultural concepts before our next meeting. How does she know so much about them? Before the end of our first session I get my answer because she lends me articles she has published in American Annals of the Deaf*, no less! These are on bilingual-bicultural education and she also invites me to see practical implementation she is carrying out at the Clerc Centre. So within the following weeks I get to see bilingual-bicultural education in practice – with American Sign Language (ASL) being used as a fully-fledged language base to learn English and any concepts in any subject I could imagine. I also meet many other Deaf faculty members, many with PhDs and some who are professors. I manage to attend an academic seminar conducted throughout in ASL. I am astounded at the depth to which they go in exploring their subject. So why is it that these Deaf individuals are ... normal? They are doing so well and can hold their own in an academic discussion with anyone. I then realised that these Deaf academics who are just like hearing academics anywhere, have had access to ASL which they use to learn and teach any subject to the fullest extent possible. I am convinced of this within the first few weeks and spend the rest of my time there trying to convince some of the Deaf academics to come to my country to be role models for both the deaf learners and the hearing teachers who are likely to disbelieve my strange tale of Deaf professors in a far-away land.*

My study tour of Gallaudet University showed me that deaf learners can learn normally if they are using Sign Language. I was surprised to realise that the professor I had been communicating with about my travel, accommodation and study itinerary through email was Deaf, because I had never met any deaf people who were that sophisticated and

knowledgeable. This visit opened my eyes to the many possibilities open to deaf people. In fact I suddenly realised that they are normal, that they do not need to hear or speak in order to be normal. This was a humbling experience in which I realised that my earlier charitable, speech-based approaches had been a hindrance to the development of my deaf pupils.

Having failed to get any Deaf academics from Gallaudet University to come to my country to be role models, I decided to take it on myself to learn more about Deaf Education so that I could become a better informed advocate. I needed to know more about the perspective which views deaf learners as normal in order to be able to directly contribute to the literacy education of deaf children in my country. It was with this goal in mind that I began to search southern African university departments for a PhD supervisor. This took close to two years. All my attempts were negative. I would usually be told that the department had circulated my brief proposal among their faculty but did not have anyone with the expertise to supervise such a study. Someone at the last university to which I had sent my proposal was thoughtful enough to indicate that there was a woman with a PhD in that area at another institution who might just be interested in supervising me. This is how I came to know of her and so I sent her my brief proposal on the literacy development of deaf learners. Surprisingly, she had responded positively and several emails later, I was in her office discussing the feasibility of my initial topic which was now changing completely. The following is a reconstruction of our dialogue in one of my first meetings with her.

6.6 Vignette 4: Quest to transform Deaf Education through PhD study

Professor

(Reading aloud to herself and looking thoughtful): *"Teachers' bilingual literacy development practices for children at schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe".* (Speaking directly to me): *Before you register for this PhD tell me a little about yourself and why you are interested in this area.*

Me

I taught deaf children for 15 years in residential schools for the deaf and I am worried about their low reading levels despite all my best efforts. I recently got a chance to visit Gallaudet University in America where I saw deaf academics experimenting with bilingual-bicultural education to develop literacy from elementary to the highest levels. I think this is where we are missing it in Africa so I would like to investigate this in my own country.

Professor

How good is your Sign Language? How well versed are you in literacy development?

Me

(The two questions in quick succession were completely unexpected. With a shocked look and not speaking as confidently as before, I offered a hesitant answer): *Not so good, you see we use speaking and listening approaches in my country …*

Professor

You may need to take up courses in Sign Language and in literacy development in order to handle this topic.

Me

(In panic mode): *I do not have that much time to do this… you see I will be on fixed study leave. What can I do?*

Professor

If you had to make just one contribution to deaf education in your country before you die, what would it be?

Me

(Surprised but recovering quickly I said thoughtfully): *Uhm … I would like the experiences of the others who also teach deaf learners to be better understood … finding out what teachers know and believe about their everyday experiences should be a good starting point in understanding how and why they teach in particular ways and so could be a first step in resolving the plight of deaf children in these residential schools.*

Professor

There you are… why don't you develop that into a topic?

The development of literacy using bilingual-bicultural approaches that I had observed in my study tour was such an appealing idea that I wanted to explore it in my country. I was convinced that this was the solution to problems in deaf education. I was therefore disappointed that the only supervisor who had expertise in deaf education seemed to be steering me away from this topic. The realisation that she was correct, that I would need to work on the pre-requisite skills, a task for which I did not have the time, really helped me get over my initial disappointment. On further reflection I realised that as none of the schools for the deaf in my country was practising bilingual-bicultural education it might not be feasible to study it in the Zimbabwean context. An appropriate starting point was an understanding of what we, as teachers of deaf children knew and believed. I needed to explore my own experiences and the experiences of the other teachers in order to gain proper insights into the meaning we attached to teaching deaf pupils. I thought that these insights might also be indicative of how our knowledge and beliefs had influenced the way in which we taught deaf learners. The more I considered the idea the more I realised the logic of studying this vital topic.

6.7 Overall reflections

Thinking back to what made me want to study my personal experience of teaching, I concluded it may have had something to do with the uneasiness that gripped me as a mid-career teacher in an environment where academic success for deaf learners was the exception rather than the norm. I had begun my teaching career with the view that I was a good teacher, which is why I decided to help deaf children whom many others were shunning. I had ventured out of the familiar territory of teaching hearing children because I was confident I could help by offering a useful service to these less fortunate human beings. Early on in my teaching deaf pupils, I became puzzled about why I had not made much progress with these particular learners despite being such a good teacher. My superiors - the principals, inspectors, deputy principals – assured me that I was making adequate progress with my deaf classes. These assurances initially lulled me into believing that deaf learners had learning disabilities and so they needed to be taught more slowly, targeting lower level objectives. Such teaching however was frustrating.

One of the turning points in my career was when the Deaf sports coach who was not even a professional teacher succeeded in teaching concepts I could not convey to my class. In my ignorance I still believed that all I needed to do was learn more signs and this would remedy my deficits. It would however appear that I had identified only a part of my deficit, that is, the one related to knowledge of signs. Just as I was contemplating shifting the blame back onto the learners as deficient, I had another turning point when I discovered Gallaudet. I was shocked by the reality of Deaf professors and philosophers at this university for the deaf. I concluded that what made them normal was their use of ASL as a real language in a bilingual-bicultural learning environment. Armed with this insight I thought we needed bilingual-bicultural education in which ZSL would also be used as a real language to develop literacy. I however had neither the credentials nor empirical evidence to push this experiment into any of the

schools. I therefore decided to pursue doctoral studies in which I would seek an understanding of the meaning of the experience of teaching in deaf education, starting with my own knowledge and beliefs. Sharing my own experiences would be a way of raising the awareness of other hearing teachers, who like me, were either unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge their power and their role in contributing to student marginalisation (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Romo (2004) argued that because of privilege, dominant culture members actually resist change toward equity. Teachers' knowledge and beliefs seemed a good starting point because as Delpit (2006) and Gay (2010) pointed out, just as children bring their own cultural values to school, so do teachers. As a member of the dominant hearing culture it had taken me a long time to become aware of and to acknowledge my power and role in marginalising my deaf pupils. Therefore analysing my own personal experiences may facilitate vicarious awareness, acknowledgement and change in other hearing teachers of deaf learners. I have recounted episodes and anecdotes which highlight my personal experiences to try to make them resonate with other teachers of the deaf in similar situations.

The episodes and anecdotes cited from '*Becoming a teacher of the deaf'* to '*The veteran's lesson reviewed*' reflect the assimilationist assumptions underlying both my intentions as a hearing teacher and the intentions of the schools for the deaf. Assimilationism was assumed in the captivating presentation on anatomy of the ear, physiology of hearing and aetiology of deafness as the deficit inclination of this presentation made me pity deaf learners. I imagined deaf children as isolated and needy. I was motivated by charity to go and teach them to overcome their lack of hearing and speech so that they could join hearing-speaking society. This concurs with the argument that in the hearing stereotype, deafness is the lack of something, not the presence of anything (Lane, 1999, 2008). It is associated with loss, rather than difference and gain (Baumann & Murray, 2010; Lane, 2008). I became a teacher of the deaf in order to

help deaf children overcome their lack and loss so that they could be assimilated into my society. As Gertz (2008) stated, hearing educators' main focus is on the stigma that deaf individuals have which needs to be 'fixed' by correcting their hearing and speaking deficiencies. I was unaware that by trying to do this I was engaging in what Foucault (1990) might call medicalisation of deafness into deviance. This medicalisation would explain why in *Vignette 1: The probationary lesson review,* my supervisors and I placed a premium on speech. We assumed that with speech, rapport and communication would follow, vanquishing the silence and isolation of deaf children. In a way the institutions and I agreed to practise what Romo and Chavez (2006) called colonizing or neo-colonial pedagogy. Ladd (2008) stated that there are parallels between the experiences of deaf people and colonialism. My perception of deaf children as outsiders in a hearing world resulted in my reinforcing hearing culture traits as desirable for the survival of the learners and this was a form of colonial activity. Lane (1999) would say that such perceptions of deaf children as deficient outsiders are based on egocentric error resulting from an extrapolative leap. This means that I imagined what it means to be deaf from my hearing standpoint. I did not have any other standpoint; my allegiance was to hearing culture, spoken language and hearing values. I appear to have been driven by existential fear, at least in the initial stages of my journey as a teacher of the deaf. My sense of pride and self-sufficiency as a hearing member of society was challenged by these silent, deaf children. I had to do something to help them out of charity. Quayson (2007) explained that charity exists alongside fear of divine disfavour, so that the two attitudes – charity and fear – are by no means mutually exclusive (2007, p. 7).

Regardless of my charitable intentions, communication with my deaf class through speech was very weak. Logically, I augmented speech with signs. Still there was not much improvement. An inclination towards simultaneous communication seemed to be reasonable to me in its

recognition of deaf learners as having visual strengths which they could use to access a Sign Language which they can see. This inclination towards simultaneous communication would however also appear to have flaws that are similar to those in an aural-oral inclination. In their seminal paper entitled *Unlocking the Curriculum: Principles for Achieving Access in Deaf Education*, Johnson *et al.* (1989) point out that because Sign Language is so different in structure from spoken language, it would be impossible to speak full sentences and sign complete Sign Language sentences simultaneously. My continued reliance on simultaneous communication might therefore be indicative of my lack of acceptance of Sign Language as a real language. Kiyaga and Moores (2009) wrote that many teachers of deaf learners in sub-Saharan Africa do not accept Sign Language as a real language. My use of simultaneous communication meant that I continued to rely largely on my own spoken language to teach. Lane (1999, p. 47) stated that using the hearing teacher's language in a class of deaf pupils is a form of colonialism which results in the miserable failure of education. He said that spoken language and articulation activities drive out all education from the classroom and this reinforces the need for Special Education (1999, pp. 25-26). My pride as a good teacher was threatened by the lack of progress. I was relieved to be assured by my superiors that I was not failing. I was assured that it was not me who was deficient as it was my deaf pupils. It was supposed to be self-evident that this is why they were in Special Education. The blaming of deaf students as intellectually deficient because of lack of true language is explained by Lane (1999) as ethnocentric misunderstanding of the nature and status of manual language. In hearing society, awkward speech and gesticulating are associated with a simple mind thereby linking language and the intellect and so making deafness a defect of the intellect (Hauser & Marschark, 2008; Lane, 1999). This ethnocentric misunderstanding is evident even when I eventually decided to learn more signs following my superiors' advice and the critical incident when I observed a Deaf adult teach my science class. I tried to 'fix up' what I thought were the

children's 'arbitrary gestures' to make them more like English and Shona. Even the reference to deaf people in the literature as fundamentally visual people (Bahan, 2008; Baumann, 2008) seemed to have been misinterpreted by me and my superiors to mean that they could only learn what they could see and would have difficulty with abstract concepts. This concurred with the argument by Valenzuela (1999) that schools have a subtractive nature by minimising students' language and culture. In *Vignette 3: The Deaf as normal*, I realised I was part of this subtractive nature as I unknowingly discounted the deaf children's Sign Language and thought them unable to undertake abstract concepts.

The awareness of the subtractive nature of deaf education in my country impelled me to want to change the education system as described in *Vignette 4: Quest to transform Deaf education*. My journey seems to lead naturally to teacher-education and the need to infuse in it awareness of deaf learners as normal. I believe that many of my colleagues in deaf education position their deaf pupils as 'less-than' on a daily basis. Like me, they might have been driven by the egocentric error of comparing ZSL with their spoken languages, finding it grammatically deficient and so academically inadequate. On this basis they might also have extrapolated and concluded that deaf children were intellectually inferior. My journey so far seems to indicate that the only way to break the impasse in deaf education is to become an advocate for the deaf and their democratic education rather than colonial education. I am acutely aware that perhaps the best advocates for this would have been Deaf academics such as those who impressed on me the idea of deaf people as normal. Those would have been living examples of what an education system that is not subtractive can achieve. However in the absence of Deaf models, I must take on the challenge. Starr (2010) explained that the cycle of enlightenment, reflection and action in autoethnography makes it a valuable tool for examining the complex and diverse world of education. As a hearing person I can only become a renegade engaging in this kind of

autoethnography to make fellow teachers aware of the need for equity in education. I envisage that teachers of the deaf in my country will be receptive to new ideas if I am armed with the appropriate research evidence and the highest academic credentials. It is not certain that a revolution will follow the dissemination of findings from my autoethnography because as Lang (2011) wrote, not everything faced can be changed. However nothing can be changed until it is faced (Lang, 2011). In order to widen the evidence base I have to seek to understand the other teachers' stories, their knowledge and beliefs about teaching in order to see how well my journey resonates with theirs. The next three chapters report the results of the other teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching in deaf education. The following chapter specifically sets out to tell the other teachers' stories.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHERS' NARRATIVES of TEACHING DEAF LEARNERS in RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

7.1 Introduction

The presentation of data on the meaning of the experience of teaching which began with my story in Chapter 6 continues in this chapter. Data in the current chapter are derived from interviewing 49 teachers individually or in specialist and non-specialist focus groups[19]. Interview items tended to elicit explanations on how teachers came to be teaching in the special schools as well as other events which happen in their teaching in these residential institutions. Following what Polkinghorne (1995) and Ylijoki (2001) called narrative analysis these experiences have been configured into temporal ordered descriptions with a beginning, a middle and an end. These hearing teachers made sense of teaching deaf learners by appropriating and transforming collectively shared narratives about deafness which have accumulated in the culture of teaching over several teacher-generations. It is therefore assumed that the meaning that these teachers attach to their experience in the schools is derived from these shared narratives. The teachers' descriptions of events and happenings in the schools were not necessarily in a neat time-line but moved back and forth in time and themes. Following what Miles and Huberman (1994) called a story approach, I configured these descriptions into stories by discerning a plot that united and gave meaning to the elements in the data. Four core plots of the narrative of teaching emerged based on this process of analysis as shown in table 7.1.

[19] As the reader may recall from the methodology chapter (chapter 4) the specialist focus groups are clusters of teachers with additional training in Special Needs Education while the non-specialist focus groups are clusters of teachers with mainstream teacher-education without additional training in Special Needs Education.

Table 7.1: Types of core narratives concerning teaching deaf learners

	Nature of teaching	
Locus of control	**Positive plot**	**Negative plot**
Internal	Heroic teacher's journey	Teacher as surrogate parent
External	Handicapped helper's journey	Teacher as martyr

Of the four core plots in table 7.1, the vertical dimension shows that two plots are positive and two are negative. A plot was deemed to be positive in instances where the overall narrative tone was positive, meaning that either the teachers succeeded in their pursuits or others view them as successful regardless of any trials on the way. In the negative narratives the teachers' experiences were generally unfavourable and outcomes looked set to be unsuccessful. The horizontal dimension shows that in some instances teachers are active agents (internal locus of control) and in others they emphasise the external situation (external locus of control). The four broad narratives in table 7.1 are collective stories which do not correspond precisely to the accounts given by individual teachers. For example in some instances some teachers would have both 'heroic' and 'handicapped helper' episodes so that it had to be decided whether overall, the individual teacher's narrative was predominantly one or the other. The narratives provide an insight into beliefs about the teachers' role in the schools and the collective experience of hearing teachers teaching deaf children in special residential schools for the deaf. These narratives show that the meaning of the experience of teaching was fundamentally different for each type of teacher. The next sections present and analyse these four narratives using detailed excerpts. In all instances pseudonyms are used to protect identities and maintain confidentiality.

7.2 The heroic teacher's journey

Teachers who narrate a heroic narrative believe that teaching is a quest to conquer deafness and restore the deaf learners to their place in society. The process involves commitment, struggle and eventually a measure of victory. The following sections discuss these processes.

7.2.1 Mystical commitment of the heroic teacher

For some teachers, deciding to teach deaf children in a residential school had a mystical aura. The mystical aura involved believing that they one was 'called' in various ways to serve the less fortunate deaf children. In some instances 'the call' had an explicit religious inclination. For example the principal of school A said:

> "Initially I did not want to be a teacher. I wanted to be a pastor but church policy at that time was that bachelors could not become pastors so I was advised to become a teacher, marry and if I still had the call, train to become a pastor. I have found that there is no difference between a pastor's call and my call to teach at this school."

In another interview Dhombs[20] said, "As a teacher here I apply Christian principles in my dealings with pupils and their parents so there are similarities between what I do and what the responsible authority (church) does." Tinds at the same school said, "This is not just ordinary teaching but it has a bit of a calling... we need that patience, we need that understanding, we need that passion…." Aripo who had been teaching at school B for nearly six years said, "I thought maybe I was going to be here for a short time because I have not done any Special Education training, but you know God has his own plans. I am still here."

[20] In all instances the actual names of the participating teachers have not been used. 'Dhombs' is therefore a pseudonym.

In these instances it seemed that the teacher was convinced that teaching deaf learners is an occupation which had a super purpose, it was not normal teaching. Such a conception of teaching appears to be underpinned by what Flanagan (2003) posited as direct divine intervention in teaching as a vocation. This implies that teaching has been commissioned by a divine being and continues to be guided by that divine being for the ultimate benefit of the learners. Quayson (2007) stated that because disability was closely aligned to disease and disease is often interpreted as a form of plague and punishment for past sins, an idea of disability as a sign of divine disfavour persisted. In most cases however, the hearing teachers did not mention religion explicitly as an impelling factor in their commitment to teach deaf learners as shown in the next section.

7.2.2 Secular commitment of the heroic teacher

Several teachers said they only realised on arriving at the school that they had accepted deployment to an institution for deaf pupils. Many teachers deployed to the school without any prior experience with deaf people, were shocked by their first sight of the learners but then could not transfer from the school as they felt guilty about leaving the children without helping them.

Tembo said she had never been in close contact with any deaf person before deployment to the school for the deaf. She said that she must have been visibly shocked on arrival in the school office as the principal gave her the weekend to go and think about whether she really wanted to join the school before he could sign her assumption-of-duty form. Tembo said:

> "I was deployed to this school thinking that it was an ordinary school. I was shocked to discover that the whole school was deaf. The principal gave me the weekend to go

> and think things through. I thought about it and initially decided not to come back here. However when I was sleeping that night I had a dream in which every teacher had left the school. I woke up and asked myself, who is going to help those children? So I came."

Some teachers toured the school for the deaf, saw the deaf children struggling to produce speech sounds and felt pity. For example Shauri said,

> "On a school-trip to the nearby monuments I brought the class that I was teaching to visit this school, just to see. I saw that these children were pitiful, they struggled to produce sounds. But there were no teachers willing to come and teach the deaf. People were afraid of the deaf especially those who had never been in close contact with them. So I decided to come and help here."

Many teachers said they were not used to people who spoke in the unusual way many children with pre-lingual deafness do. Many new teachers are said to have come, stayed for a few days then left. Those who remained said they felt that if everyone left there would be no one to help the children. The shock, guilt and desire to help experienced by the hearing teachers appeared to be a dominant response to disability. The teacher heeded his or her conscience and remained to help deaf children on the basis of what appears to be rational morality. Moshman (1995) stated that rational morality is actively constructed through reflective processes in which cultural transmission and peer interaction are critical. It is therefore quite possible that the teachers reasoned that they had to help the deaf learners in order to make the world a better place. As Moshman (1995) explained that, such logic occurs in a cultural context. A proverb such as *Seka hurema wafa* (Laugh at disability when you are dead) used in the socialisation of Shona community members could illuminate the help that is

proffered to children with disability within the African cultural context. Devlieger (1999) explained that *Seka hurema wafa* implies existential insecurity resulting from the possibility that anyone can become disabled. If the Kisanji (1995a) argument that proverbs condense and generalise a community's experience is accepted, then it is possible that the teachers might have felt guilty and committed themselves to teaching the deaf learners because of their own existential insecurities. However it is also possible that some simply wanted to help, serve and fulfil their calling to uplift. The heroic teacher, in both mystical and secular commitment to teaching, is committed to teaching deaf learners who are considered to be less fortunate than the teacher. Teaching would therefore seem to offer hearing adults an opportunity to commit themselves to a cause for the less privileged deaf children.

7.2.3 Struggling hero

The teaching process itself consists of a learning period during which the hero struggles to learn how colleagues at the school teach. Many teachers believed that newly arrived teachers of deaf children needed an induction period before they could be expected to teach. They believed that in order for the induction to be useful, it had to involve observation of lessons accompanied by listening to explanations of why the mentoring teacher did what he or she did. The principal of school C said:

> "Orientation here means being attached to an experienced teacher for about two weeks. During this period they observe lessons and are taught communication skills like Sign Language."

Some teachers reported that they found this initial period to be full of deep emotions. Mbara said of the first few weeks: "When I first came I regretted having come because it was difficult. There was no communication between me and the children and the children were stubborn because they knew that there was a barrier between me and them. So they will be

stubborn until you are able to communicate." Sithole said: "I was stressed when I first came here. I would get home and go straight to sleep. At one time I went back to the District office to complain that I had been wrongly deployed at the special school. But they persuaded me to stay a little longer and learn".

The despair, loss of confidence and depression which characterise the struggle to learn how to teach deaf learners, as illustrated in these excerpts, would appear to be heightened in situations where there is no induction training. Tema, who was not formally inducted into the school illustrated this when she said, "I did not undergo any orienting induction training as I was straight away put into a class with deaf pupils. I didn't even have the mode of communicating with the children. I was stressed and dejected."

Teachers might not have induction training because there is no ready model of how to teach deaf learners. The absence of a ready-made model would appear to result from the unavailability of official policy on how to teach deaf learners which Chimedza (2001) attributed to government's continued search for information on which to base the policy. This lack of clear direction might in turn emanate from what Barcham (1998) called the international conflict and struggle over methods of communication used in the education of deaf children. Swanwick and Marschark (2010) pointed out that there is a legacy of polarised debate in deaf education because as Spencer and Marschark (2010b, pp. 4 - 5) explained, no one system, no one approach will be optimal for all deaf learners as individual needs, strengths and experiences interact to produce a population of learners even more diverse than the population of hearing learners. So it is within this diversity of learners that the hero struggles without the assistance of a ready-made model of how to teach. Even without a

ready-made model, apprenticeship to more experienced teachers alleviates anxieties in the transition from mainstream to special school teaching. However even without an apprenticeship relationship to other teachers, new teachers of deaf children still had their identity transformed into heroes in the community of their classes in what Lave and Wenger (1991) call legitimate peripheral participation.

7.2.4 Victory for the hero

The time that teachers took to settle down to the diverse learners in the special school varied from a few weeks to one or two school terms before they became victorious. The principal at school B said: "Those who have got interest should get basic communication going within the first two or three weeks." Once the teacher has settled down to the routine of the school, the serious business of teaching is supposed to begin. Mbara, a specialist teacher at the same school said, "It took me about a month to be able to settle down. In a month I was now able to communicate." Asked how she settled down and began to teach, Chingai said, "I was fortunate because I had older children and they were able to teach me Sign Language. The kids would tell me all the signs that I did not know, you know there are some common signs like 'go', 'come' which are easy but those words which were hard for me I would write on the chalkboard and then they would tell me the meaning of the word.'' Aripo added: "You find that you learn better from the children themselves rather than from the books or from anyone else. When the children realise that this person cannot sign, they actually become your teacher. So you will be learning from them and they will be learning from you." Edzai added, to general laughter from the non-specialist focus group-members, "And they really love to teach you. *Chirema ndochine zano, chinotamba chakasendama kumadziro* (A deformed person is clever, he supports himself against a wall when dancing)." After this devotion to finding out the best ways to communicate with the learners, the teacher sometimes becomes convinced that she can teach at the same level as colleagues who have

been in the school before she arrived. Bhachi, a non-specialist teacher at school C said: "After a while I realised I could now sign as well as the other teachers who have been teaching here for some time. That gave me a lot of confidence to continue as a specialist." Even for those teachers without any special training, teaching at a special school meant that they were specialists, as shown by their constantly referring to themselves as such.

An induction period of a few weeks or even a term is unlikely to be adequate as Storbeck (1998) observed that it takes time for hearing teachers to become enculturated into the anthropology of theory on deaf learners. Teachers who were just 'diverted' from the mainstream (Storbeck, 1998) and who in a few weeks pronounced that they were victorious in communicating with deaf learners might be prematurely satisfied with basic superficial communication. In that sense the victory is hollow. When teachers averred that it took them a month to learn Sign Language from deaf children, it appears they do not regard Sign Language as a real language. This is because it is unlikely that the same people would think it was reasonable to expect one to acquire any spoken language from children in a month. Kiyaga and Moores (2009) reported that in general teachers of the deaf in sub-Saharan Africa generally cannot sign and do not view Sign Language as a real language. They are informed by such Shona proverbs as the one cited by one teacher which literally means that a deformed person is clever he supports himself against a wall when dancing. This proverb implies that solutions to problems are contrived and unnatural (Devlieger, 1999) which suggests that Sign Language is a contrived system that tries to bridge a gap and so is not a natural language. In this case it either means that deaf children are perceived as clever as they have this contrived system or that the hearing teacher is clever as evident in her learning the deaf children's contrived system. When the teachers say that they learn Sign Language better from the children rather than from books, this is consistent with Nziramasanga (1999) who found that

specialist teachers for the deaf in Zimbabwe had to be taught ZSL by their pupils, before they could teach them. The fact that Sign Language is a moving language which cannot therefore be fully captured by static books might explain why the children were regarded as more useful teachers of the language. However the ethical implications of this reversal of role between teacher and learner were not considered, even though teachers perceive themselves as heroes helping deaf children in distress. From an ethical point of view 'heroes' have a responsibility to be stronger, in this case more knowledgeable, in order to be able to meaningfully help the children they perceive as distressed. The extent to which these hearing teachers could become fluent Sign Language users when they do not have formally organised role models is also questionable.

7.3 Teacher as handicapped helper

In the handicapped helper narrative the quest to conquer deafness is still there but the teachers' narrative is predominantly about struggling in less than ideal, adversarial conditions. The conditions that are said to restrict the help that teachers can offer revolve around perceived defects of Sign Language. The following sections discuss the help, struggle, limitations and recognition of achievements in this helping process.

7.3.1 Teaching as help

As in the hero story, many teachers regarded their teaching of deaf learners as help. For example Gwara, in the specialist focus group discussion at school B, had this to say about how he came to teach deaf learners: "At the mainstream school where I was teaching, there happened to be a girl who could not talk… I began to worry about how I was going to be able to help her… I applied to UCE and trained as a teacher of HI children… then later came to

teach at this school.'' It is evident that this teacher, like many others, viewed his work as help.

In many other cases teachers thought that their teaching was more than just help but charity for those who were less privileged than them. For instance one teacher, Svayaz at school C said: "Teaching here is quite a challenge but we are sacrificing. If we say we do not want to do it, who will come and do it?" Duma said: "We just have the children at heart." The helping relationship here appeared to have moved to a level where the teacher was a benevolent benefactor who made sacrifices. Quayson (2007) stated that society might view specific impairments as challenges to man's sense of pride and self-sufficiency thereby encouraging the non-disabled to respond with charity toward people with disabilities. Charity existed alongside fear of divine disfavour so that the two attitudes – charity and fear – are by no means mutually exclusive (Quayson, 2007, p. 7). Service provision for people with disabilities in southern Africa has for a long time been based on the charity model (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). Coleridge (1993) argued that if disability remained a charity issue, this would not result in development. There would not be a lasting impact and so there were risks of life-long care for the other human being who was supposedly being helped. In the teaching situation, it was the helper who participated more actively than the one who was being helped, as discussed in the next section.

7.3.2 Struggling helper

The assistance that the teacher rendered as charity or as ordinary help is characterised by hard work just as in the hero story. In the specialist focus group discussion at school B, Moyo said: "I think with the deaf you have to put a lot more conscious effort for them to understand because you can't take anything for granted. HI children learn everything from the teacher

who takes conscious effort. If you don't tell them they won't know it. Whatever they know is because of you. If you don't tell them even their names, they won't know." Since teachers had these archaic views of deaf children as blank slates, they said they took nothing for granted and had to tell the pupils all they know. This unnecessarily made the teachers struggle as helpers. Teaching based on the idea that any children are what John Locke would call *tabula rasa* (blank slates) necessarily needs a lot of hard work on the part of the teacher. Teaching is easily more successful if it is based on some prior knowledge. Gagne, Briggs, and Wagner (1992) pointed out that stimulating recall of prior learning is an essential basic condition of learning. In this case it appears the teacher was looking for auditory-based prior knowledge such as the children's spoken, written names which the children might not know. Either the teacher was unaware of the children's sign-names and other visual-gestural strengths or did not know how these could be used as prior knowledge in order to develop further knowledge. Such teaching appears set to become handicapped as shall be shown in the next section.

7.3.3 Sign Language limitations in teaching

Many teachers said in their struggle to teach the deaf learners, Sign Language emerged as an obstacle. Moyo in the specialist focus group at school B said: "Sign Language won't get us anywhere. In Science for example the abstract concepts like fusion, transpiration or chlorophyll – you are not saying one sign for one word. Those are non-existent in their language. Just like in our Shona we don't have Shona equivalents for many Science words in the books. So it is very difficult to learn Science using signs." Nyarai added: "So the best thing is to dump that language which does not get us anywhere and use the real tool for that subject – English*"*. She explained why Sign Language was not used to try to access curricular content when she said: "Yes of course they sign which is a different language because that

Sign Language you don't find it anywhere in the books so it doesn't help them in their learning at all."

The foregoing focus group discussion highlights several Sign Language-related challenges the teachers believed handicap their teaching. The teachers said Sign Language could not be translated into English because there was single sign for one word. This perceived handicap would appear to result from confusing 'interpretation' and 'transliteration'. According to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf in the United States (RID), interpretation involves changing a message produced in Sign Language into English or vice versa (RID, 2004) and recognises that Sign Language is not a manual coding of English onto the hands (Aarons & Reynolds, 2003). This means that in interpretation, the two languages are taken as independent and so it is neither possible nor desirable to have one to one correspondence of words. Any such attempts are likely to handicap communication and therefore teaching. Transliteration on the other hand involves changing the message produced in English into English-based signing or vice-versa (RID, 2004) meaning that there should be one to one correspondence of words. Nielsen, Luetke, and Stryker (2011) found that such English-based signing provided a bridge to developing morphemic awareness necessary for reading. However if the children do not yet know English well enough, basing signing on English results in unnecessarily handicapped communication and therefore teaching (Johnson *et al.*, 1989).

Lack of expertise in Sign Language could be the basis of the teachers' suggestion that only English could be used as the tool for learning abstract content in such subjects as Science. The suggestion ignored the possibility of growth and development to suit any abstract

purpose, which is an important quality of all languages. All languages borrow words or phrases from other languages (Baker, 2008) so ZSL could also borrow from South African Sign Language (SASL) or create signs where necessary. This therefore implies that competent ZSL users should be able to sign any concept expressed in any spoken-written language.

7.3.4 Recognition of achievements

Teaching deaf learners continued to be regarded as hard work. The hard work was in some instances viewed as something recognised by society. In a specialist focus group discussion at school C Tantan said: "When we talk to teachers from the mainstream they say that we must be getting a much higher salary than them otherwise we would have left long ago. They understand that our job is much more difficult than theirs." Zare said in an individual interview at school A, "The community sees us as people who do a challenging job. They ask us how we communicate with them and marvel that they themselves cannot even ask a deaf person where he or she is going and yet we spend the whole day from 8 to 4 communicating with them, giving them instructions. At least socially we are uplifted; you know you are doing something in someone's life." Aripo in a non-specialist focus group at school B said: "When you mix with people out there they comment that you are doing a good job and ask how we communicate with deaf children. They think we are doing something very special." In these instances the teachers perceive themselves as helpers who are getting due recognition from society. Banhai added: "Even if you write on your CV that you are teaching deaf children and also the other language you know is Sign Language, people are impressed." Asked how fluent she was in Sign Language she responded: "It is very bad but I have got the basics" to general laughter from the focus group. The laughter seemed to imply that the group were insiders on something that those outside deaf education were unlikely to know.

An earlier observation that teachers could be prematurely satisfied with weak communication was supported by teachers' acceptance that their mastery of Sign Language was weak. Not only did teachers know that their Sign Language was weak but they also knew that outsiders who recognised their work as good were unaware of this weakness. This latter would explain the laughter by this community of people with inside knowledge of their secret handicap.

7.4 Teacher as martyr

Teachers who narrate their experience of teaching as a punitive chore believe that the teaching of deaf learners is a futile struggle against heavy odds in a rather rigid school environment in which discipline is uncertain because of the learners' disability. The following sections discuss these beliefs.

7.4.1 Myths attracting teachers to deaf education

Some teachers were persuaded to stay in Deaf Education by the myths they had heard about Special Education. Some heard that they would quickly learn some signs which they could use to teach, others heard that they would have less work than in the mainstream. Thole at school C is an example of someone who heard both myths. She, just like Tembo at school B said she had only realised that the children were deaf when she tried to greet them so that she could ask for directions to the school office. Surprised at the children's non-response, Thole thought the children were extremely rude and located the office on her own. She said: "In the office the principal explained to me that all the children could not hear at all. I pointed out that I was not going to be able to teach these children since I did not know how to sign and they did not know how to talk. He told me not to worry as the children would teach me as

they had the Sign Language. He assured me that there was no one on his staff who came to the school already knowing Sign Language. So with that and also encouragement that I got from colleagues here and a friend who had observed someone working with special needs children elsewhere, I was assured that there was less work in Special Education than teaching ordinary children in the mainstream. My colleagues pointed out that I would have a smaller class."

In the principal's encouragement to the teacher to learn from the pupils there is the expectation and acceptance of teacher-pupil role reversal. Implied in this acceptance is a recurrence of misconceptions about the nature of Sign Language such as those cited by Aarons and Reynolds (2003) and Kiyaga and Moores (2009). The principal's assertion that teachers at the school could learn ZSL from their pupils is consistent with a finding by Nziramasanga (1999). It is uncertain whether the deaf children who teach these hearing adults would themselves get adult guidance in their own Sign Language development. The idea of teachers being taught by pupils appears to be based on one of two possible misconceptions. First, it might have been assumed that the deaf children had optimised their own Sign Language development. This is usually not the case. Ninety-five percent of deaf children have hearing parents, while most deaf parents of deaf children are themselves often raised in homes with impoverished parent-child communication (Hauser & Marschark, 2008). It cannot be assumed that either set of parents would be skilled users of Sign Language. By implication, their deaf children cannot be assumed to have optimised their Sign Language development. Second, it might have been assumed that the teachers would only need to learn the most basic Sign Language in order to teach. This would be based on the fallacy that Sign Language is not a real language (Kiyaga & Moores, 2009), as its rich dialects and registers (Aarons & Reynolds, 2003) are underestimated. Similarly assurances that there was less work

in Special Education ignore the more intensive, individualised instruction which should be characteristic of the field. The greater amount and intensity of work is a result of the individual needs, strengths and experiences that interact to produce a population of deaf students that is even more diverse than the population of hearing students (Spencer & Marschark, 2010b). Having been attracted by what seemed to be less work, the teacher soon realised that because of the need to individualise instruction for the deaf learners, there was much more work in the special school than in the mainstream.

7.4.2 Futile Struggle

In addition to individualising instruction for each deaf learner, the teacher had to teach the mainstream curriculum as required by the government (Chief Education Officer, 1989) but does not regard this as feasible or desirable, and so struggles with these onerous tasks. The teacher begins to feel that his or her work is punitive and futile. These sentiments about the curriculum were raised in a specialist focus group Kondas said: "These children are expected to do the same curriculum as those in the mainstream but I think we seem to be teaching too many languages. I suggest we leave Shona out because in any case we have too many subjects and very little time". Zenda added: "I am for the idea of just giving them skills. Some of these children also have learning difficulties. For example some cannot identify 3 three things but we keep forcing them to learn academic material." Chimwe added: "History talks loudly that these children do nothing academically – we haven't seen a single thing being accomplished but we put a time-table on the wall which strictly indicates that after every 30 minutes we should do academic lesson after academic lesson."

In a non-specialist group, Mari said: "I don't think they should be given the same exam. They should learn to a certain level, for example learning to write. Then when the children can

write, we release them to go where … (Rai interjected – home) no, to vocational-technical skills training. This is because now the children can write their names, have basic literacy and numeracy and so on. It is better this way."

Some teachers in the same non-specialist focus group felt that the material that deaf pupils are taught in specific subjects was too much. For example Tinds said: "The Religious and Moral Education syllabus is too diversified as the child is expected to know the whole Bible. I think it is a burden. They should have their own syllabus without too much content." This indicated low expectations for deaf learners because the same syllabus was used by hearing pupils in the mainstream. Related to the issue of too much content in specific subjects was the issue of too many lessons per subject. Teachers pointed out that deaf learners were doing additional subjects such as handicrafts and speech which hearing children in the mainstream did not do (see the section on *Organisation of learning* in Chapter 5). These additional subjects took up time-table slots that would normally have been allocated to mainstream subjects. To compound this unwise decision which took away time for academic learning, teachers were still expected to prepare lessons for all mainstream subjects, including those they would not be able to teach because of time-tabling constraints. In this light teachers began to view their teaching preparations as punitive, futile chores.

Similar objections on using the same national curriculum meant for mainstream schools were raised in a specialist focus group discussion. Nzou said: "Each institution should come up with an institutionally-based syllabus which depends on the skills they can impart. Using the syllabus for normal (hearing) children does not benefit our children." Stick said: "These children should not follow a rigid 30-minute per subject time-table. There should be no time

limit. They should be given open time so that they just master a concept before moving on to the next concept even if this means that I start teaching a concept at 8 am to 10 am, let it be. When we force them to do 30-minute lessons like this they grasp nothing and this only helps those officials who come to inspect us as they find that the children wrote Content, English, Maths and so on. The children surely do not benefit." Grace thought that there should be textbooks specifically for deaf learners. She argued: "I see that there is only one Sign Language book but surely there is need for more pupils' books in Sign Language covering those things that are basic in life. These books would be different from those for a normal school."

In the foregoing, it is evident that many teachers had negative views of deaf people. As a result they did not regard it as useful to continue teaching deaf learners academic subjects to more than a basic level as historically they underperform academically. Various academic subjects were seen as a burden as the deaf were not going to use them anyway because they generally did not go on to high school. The parallels between deafness and intellectual disability that Aarons and Reynolds (2003) also found in their South African study were made more explicit here as the teachers pointed out the futility of continuing to teach deaf learners academic subjects. Teachers argued for emphasis on areas where the children could excel such as in handicraft or technical-vocational subjects in the same way they would for pupils with mental retardation, thereby reinforcing the stereotype of deaf-as-mentally-retarded. Most teachers' advanced the notion of deaf-as-mentally-retarded since they viewed the mainstream academic curriculum used for deaf learners as futile. In light of this, when the teachers advocated for mastery learning as advanced by Carroll (1963) and Guskey (1997) they would appear to be advocating for mastery of low level academic content over longer teaching periods. It therefore appears that the teachers advocated for a mainstream curriculum

which is diluted to suit deaf learners and taught slowly over a longer period of time. Such an approach would be based on the negative stereotype of the abilities of deaf children and is not in the best interests of the deaf learners just as the current approach of teaching for the inspectors which the teachers are decrying. It is difficult to see how either approach could be in the best interests of the teachers.

With regard to the teachers' feelings on the unreasonable requirements to teach a variety of academic subjects using an under-developed Sign Language, they thought that teaching was full of pain and suffering for both the teacher and pupils. Some teachers said they were resigned to the pointlessness of it all and that they continued teaching just for the salary. Chimwe said: "Really there is no job satisfaction, you don't enjoy work. I then just do the job so that at the end of the month I can get something." Banhai said: "We are just whiling up time here because we are not satisfied. To make matters worse the remuneration is not at par with what we do … it is too far below what we put in." This is consistent with Chireshe and Shumba (2011) who found that teachers in Zimbabwe said poor salaries are a challenge resulting in low morale and poor service delivery. In many instances the teacher's work is perceived as being unrecognised especially by government which is the employer. In an individual interview Muzee said: "They (government) should do something because they no longer recognise teachers at special schools. We used to get special responsibility allowances in addition to our salaries, but this has since been stopped." It is noteworthy that one of the teachers referred to the analogy of an input and output processing model which paradoxically suggests a need to recognise the hard work she put in, regardless of the potentially weak output resulting from possibly ineffective communication skills.

7.4.3 Boarding school regimentation

Many teachers viewed the conditions in the institutions as rather rigid and the cause of deaf learners' disliking school thereby making teaching a very difficult. For example Rai at school A said: "We have some very young children in boarding and the time they get up and come to school in the morning is too early. This is bad. If the parents could see this they would withdraw their children because even they cannot do such things. Like now in winter it is tough for children to get out of bed at 4 or 5 am. Even us adults find it difficult, what more of little children? On top of that they then take a cold bath. This is tough for children". Sasa added: "These are some of the things that make children dislike school. Children will begin to associate schooling with getting cold and generally being miserable and so going back to school is like thinking of going back to misery. This affects attitudes in class as well. These children need relaxed conditions for example they should start lessons when it is warm, they should not feel the pain of being in school." One teacher at the same school argued that since deaf children were not able to read, they should not be kept in class for long periods of time and even being asked to come back for study periods in the afternoons or early evenings. Tinds in the non-specialist focus group at the same school said: "They should be taught for brief periods and not pin them down the whole day to the extent of even giving them study periods when they do not know what it is they are supposed to be doing in the study periods." These suggestions are contrary to the expectation that hearing children in the mainstream have equally long periods in class and so reflected low expectations for the deaf learners. However the issues about relaxed conditions were valid as learning should be fun.

Many teachers in the non-specialist focus group discussion said that the regimentation at school A was not good for very young, primary schoolchildren. Discussing the arrangement

that children's snacks sent from home were kept by the boarding master and boarding mistress Reva said: "It is not good to wait to provide these children with their snacks only at specified times once or twice a week as this means that they go hungry even when the parent has sent food. There is also need to begin to have parents' visiting days. I mean for the whole term a child doesn't see his or her parent and yet we go and visit our own children once or twice a term in boarding schools." Other teachers in the same group went to the extent of likening the situation in the residential special school to imprisonment. For example Rai said: "These deaf children are not free to tell us that they do not want to learn for such long periods of time in classrooms and in this way they are like prisoners". Sasa added: "And this makes us feel like prison warders." (Laughter from the group). When they were asked what they were laughing about, Sasa said: "You are aware that prison warders simply follow their bosses' instructions? That is exactly how it is for us, because the children are not free to open up to us about their feelings. An example is what has already been said about food – they cannot open up to say food is too little, they just eat. Even if they were to tell me as their teacher, there is nothing I can do."

The shortage of food, early hours, strictness and rigidity described as characteristic of the residential institution were arguably forms of child abuse. Abuse is considered as part of normal childrearing practices in some cultures, for example O'Brian and Lau (1995) found that in Hong Kong children are verbally abused and publicly humiliated by their parents as part of the child rearing practices. In the residential institution for the deaf such practices as getting up early were probably considered normal childrearing within the institutions. All children are prone to abuse but the literature has shown that children with disabilities are at increased risk (Cherlin, 2008; Cross, Kaye, & Ratnofsky, 2003). Children with disabilities were mostly abused by paid staff or volunteers (Sobsey, 2003) in what Marchant (2001)

called extra-familial situations such as residential schools. Residential institutions can be high-risk environments where children with disabilities are mostly isolated and lack advocates to speak for them when they are abused as shown by the teachers' assertion that even if the deaf children told them about abuse or neglect, there was nothing that they as teachers could do to help. The teachers' helplessness if not complicity in abuse is reminiscent of the notion of total institutions as advanced by Goffman (1968) and suggests a comparison with other asylums such as prisons or psychiatric hospitals. Foucault (1979) said that timetables enable a temporal enclosure that controls bodily activities by appearing to prevent idleness while exhaustively using time. The regimented existence of the deaf learners led the teachers to view schooling as incarceration in which they had the reluctant rank of prison warders exercising what Foucault (2007) called disciplinary power over the inmates in the institution.

7.4.4 Discipline[21] and punishment

In the non-specialist focus group discussion at school B, the issue of discipline and punishment was raised as a question for me as a facilitator. Dhongeri asked: "Can you assist us with ways in which to discipline these children, because like children, they do misbehave sometimes. Now for us to cane them, it does not feel right. It doesn't give a good impression to be seen disciplining a deaf person." While I was thinking of a way to respond to this question, Chingai added: "To add to this these children do not have respect for us. One can even say to you '*pfutseki*'." (This is a Shona adaptation of the Afrikaans term '*voetsek*' meaning 'get lost'). Aripo added: "Those with some speech simply address me as Aripo instead of Mrs. Aripo."

[21] The term discipline as used in this study refers to the regulation of behaviour. The title 'Discipline and Punishment' is derived from Foucault's book of the same title.

In an another focus group discussion the issue of deaf children lacking good manners had been raised as a disciplinary problem, but was challenged by Kondas who said: “On good manners – isn’t it their language? Just like in English where everyone is referred to as “you” or in Ndebele where everyone is referred to as *“wena”* – I think it is a language or culture difference rather than lack of good manners.” This explanation of the use of the honorific plural in some languages such as Shona, and not others such as English and Ndebele is used to address the issue of lack of respect brought up in the non-specialist focus group. This is not to belie the fact that deaf children can and do engage in misbehaviour of various kinds such as the five that Scheetz (2004, p. 58) listed on the basis of Charles’s (1999) descriptions: aggression, immorality, defiance, disruptions and ‘goofing off’. With regards to punishments for these offences, the Zimbabwean government’s "Public Service (Disciplinary) Regulations" 2000) stipulate that only the principal can inflict corporal punishment with a light cane on the buttocks for boys and on the palms for girls. However as Chemhuru (2010) found, corporal punishment has been a conventional method of disciplining children for a long time in Zimbabwe by most teachers and so has become difficult to eliminate from many classrooms. In concurrence Musengi and Shumba (2012) found that deaf children in Zimbabwe reported that teachers administered corporal punishment on them. What is noteworthy about the question on how to discipline deaf learners is that it was predicated on the focus group’s idea that it did not feel right to be seen disciplining a deaf person. The inference here was that the deaf learners were seen as so unusual, so different that they deserved to have their behaviour regulated in a way that takes into account this difference. This appears to be consistent with Scheetz (2004) who advocated that the nature of the punishment and the intent of the teacher’s message had to be clearly communicated to deaf children in order for discipline to be effective. She argued that deaf children may not make the appropriate associations to understand the precise dimensions of their misconduct because

they might have missed the subtle communication cues and reprimands that hearing children get through incidental learning which help in forming cause-effect relationships. Principals who discipline deaf children should therefore ensure that the children understand the cause-effect relationships of misconduct and punishment otherwise punishment risks becoming ineffective and therefore abusive.

Failing to discipline them solely on the grounds that they were deaf and therefore disabled was likely to result in escalation of the misconduct and could arguably be considered another form of abuse, neglect. Scheetz (2004) advocated a proactive regulatory strategy in which there is a clear and firm rule system in place with opportunities for discussion so that the child's independence is fostered within set behavioural limits. With this kind of proactive disciplining the deaf children develop self-control and do not become dependent on their teachers or parents for decision-making.

7.5 Teacher as surrogate parent

In the surrogate parent narrative the quest to help deaf children goes beyond the normal *in loco parentis* role played by colleagues who teach non-disabled pupils. This is because many teachers said some parents of these deaf children have poor parenting skills which pull the children more towards them as teachers, and pushing them away from their parents in what Schein (1989) called centripetal and centrifugal forces. The following sections discuss the teachers' views of the help they offer to these children and what pulls the children to the teachers and pushes them away from their biological parents.

7.5.1 In loco parentis

From mainstream education the teacher has always known that she had an *in loco parentis* role to in the education of her pupils but this role has now become magnified in the work of charity that she is undertaking in the residential special school. For example Grace in the specialist focus group at school C said: "At this school we are different from mainstream schoolteachers in that I have the child full-time. I am more involved with the child and as a result I have more chances of seeing problems such as illnesses that the deaf children may have." In a non-specialist focus group discussion at school B, Dhongeri said: "Some parents were saying to me at the beginning of the term 'I've brought your kids, how do you survive them?' They are the biological parents of the children yet they say to me 'your kids.' This is why I stay on, I mean if the parent is not for the child, then who shall be for the child if I leave and go to the mainstream schools? Here I am really a foster parent and I accept that." Dhongeri said that it was ironic that it was the biological parent who said 'your kids' to her, a professional teacher. Another teacher in that group, Chingai, gave the example of a deaf learner in her class who was discriminated against by his parents in favour of his hearing twin brother. She said: "It is only the deaf boy who is consistently sent to go and help the grandparents with farming in the village every school-holiday. During the few days that the deaf twin is in town with his parents, he is the one who does all the domestic chores as his hearing twin is excused on the basis that he is busy studying." This might show that the parents did not expect much from the deaf twin academically. It would appear that because the teachers have the deaf children for longer in the boarding school, they are more involved with them, expect more from them academically and even the biological parents have come to accept the teachers as guardians or foster parents in their absence. Teachers also seem to take their *in loco parentis* role as an integral part of their teaching without questioning it or

considering ways in which they could involve the biological more in the school-life of the deaf child.

7.5.2 Communication as a centripetal force[22]

In addition to being with the deaf children longer, some teachers regarded their communicative abilities as better than those of the parents and saw this as a force pulling deaf children towards them as teachers. In the specialist focus group discussion at school A Zenda said: "The parents of these children do not know Sign Language and may sign differently from how we sign here at school. At least we are better here at school because we get assistance from those teachers who have been here longer and we can make reference to the dictionary to see how things are signed. But not the parents – they are likely to be just contriving signs and having a language barrier at home." Teachers regard themselves as communicating better because they use proper Sign Language, rather than the home signs used by the biological parents. This improved communication is said to help in fostering attachment between the deaf children and their teachers. Some teachers believed that they were playing a closer *in loco parentis* role to the children because of the unusual mode of communication required by the deaf children. While the centripetal force described by Schein (1989) refers to a force pulling Deaf people toward each other because of shared experiences the current centripetal force is perceived by teachers as pulling deaf pupils towards them as teachers with whom they have the shared affiliation of language.

[22] The idea of communication as a centripetal force and a centrifugal force was mooted in Schein's (1989) model on the formation of Deaf communities.

7.5.3 Communication as a centrifugal force

In the same way that some teachers believed a force was pulling deaf children towards them, other teachers believed that there was a force pushing deaf children away from their biological parents due to communication challenges which lead to isolation of the deaf child at home. In many cases parents are reportedly unable to communicate with their own deaf children. Aripo from the non-specialist focus group discussion at school B said: "Most of these parents are uncertain how to communicate with their deaf children. So for them it is better when the HI child is out of sight, away in their rural home. I mean some of them, not all of them. There are some who really love their children but there are others who have a negative attitude." In a non-specialist focus group at school A Tinds said: "One parent of a 13-year-old girl in my class came to fetch her for the school holidays and when I finished discussing with her about the welfare of the child she asked me to help her communicate with her daughter. I was shocked and asked her how she was communicating with her at home and she said the child mostly played on her own. In further discussions with this parent it emerged that she had sent her daughter to school only to relieve herself of having around her a child with whom she could not communicate. She said she did not expect her daughter to learn anything much beyond learning to write her name. I went on to tell her that not only could the child already write her name, but also she was one of the high-achievers from whom much was expected in the school. The parent was surprised." From this it can be deduced that the teacher had higher expectations than the parent who had been unable to properly communicate with her own daughter for the past 13 years. In light of the parent's request for help from the teacher it was also apparent that the parent recognises the need to learn the unusual mode of communication existing between the teacher and her daughter. This realisation by the parent presented an opportunity overlooked by the teacher to help the

parent communicate with her own daughter so that more of the foster parent responsibilities could be shifted back to the biological parents.

7.5.4 Parents as impediments

Some teachers view the parents of the deaf children they teach as impediments in the teacher's path to success. For example in addition to Zenda's contribution on how parents used signs that are different from those used in school, Nyepo said: "When their child comes to school and comes across our signs here, the child is likely to become very confused. What was being done at home and what is being done at school are likely to be different things. So this may increase the language barrier as it becomes difficult to eradicate what the child has been taught at home." Home signs were therefore viewed as impeding the smooth communication which should otherwise take place had proper Sign Language been introduced at home.

Other teachers viewed many parents as ill-equipped to fulfil the parental role meaningfully. For example Chingai in the non-specialist focus group discussion at school B said: "Most of these parents who come here are divorced mothers. I think the divorces have something to do with giving birth to a child who cannot speak and so the husband says the disability has nothing to do with his family lineage. Now for the single mother to pay school fees, get bus-fare to collect the child from school and so on … it becomes difficult." In a specialist focus group at school C the issue of parents' poverty is raised by Tantan who said: "Most of the money that is used to run this school comes from the government's department of Social Welfare and foreign donors because a lot of the parents of these children are very poor." In that discussion, Nzou disagreed and said: "Parents are not poor but they pretend to be poor. When they bring their HI children here, they want government and donors to pay the fees

because the child is disabled and yet the same parents can afford to send two or three other non-disabled children to expensive schools. Many parents just do not want to be associated with disability that is all." The teachers were saying that some parents might be ill-equipped to fulfil the parental role for various reasons. First, they cannot communicate with their child. Second, they sometimes lack the emotional support of a loving spouse in order to cope with the needs of the child with a disability. Third, they might not have the financial and material resources necessary to take care of the deaf child. Finally they might have the necessary financial and material resources but might also have negative attitudes towards disability. These negative attitudes could preclude the use of those resources for the benefit of the deaf child. Overall the teachers blamed many parents as ill-equipped to fulfil their parental role and said that this leaves the teachers as surrogate parents to the deaf learners. Teachers' views were limited to blaming parents and there was no indication of how the teachers may extend their role in order to support parents through early intervention and counselling.

7.6 Conclusion

Teachers' explanations of their experiences were configured into temporal-ordered narratives. In the first narrative of the heroic teacher some teachers had a mystical commitment in which their teaching was commissioned and guided by a divine being. Other teachers had a secular commitment which seemed to be informed by socialisation into Shona culture. For teachers with either a mystical or a secular commitment, teaching appeared to have offered them opportunities to commit to a cause for the less privileged. These heroic teachers initially struggled to communicate with the deaf learners as well as with their emotions: despaired, loss of confidence in their ability to teach and in some cases became depressed. After varying periods of time ranging from a few weeks to a few months, the teachers felt victorious, they

could now communicate. In the second narrative the teacher is a handicapped helper in that like the heroic teacher, she is attracted by the need to help but perceived various impediments outside herself which restrict the extent to which she could properly help. The impediments aside, the helper's achievements were recognised by others who did not realise her weaknesses. The helper received these accolades but knew that her communication with the learners was weak. The third narrative is about the teacher undertaking the teaching of deaf children as a punitive chore. The teacher is a martyr. Some of these teachers were attracted to deaf education by myths about Special Needs Education. It did not take long for the teachers to realise that these were myths. Various mainstream curriculum requirements and other measures to regulate teaching in the school for the deaf were soon perceived as futile because these learners are not mainstream hearing learners. In addition the teachers felt complicit in the regimentation in the boarding school but were helpless to rectify the situation. They did not have a say in administrative matters and were uncertain how to discipline or punish these children with disabilities when they did misbehave. In the fourth and final narrative the teachers firmly viewed themselves as surrogate parents to their deaf pupils. The children are in an institution with no ready access to their biological parents, in some cases for the whole term. In this situation the teachers see to the child's every need and are aware that they are close to these children because they also have better communication with them than do many of the parents. In many instances the biological parents can hardly communicate with their own child and this draws the deaf child even closer to the adults with whom they can communicate. In some cases the parents are viewed as an impediment to the full development of the deaf child but the teachers do not take this as an opportunity to assist them improve their parenting skills.

These four broad narratives are collective stories intended to provide insight into the beliefs and collective experience of hearing teachers in the residential schools for the deaf. As has already been stated, they do not correspond precisely to the accounts given by individual teachers. The next chapter complements this story approach by discussing the specific concepts of individual teachers' knowledge and beliefs about deafness and deaf pupils' ability to learn in the special residential schools.

CHAPTER 8

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON DEAF PUPILS' ABILITY TO LEARN

8.1 Introduction

In addition to 'storying' the 49 educators' individual or focus group interview data as reported in Chapter 7, a concept approach was used in this chapter to report data on teachers' knowledge and beliefs about deaf pupils' ability to learn. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 208) concurred with this strategy as they stated that good explanations combine story approaches and concept approaches. This chapter presents and analyses specific concepts and themes which emerged in the analysis of focus group and individual interview data on the question of deaf pupils' ability to learn. Two major categories emerged: *Views on deafness* and *Views on language.* These were used to organise and present various emerging sub-themes in the first two parts of this chapter. *Deaf pupils' ability to learn* was a theme derived directly from a research question and was used to organise the final part of the chapter as a sought theme. Figure 8.1 summarises the main themes in this chapter. Detailed excerpts from the interviews were used to illustrate themes and as in the previous chapter, the teachers had pseudonyms and letters were used in place of the schools' real names to protect participant identities and confidentiality as well as maintain the integrity of each institution as far as possible. The interviews were conducted in English, but many of the participants would code-switch and speak in Shona. Excerpts from the interviews were therefore largely in English, as the Shona was translated into English (see chapter 4 for translation details). Where particular Shona words used by participants could not be fully captured in an English translation however, the Shona words were used verbatim in italics, with the closest English meaning placed in brackets immediately afterwards.

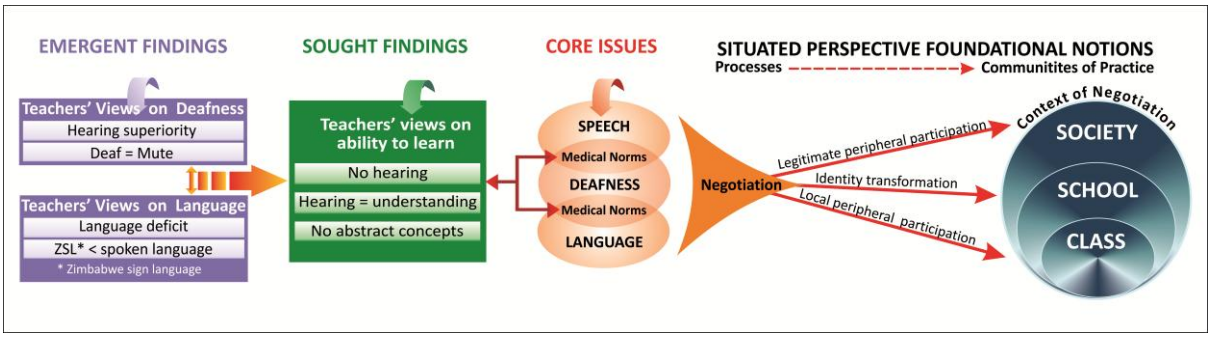


Figure 8.1: Themes of teacher knowledge and beliefs about deaf children's ability to learn

Figure 8.1 shows that teachers have a hearing attitude towards deafness as they view deaf children primarily as mute. This hearing view of deafness is reciprocally influenced by the teachers' views that ZSL is a deficient language which impedes the spoken language development of deaf children. Both these teachers' views of deafness and of language reciprocally interact with how the teachers perceive deaf children's ability to learn as concrete. The following sections elaborate on these themes.

8.2 Views on Deafness

Interviews with specialist and non-specialist teachers at each of the three schools raised various views on deafness. Many of these views emerged from focus group interviews and were elaborated in individual interviews. The views are therefore presented as data from group interviews while the individual interview data are used to complement this by exploring similar and divergent issues. For ease of presentation and analysis, data are clustered into the following themes: *Hearing attitude towards deaf learners* and *Deaf as mute*.

8.2.1 Hearing attitudes towards deaf learners

The specialist focus groups at the three schools had varying attitudes towards teaching deaf learners. These views were all presumptuous[23] in that they appeared to take hearing norms and values as universal and used these to judge the behaviour of deaf learners. In speaking about the need for deaf children to learn spoken language, the specialists at school B were particularly patronising in assuming that deaf people had to join hearing people. For example Moyo said, "It's unfortunate they are a minority group. I don't think they understand it up to now, but that is the fact. 'If you can't beat them join them.' It's the deaf who want to join the hearing world. We are so many of us that we cannot bend over to learn this Sign Language". This specialist's sentiments could be considered disrespectful[24] as they appear to be based on the compelling[25] assumption that minorities want to or have to join the larger group. This assimilationist attitude assumed that in order to survive, deaf pupils had to learn hearing norms, values and spoken languages. This stance did not accommodate divergence and difference as it depicted cultures and languages as if they were in conflict or competition. This implies that the culture and languages of minority groups were perceived as unable to coexist with those of the larger group. This was openly patronising because the teachers who belong to the hearing group believed the teaching of their group's language, and the eradication of Deaf culture were the only means by which deaf children could survive. This group's erroneous[26] mindset was also evident in their response to the item comparing the academic performance of hearing and deaf learners, Nyarai said, "Their (deaf children's academic) performance is not bad. I actually think they strive much more than the hearing

[23] The original adjective 'patronising' was replaced by 'presumptuous'.
[24] The original adjective 'arrogant' was replaced by 'disrespectful'.
[25] The original adjective 'tyrannical' was replaced by 'compelling'.
[26] The original adjective 'prejudiced' was replaced by 'erroneous'. All four original adjectives in footnotes 23 to 26 were adjudged to be 'too strong' by an anonymous reviewer of this chapter. They are recorded in footnotes here only for purposes of meta-analysis, discussion and recommendations later in Chapter 10. The replacement adjectives were selected from synonyms I adjudged to be less emotive using Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases.

students. They really try their best". In agreement Gomba explained, "They are doing very well considering that they learn the language at school." In this instance the specialists' acceptance of deaf learners' academic underachievement showed the specialists had set a low ceiling, and had low expectations of deaf learners. This attitude underestimates deaf children's ability to learn and leads to patronising benevolence which was quite pronounced in the specialist focus group discussion at school C.

In the specialist focus group discussion at school C deafness was called a silent disability which needed tolerance. For example Mbara said: "Deafness is a silent disability. They (deaf children) may seem to annoy you for example calling you a BOY-TEACHER (mouthed and signed) but you need to just tolerate them." Tantan added in agreement: "They need patience." In addition Stick explained, "To be a teacher here (at the school for deaf) you need to show them love, more love than a mainstream teacher shows hearing children." The 'silent disability' sentiments could be viewed as patronising because they construed the deaf child's situation from a hearing person's point of view. Hearing teachers viewed silence as an undesirable characteristic of deafness, the reason for their calling it a disability. Similarly the call to be tolerant of deaf children interpreted what the children said from the hearing teacher's point of view. BOY-TEACHER which is signed and mouthed need not be demeaning from a Deaf culture and Sign Language view where it simply describes that the teacher is about the same age as the boys. There was therefore no need to tolerate the term but to accept it as coming from another culture and language. While being patient and showing love to the learners is the embodiment of professional virtue in teaching, if this was done in an atmosphere where the deaf learners were not accepted, but merely tolerated, then the benevolence becomes patronising. The implication is that deaf learners were perceived as inferior or abnormal. This was contrary to Grace's advice to see the deaf children as normal.

Responding to the item on what advice she would give to a new teacher, Grace in the same specialist group said: “Don’t be afraid of the children. They are just normal, they are not harsh. Some new teachers did not stay long as they left the school fearing the deaf children.” What this teacher did not realise by her saying the children were normal is that she focussed on the negative things she said they do not do: they were not harsh or violent. Taken to its logical conclusion, the notion of considering the deaf children as normal must not be restricted to the negatives that they do not evince. Similarly, because fear is not normally a hearing adult’s response to children, saying teachers should not be afraid of deaf children is a negative notion of normality indicating patronising benevolent attitudes towards deafness. One participant in the specialist focus group discussion at school A alluded to a more positive notion of normality.

In the specialist focus group discussion at school A, Chimwe appeared to acknowledge the normality of deafness by observing: “Making specialist teachers of the deaf proficient in Sign Language should be a prerequisite before being awarded a diploma or degree in Special Education.” Deafness could be perceived as normal in this sentiment because it is the teacher who needs to master the deaf children’s Sign Language before he or she is allowed to teach. Had the other group participants believed Sign Language was a real language, Chimwe’s sentiment would have been that deaf children are normal as they just have a different language to their teacher. However the same participant did concur with her group that Sign Language was a defective language (see 8.3.2 on *Mythical Views of Sign Language*). This meant that even though the participant’s attitude was positive as it was child-centred because it is the teacher rather than the pupil who needed to change, it could be regarded as a patronising mindset in that the teacher is expected to master children’s defective language. The children were therefore not considered as normal because their language was not normal.

The attitude of viewing deaf children as normal was not widespread in this specialist focus group discussion, thereby not only making Chimwe's contribution isolated but also making the same participant eventually fall into line with the rest of the group in the continuing discussion. The rest of the group continued to make contributions which confirmed the hearing world's perspectives of deafness. For example Tema said: "They don't have basic good manners which would enable them to interact with others. They just call everyone 'you' including adults. This lack of respect becomes very clear when they meet others who can talk". After various examples of deaf children's disrespect had been raised in the group, this group concurrence was briefly disrupted when one participant disputed deaf children's lack of socially acceptable manners (see 7.4.4 on *Discipline and Punishment* in Chapter 7 for excerpt). The group laughed when Kondas disputed and explained that not all languages used the honorific 'you'. The laughter probably indicated that the group was embarrassed by the realisation that their example of bad manners was inappropriate. The laughter was therefore followed by an alternative example of deaf children's bad manners. Rim said, "I want to correct you there because you can't just say it is their culture or language. When children see an adult carrying a heavy burden normally they offer to help. They (deaf children) can't do such things as they just stare as you struggle with your burden." Kondas replied, "Even our own children at home nowadays don't offer to help adults. That is the way things are these days and in any case some of these deaf children do offer to help. You know, sometimes those who don't are afraid of breaking the school rule that they should not go to the teachers' cottages". The argument was set to continue with examples and counter-examples and was unresolved when the group moved on to the next issue.

The foregoing argument is important in that it casts light on the two attitudes earlier discussed. On the one hand most specialist teachers in this group discussion used hearing norms and values to judge the behaviour of deaf children as deficient. These children who were perceived as deficient needed to learn hearing norms and values so that their deficit behaviour stopped. On the other hand, one specialist teacher resisted this and recast deaf learners as normal within another culture and even within the same hearing culture. Within Deaf culture, they had been able to learn to sign YOU just as English and Ndebele speakers would say that pronoun in their own languages. Just as the English or Ndebele are not deficient or disrespectful by using the pronoun 'you' deaf children are also neither deficient, nor disrespectful by signing and mouthing YOU or BOY-TEACHER. Even when judged from the perspective of the same hearing culture, deaf children are also behaving just like other children who hear in terms of courtesy in helping adults. In a study of teachers of hearing children in South Africa and Gambia, Jessop and Penny (1998) found that teachers had considerable nostalgia for an imagined golden age in which children respected their elders. The teachers who thought that their deaf pupils were disrespectful may also be imagining such a golden age. However singling out deaf children and attributing their deficient behaviour solely to deafness, rather than youthfulness was prejudicial and discriminatory. The non-specialist teachers' focus group discussions were permeated by the attitude that deaf children were deficient and therefore needed to learn hearing norms in order to become normal.

In the non-specialists' focus group discussion at school C, Mugwa explained that teaching of deaf learners was more labour-intensive than teaching hearing learners. She said: "You don't just give instructions without follow-up to check. You also have to walk up to each one and physically touch them so that they pay attention". Some of the activities said to intensify the

teacher's work could be considered as part of a different culture. This implies that the teachers were not appreciating cultural diversity. In apparent ignorance of the existence of different norms in Deaf culture the non-specialist focus group discussion at school A, was agreed that the children lacked respect. Mari said: "Those of them with some speech just say 'hallo Mari' (name altered). They don't know enough to show respect. They also just touch you and don't consider that you are their teacher." This is similar to the 'lack of respect' sentiment disputed by Kondas in the specialist focus group at the same school. Physically touching someone might be unacceptable in certain cultures such as Shona culture but is a norm in Deaf culture where it is usually a necessary way of drawing that person's attention. Generally the non-specialists' sentiments showed that their attitude was judgmental of the children's behaviour from hearing culture, rather than the children's Deaf culture.

The non-specialist focus group discussions were similar to the specialist discussions in that patronising benevolence and low expectations were also evident in their non-specialist focus group discussions. Muza at school C said, "Teaching these children from 8 am to 1 pm is too much for them. This is why they get bored with lessons and ask to be excused to go to the toilet frequently, and either stay there for long or don't come back. Why are we treating them like children in the mainstream?" Nhema in that group added: "Academically the H.I.[27] are not as gifted as the hearing. They are behind … but just say 'let us draw' and lo and behold, they are elated. In Art and such areas that do not require thinking they are okay." The patronising attitudes in these two contributions were quite strong. Muza did not expect the deaf learners to be treated like children in the mainstream because as Nhema explained, they were not as academically gifted, they were behind. These non-specialist teachers considered

[27] 'H.I.' or 'HI' is an abbreviation for 'Hearing Impaired' which many of the participants used in place of the term deaf. In all verbatim excerpts the abbreviation is used as it is.

the deaf children as inferior learners who would do well in areas that she mistakenly regarded as requiring thinking. The attitude that deaf learners are inferior is patronising as are the low expectations about the learners. Such attitudes evince a lack of adequate introspection on the part of the teachers. They correctly observed that the learners were bored with lessons but did not reflect on the causes of this boredom, outside the learner. Saying they were not as gifted as hearing learners is an innate explanation of ability as giftedness is innate. By stating that certain academic areas did not require thinking, the teachers revealed that they were unaware that 'thinking' is required in such areas as Art as well, as Armstrong (2009) demonstrated using Gardner's notion of multiple intelligences. Lack of introspection inhibited the teachers from questioning their own teaching and communication approaches.

The individual interviews revealed a continuation of patronising benevolent attitudes which showed insufficient reflection on the part of both specialist and non-specialist teachers. Dude, a specialist at school B said: "They need to be taught everything, you can't take things for granted with them. ...with these you have to follow up constantly." This echoed what Moyo in the group discussion at the same school said about the deaf learners learning everything they know from the teacher who takes conscious effort. These teacher-centred attitudes took the deaf learners as blank slates upon which the benevolent teachers wrote whatever they wanted. Nothing in the children's background was regarded as useful because they were assumed to have no prior learning. It also became apparent from these sentiments that the learners were not to be trusted to do their own learning without the teacher consciously teaching them. This subordinated deaf children who could not be taken as peers or normal learners who could discover things or construct their own knowledge.

In addition to the patronising subordination of deaf learners evident in the foregoing, the non-specialist interviews revealed attitudes of low expectations for deaf people in the long-term. In a non-specialist individual interview, Mazambara said, "Our streets are already full of 'the deafs' selling cellphone airtime vouchers and many other things. They are not arrested by the police because they are disabled and this is the only way they can survive. In any case if they were to arrest them, how would they communicate with them? They just let them be on the streets." The import of this discussion was that there were low expectations for deaf people even after school. The attitude was that deaf people were destined to become either street vendors or beggars because not hearing limits their means of earning a living to this low level. Ironically the teacher saw the language barrier between the police and deaf vendors or beggars as something that was to the deaf beggars' advantage as the police would not arrest them for such minor offences in order to avoid the bother of having to find ways of communicating with them. Overall, these attitudes complement the attitudes of the specialist teachers who viewed deaf learners as inferior and are generally part of a view of deafness as pathology or deficiency, rather than normality. Teachers' attitudes towards deafness as either normality or deficiency have implications on the importance they attach to speech and the teaching of articulation to deaf children as discussed in the next section.

8.2.2 Deaf as mute: discordant speech is better than silence

The specialist and non-specialist group and individual interviews persistently raised the significance of deaf children's inability to talk, and the importance of learning to talk. The first thing that the teachers noticed about deaf children was usually their inability to talk. In the specialist focus group discussion at school B, Gwara's explanation of what motivated him to come and teach deaf learners was that he had been inspired to get specialist training so that

he could find ways of helping a girl at his mainstream school who could not talk. Gwara said: "I trained at … (name withheld) and after my training I taught at (name of mainstream school withheld). At this school there happened to be a girl who could not talk. She started attending grade one at that school where I was teaching… I said hey how am I going to help this child who is deaf?" Just as Gwara focused first on the deaf girl's inability to talk, the primacy of talking was repeated in this specialist focus group discussion. Moyo said: "Any deaf child who can try to say something, even in discord, people will wait and say lets listen, what is he saying?" The specialists argued that if deaf learners just learnt Sign Language, it is only their teachers who would understand them as no one else would have time for them. Mavhu explained, "It's only us the educators who will learn this Deaf language because we want to do something with them. The rest of the people will think they are mad and they won't have time for them and they won't get jobs no matter what you do. Anybody who wants someone to do Accounts won't take a deaf person who cannot speak no matter how clever because the deaf person will need an aide to explain the Accounts he has done. He cannot tell the rest of us what he has done". In discussing the primacy of speech none of the specialists at school B explicitly mentioned the outcomes of the articulation training that they did. However the reference to discordant speech being better than silence might be an indicator of the low outcomes expected in articulation training. The teachers in general mostly focussed on the importance of learning to speak in order to be included in speaking society, in what Knoors and Marschark (2012) called the social desire for deaf children to eventually integrate fully into the larger society.

In the other two specialist teachers' focus group discussions the teachers were unenthusiastic about teaching deaf children to speak as they cited the end result as unsatisfactory. At school C, the lack of enthusiasm for speech teaching was because the results of speech training and

auditory training were disappointing. Nzou said: “None of the children even with training can produce understandable speech”. In support Stick said: “Too few of them understand if you only speak to them without signing.” Tantan added, “There is a big difference between what you put in and what you get out.” These teachers used an input-output model to determine that the time they spent on articulation training was not worth it.

Lack of appropriate equipment was given as a reason for unsatisfactory outcomes of speech teaching. Grace observed: “Many of these children can be taught to speak but we don’t have the necessary equipment. If only government could take things seriously and provide auditory and speech trainers.” Even though the participant believed many deaf children could be taught to speak, she said that the lack of equipment precluded this. In an individual interview Svayaz, a specialist teacher at the same school said: “We don’t have enough hearing aids for all our pupils. In the past every child had a hearing aid, now the donors have stopped donating and we don’t have any more”. He explained that there used to be a teacher dedicated to teaching speech, but now the school had no one to do this. Asked why the school no longer had anyone, he said: “It was just a flop and yet we are saying we want this child to get into our system to talk like anyone. Let me give you an example, you know … (name of deaf individual who can speak withheld)? You have talked to him, yes? That was speech training which developed him to where he is today. It is because there was speech training in this school. But today … rot!” Svayaz however contradicted the importance he placed on speech when he later talked about deaf children’s inability to speak: “They don’t have time to gossip with anyone because they can’t talk. That is why they are so hard-working because they just get to their work and start working, no talking.” (Laughter). The laughter may have indicated that he meant to be flippant otherwise his sentiment, like that expressed by one non-specialist,

finds unlikely advantages to being deaf and contradicted what he had said earlier about the importance of speech.

The specialists at school A mentioned speech in relation to a few exceptional children whom they said could speak the local Shona language. Rims said: “In my class I have two kids with whom I can converse in Shona. They have their own hearing aids which they also use at home, and I think at home they talk a lot with their families.” In this outstanding example of speech use, it is noteworthy that the non-specialists attributed the success not to themselves in the school, but to the availability of privately owned hearing-aids which these exceptional children could therefore take home. This meant that these few children had uninterrupted, consistent hearing-aid use even within the family, something that most deaf learners did not have as they must leave the school’s hearing aids when they go home for holidays. Inconsistent hearing aid use was not raised as a challenge to learning speech in any of the other interviews. This could indicate that the teachers were now accustomed to the school’s hearing aids being left behind during holidays and so regarded this as normal.

In the non-specialists’ focus group discussions speech was mostly discussed in the context of something missing from among the learners, a defect to marvel at. At school A, Tinds said: “Just imagine teaching a child who does not hear and does not speak!” Thole at school C explained her first day at the special school in these terms: “When I arrived here for the first time all the teachers were in a meeting. The pupils were playing outside and when I greeted them they did not respond. I was surprised. When I eventually saw the principal after the meeting, I asked him how I was going to teach them since I couldn’t sign and the children couldn’t speak”. Almost invariably, in referring to these deaf children, the non-specialist

teachers referred to them as children who could not speak or talk. In one case the deaf pupils were reported as wanting to conceal this inability to express themselves through speech. Mugwa, in the non-specialist group at school C observed that whenever she tried to sign to deaf children at a public event such as a sports meeting involving hearing pupils, "They (deaf pupils) rush to sign 'I-KNOW, I-KNOW' when they don't understand because they don't want it known that they cannot speak. They don't want the others staring at them." This indicated that the deaf learners were self-conscious about their inability to speak which they did not want publicised.

The issue of teaching speech to the deaf learners was generally raised by the non-specialists as a novelty, but was not evaluated in the same way as the specialists. The lack of speech was mentioned as something deaf children wanted to hide from the public. Articulation training had become something that they now did as part of their duties, and something their colleagues at mainstream schools did not do. The non-specialists at school C said they were now doing specialised activities they would not normally do in a mainstream school for hearing learners. Muza explained: "We also engage the children in speech activities such as mouth and tongue exercises". It is the novelty of teaching someone to speak which made these non-specialist teachers special as it was something that was generally not carried out by other teachers in mainstream schools for hearing children. The non-specialists did not evaluate their work but were proud to demonstrate that they were engaged in speech teaching, a scientific specialty that was part of their duties at the special school. The novelty of the scientific specialty had not been worn out by specialist training and experience.

In light of the differences between the specialists and non-specialists it is possible to conclude that specialist training could make one enthusiastic about the importance of speech. It was clear that exposure to orally-inclined specialist training was necessary to make the teacher enthusiastic about the primacy of speech. This is confirmed by the fact that otherwise the non-specialists would have been as enthusiastic about the importance of speech as some of the specialists. However even though some of these specialists said speech was primary, most of them pointed out the obstacles in the teaching of speech and were not enthusiastic about teaching deaf children speech. In contrast, although one principal also pointed out obstacles in speech teaching, he was convinced these could be overcome.

In an individual interview the principal of school B appreciated the specialist training he had received and how it had enabled him to understand the speech challenges of deaf children. He said: "When I first came here I was surprised that there are people who talk like this – the voices! I had the questions: why is it that they cannot talk? Why is it that they cannot hear? If they cannot speak and hear what has that got to do with their doing badly in class? Specialist training opened me up as I now knew where the problem was, where the speech was". The principal added that the children do well in speech teaching if they start at a young age. "If we could start from when the child is very young, we know they can master spoken language like other children. However we are getting the children when they are a little too old at four or five years when we need to catch them at three months. If only we had the resources we would fit babies with hearing aids straight away so that when they start school they already have the language." The principal was alluding to the importance of what Fox, Nelson, and Zeanah (2013) called a sensitive period of development, which in this case is the window of opportunity for language development which, if missed, leads to less than optimal speech and language development. Asked to judge the success of speech teaching in light of the

constraints he had mentioned, the principal said: “If we implement oralism with serious teachers, using teachers who cannot sign completely and who insist on children speaking to them, truly you will be surprised. The children will speak a lot more but of course they won’t leave out signing. They will always sign but when you talk, they will talk. This will give them a choice in life. This is unlike if you start early on just signing, nothing will come out. You will see that you have killed the children”. The principal had a strong commitment to teaching speech as he was convinced that deaf children could learn to speak quite well despite the late intervention and limited technical resources.

The principal’s strong commitment to teaching speech is a result of his own experience of teaching at the school. He recounted as his biggest success at the school, his first class’s ability to speak. He said: “My first class here made me proud in that they acquired speech. This is because I could not sign. I now think back and can see that it was much better that way. I was speaking to them and demanding a lot from them, not knowing what they would say, what their limit was. When I had been here for a while I learnt to sign and that destroyed everything.” He laughed and added: “If only I had remained ignorant of signs it would have been much better”. The laughter appeared to have been at the paradox of a novice teaching in a way that resulted in better speech than more experienced teaching later produced.

The principal appreciated the importance of speech teaching. He blamed the lack of seriousness on the part of teachers for the current speech results which he acknowledged were not as good as those attained by his first class as a new teacher at the school. The principal’s thrust was that deaf children were able to learn to speak if only their teachers would be serious in refusing to change and become signers. He however also acknowledged that

whatever a teacher did, the deaf children would still sign. He said: “To us throughout the primary school we insist on talking. One can sign you cannot send them to prison if they do. Whatever you do you cannot stop a person signing.” The acknowledgement that deaf pupils and teachers would still sign appeared to be a good concession until one came to ‘you cannot send them to prison if they do’ which portended other, subtle sanctions negating the initial concession. In keeping with sentiments raised by the teachers at their respective schools, none of the other two principals mentioned speech teaching as important.

It was evident overall that many teachers teaching deaf children in the schools at least initially marvelled at the children’s inability to speak. Many of these teachers had moved on from the focus on speech. Many specially trained teachers had also moved from marvelling at lack of speech onto trying to alleviate the deficiency. Some of these teachers were convinced that even discordant speech was better than silence. The principal at their school concurred, believing that if the teachers could be even more serious, and if there were resources availed to intervene a lot earlier, speech production would improve dramatically. The importance of speaking was highlighted while signing was seen as restricting communication only to familiar people such as teachers. On the basis of these views it was argued that many deaf children could and should be taught to speak so that they could be included into speaking society. On the other hand many other teachers from the other two schools argued that even when material and human resources were available, none of the deaf children could produce intelligible speech. The principal of school B said a speech emphasis in some schools and a manual emphasis in others are examples of the diversity that is necessary in order that parents would have a choice. He said: “What we really need in this country are schools that are strictly and clearly either oral or signing, not a mixture of both. That way parents can choose and the results would be seen by all”. Such a choice largely depends on what language is

considered to be important and feasible for deaf children. The next section therefore discusses various views that teachers have of language for their deaf pupils.

8.3 Views on Language

Interviews with specialist and non-specialist teachers at each of the three schools raised various views on language. Many of these views emerged from focus group interviews and were elaborated on in individual interviews. As in the preceding section, the views are therefore presented as data from group interviews while the individual interview data are used to complement this by exploring similar and divergent issues. For ease of presentation and analysis, data are clustered into the following themes: *Language as a deficit* and *Mythical views of ZSL for learning.*

8.3.1 Language as a deficit

Inability to speak was usually the first characteristic of deafness that many teachers noticed about deaf children and interviews therefore persistently raised the significance of deaf children's inability to talk, and the importance of teaching them to talk as discussed earlier (see 8.2.2 in this chapter). In addition to the significance of lack of speech production, teachers also raised issues that deal with deaf children's limitations in language as restricting learning. The principal of school A said: "These children are really language-handicapped. Instead of talking about 'deaf' we should be talking about 'language-handicapped' because that is where their disability lies". This concurred with what the principal of school C said about language. He said: "If you compare blind children with deaf children you will find that blind learners perform much better (academically) because they have language. Once they have mastered Braille it means their sight is also there and they can be easily taught. For the

deaf, language is quite a barrier." Even though deaf children's impairment is hearing, their disability and handicap was said to be language-related. Unlike many blind children who can learn the Braille system in order to use it to learn various subjects, many late-identified deaf children cannot master the spoken language used to teach them to read and write. This concurred with Caselli (2014) who cited various studies showing that a severe to profound deafness in children affected the acquisition and mastering of spoken language. Holte *et al.* (2012) also cited studies showing that hard of hearing children, that is, those with mild-to-severe hearing loss, were also at such risk and represented an historically underserved group as they were identified even later than those who are in the severe to profound group. In saying that deaf children were language-handicapped the principals were talking about the learners being severely restricted in the language used for teaching and learning, rather than having language impairment. Morgan (2014) said that most deaf children did not have language impairment. What the principals and many teachers view as the language necessary for teaching and learning is the spoken language which can be written. A few teachers said Sign Language needed to be the language of teaching and learning but that it had defects while many others said Sign Language impeded acquisition of the written language and so did not have to be the language of instruction (see section 8.3.2 in this chapter). When many teachers talked about the language challenges of deaf children, they were referring to the spoken language for instruction and writing. Various sentiments about deficiencies in this language recurred in the specialist and non-specialist focus group and individual interviews.

In the specialist focus group discussion at school C, Mbara said: "Deaf children have a language deficit". Nzou in the same group agreed and said: "Language is a problem for deaf children." The language deficit raised in this group discussion was elaborated on in another specialist focus group discussion at school B. In that discussion, Moyo said: "Hearing

children come to school with 5 years experience of language which is the tool they need for learning. My deaf pupils are at zero when they come to school. They learn the language at school … they are lagging behind already when they come to school. That's why these H.I. children sort of remain behind because they are already 5 years or whatever years behind the hearing child who has learnt at home." Deaf children have a deficit in language development arising from before school and so they continue to lag behind because of the initial deficit. This is based on findings showing that deprivation during a sensitive period for the development of a particular domain has a profound, negative effect on the course of subsequent development on that domain (Fox *et al.*, 2013). The specialist teachers were therefore using such findings on early childhood development to say that many deaf children had an experiential lag and began learning language from the teachers at school. Specialist teachers therefore argued that whatever deaf children learned and knew came from the teacher.

The non-specialist focus group discussions just like the specialist discussions also highlighted the challenges related to language in the teaching of deaf learners. None of the non-specialists however attempted to diagnose the language deficit from before the children came to school. Instead the non-specialists focussed on the challenges of teaching learners who were language deficient and how these challenges might emanate from either lack of hearing or from interference from another language. In the discussion at school A, Mari said: "They don't have any vocabulary. They can't even spell. What a word is like they don't know because they have never heard of it. When they see it written down that is when they mix up the letters. In some cases 'baba' becomes 'dada' *nekuti havanzwi, havanzwisisi kuti zvakambomira sei*". (…because they don't hear, so they don't understand how things are…). In this case the challenge was simplistically attributed to lack of hearing which resulted in not

understanding. In the non-specialist focus group at school B, the challenge was attributed to acquisition of another language which impeded acquisition of the language of teaching and learning. Fadzai in that discussion said: "They (deaf children) may know how to read some words but sentence construction is very bad. They cannot write pure or correct sentences because Sign Language is in short, it cuts, shortcut." In agreement Dhongeri explained, "Sign Language is broken English." A similar view was also raised in the specialist focus group discussion at school C. In that discussion Nzou said, "Their language is sort of telegraphic". In other words the language deficiency in reading and writing English could emanate from the children's knowledge of Sign Language which is telegraphic. This implied that the telegraphic nature of the language was seen as an impediment to the acquisition of another language with different structures, such as in the example of written English cited by the teachers. The idea behind this was that the co-existence of more than one language overloaded the deaf child and therefore confused him or her.

This idea of too many languages confusing deaf children was raised in all the focus group discussions in relation to the learning of Shona in addition to English and Sign Language. It was agreed that the Shona language was unnecessary and should not be taught to deaf pupils. Nyaku in the non-specialist focus group discussion at school A said: "They have difficulty building Shona words as they cannot hear such syllables as /ma/ /me/ /mi/ and so on which they need to build Shona words. They find it easier to learn English than to learn Shona." In agreement Mari in the same group explained: "When I teach Shona comprehension I am forced to translate into English so that everyone understands. If you stick to Shona only, you will be alone in that classroom. I don't see the relevance of Shona for the children that we have". Tinds added another dimension, "I think Shona is not very helpful to a non-speaking, deaf child because we may try to teach him or her idioms but how will he or she use this?

They can't communicate among themselves using Shona proverbs." The non-specialists had difficulty using a sound-based syllable approach to teach reading. It was not immediately clear whether their reported successes in teaching English reading resulted from different teaching approaches or whether the children simply had greater exposure because all the other subjects used English. The dimension of figurative language not being useful to deaf learners assumed, with the concurrence of Morgan (2014) that pragmatic skills such as knowing the context and inferred intent of the speaker were usually weak in deaf children because of impoverished language and communication interaction with caregivers. Such deaf children would therefore have limited success at assimilating proverbial information because of underdeveloped pragmatics. What the teachers are said about proverbs not being useful also assumed that deaf people needed only to acquire a very basic language, unlike hearing people who find figurative language useful in many contexts. This was contrary to Aarons and Reynolds (2003) who argued that deaf signers made use of the rich registers and other variations found in Sign Language. It was not figurative language alone that the teachers deemed unnecessary, because of deaf children's underdeveloped pragmatics, but they also queried the use of Shona as a language saying it was an unnecessary burden. Tembo in the specialist discussion at school B said: "This Shona language confuses the deaf children. They have English, Shona and Sign Language so it confuses them. Up to grade seven when they write the examination they don't even understand much Shona vocabulary." At school C Tantan said: "We are forcing our children to learn three languages i.e. Shona, Sign Language and English whereas a normal child learns his mother language and then English. So it is taxing for the deaf child. I suggest we drop Shona."

The teachers appeared to intuitively hold the naïve balance theory of bilingualism which Cummins (1980) called the separate underlying proficiency model which conceived of the

mind as having a restricted amount of room for languages and that two or more languages operate without transfer within this restricted space. Bialystok (2001) argued that nothing that is known about memory substantiated the idea of a language overload, and in any case the fact that so many children have grown up with more than one language with no obvious trauma should put an end to this notion. Quite to the contrary Baker (2008) cited research showing that there were enough cerebral living quarters not only for two languages, but for other languages as well and also said that there are cognitive advantages of being bilingual or multilingual.

The teachers' views were that Shona was a difficult-to-teach, irrelevant third language which they first had to translate into the easier-to-teach English but still deaf children did not acquire a large enough vocabulary to write the grade seven Shona examinations. English was viewed as important because it was used for teaching all the other subjects, so it was not seen as a burden and none of the teachers called for its removal. Beyond this agreement, the specialists differed on what should be done in light of the perceived language overload. At school B the specialists argued that Sign Language should be done away with as it did not help the children to learn. For example Moyo said: "They may sign but you don't find that language in any of the books so it does not help them. It is better to do away with that language". Although they are not as explicit about sidelining Sign Language as their colleagues at school B, the specialists at school C implied that it was not a useful language. They said it was telegraphic and Stick said: "It (Sign Language) leaves out a lot of information". On the other hand at school A, the specialists went further than pointing out the perceived weaknesses in Sign Language. They argued that Sign Language needed to be fully developed in order for it to be used for teaching and learning. Chimwe said: "Sign Language should be their (deaf children's) tool for learning but up to now we do not have a national

Sign Language. It is just rudimentary with one school signing one thing and another signing differently." This group acknowledged ZSL as an important tool for learning which needed to be developed in order to be used for academic purposes. It would be used alongside English. In all three schools, the teachers said that as the children already had Sign Language, Shona became an unnecessary burden to learners who might be better off concentrating on English and ZSL. This would avoid a perceived language overload. It is worth noting that teachers said deaf children were better off with just English and assumed they already had ZSL, but they had different conceptions about ZSL, with many thinking it was a system that needed to be artificially developed. The following section looks at the different conceptions and misconceptions about Sign Language which many teachers raised in the interviews.

8.3.2 Mythical Views of Sign Language for Learning

In addition to perceiving Sign Language as interfering with the acquisition of a written language such as English, many teachers had various other notions about Sign Language. In the specialist focus group discussion at school A it was assumed that signs were acquired from the parents at home. In this group discussion Zenda said, "Sign Language is difficult for us as teachers because the biological parents of these children may actually be signing differently from us here (at the school). At least here we are better in that we ask each other and also check in the dictionary. They may just improvise and for us to 'un-teach' (what they have taught their deaf child) becomes difficult." Home signs were viewed as an impediment rather than a useful basis for the acquisition of school-based signs. Although Herman (2014) said deaf children could be at risk for language development because input from fluent Sign Language users was lacking, there was no evidence that home signs put deaf children at risk when they later acquire Sign Language in a natural community of users. Fusellier-Souza

(2004) called home signs ‘emerging Sign Languages’ and says that they develop into micro-community and macro-community Sign Languages. As home signs contributed to the development of macro-community school-based signs they aided, rather than impeded the development of Sign Language. In the specialist discussion at school B, it was noted that many deaf children only learned language at school, as discussed earlier. The literature concurred and showed that this acquisition of language at school was not restricted to spoken language but also included the acquisition of Sign Language (Marschark, Schick, & Spencer, 2006; Marschark & Spencer, 2010; Reilly & Reilly, 2005).

It is evident that the specialists and the non-specialists had different ideas on what signing involved; some said it was telegraphic, leaving out information and others said it was a different language from another culture. Dhongeri in the non-specialist group at school B said: “Sign Language is broken English. It is short-cut.” In agreement Aripo in the same group explained: “In Sign Language they just use those words which are important.” In the specialist group at school A Chimwe explained that the signing they do comes from another culture. He said: “Our (teachers’) signing doesn’t really follow the manner in which we speak or write. It is from Deaf culture.” These differences between the specialist group (as represented by Chimwe) and non-specialist groups (as represented by Aripo and Dhongeri) would appear to be based on the specialists’ exposure to literature on Deaf identity such as McIlroy and Storbeck (2011) and Deaf culture in general such as Padden and Humphries (2005). The non-specialists who had not been exposed to such literature tended to compare Sign Language structure to English structure and using the latter as a model, they concluded that Sign Language was deficient. The specialists on the other hand were aware that Sign Language was an independent language used by people with their own identity and from a different culture so that it did not need to use any other language as a model. These specialists

at school A however believed that the language needed to be standardised so that it becomes a national language.

In contrast to the Deaf culture perception of Sign Language offered by the specialists at school A some of the specialist teachers at another school believed that Sign Language was intrinsic to deaf children. They argued that deaf children would not really be deprived of Sign Language if the teachers concentrated on English alone. For example Moyo at school B said: "We cannot really say we are depriving them of Sign Language because we can never take Sign Language out of the deaf child". The principal at this school said: "…whatever you do you cannot stop the deaf children from signing. They won't leave out signing, they will always sign." These sentiments were more of a reflection on the resilience and will of deaf children to communicate than a reflection of their language being inherent. Fusellier-Souza (2004) explained that Sign Languages emerged from a cognitive-communicational process defined by iconization of experience anchored in the practical-perceptual world. Stokoe (2005) explained the same process by saying that there grows between the child born deaf, and those around the child, a communicative system derived in part from the visible parts of the paralinguistic, and especially the kinesic, communicative behaviour of the culture. This means that in their daily need to communicate with each other, deaf children made picture-like representations of objects and activities as they created a complex language. Arguing that one could never take Sign Language out of deaf children and that they would always sign without explaining how they acquired and developed the language could indicate innatist views of language development. Such views were useful in explaining the children's resilience as, according to Morgans (1999), they used the language underground, away from hearing educators who prohibit Sign Language. The views however become discriminatory if they are reserved only for this one language in order to show that it did not have to be taught,

unlike spoken languages such as English. This would be a thinly veiled justification for the linguistic discrimination of Sign Language.

In what could be justifications for discriminating against Sign Language many teachers raised various misconceptions about the language. For example Moyo tried to show why Sign Language would not be useful for teaching: "We don't have a standardised Sign Language which is uniform to use for all so that if we have a sign for 'boy' here (at this school) it is the same at another school and on television. They have different individuals with their different signs … they are not confused by those different signs because it is their culture just like hearing people. For example someone (hearing) from Manicaland and someone from Masvingo have dialectal differences (in Shona) but they understand each other. (Similarly) if a deaf person comes from America or Germany they (local deaf) won't get lost no matter that it is a different sign because it is their language. But we are people who only learn that language from them." In agreement Mavhu added: "…and unfortunately that language (Sign Language) is very different from the language used in the books so much that you cannot translate Deaf language into English or vice versa, that is where the problem is."

The teachers equated the differences in signs from different schools to dialectal differences in any language and this appeared to be valid. Teachers pointed out that dialectal differences in Shona did not impede communication between competent Shona-speakers. Teachers overlooked the logical extrapolation that, likewise dialectal differences between the schools should not impede communication between competent ZSL users. For example Aarons and Reynolds (2003) and Aarons and Akach (2002), in papers on South African Sign Language (SASL), described a situation in which there was no problem with Deaf-Deaf

communication, but with hearing-Deaf communication. This implied that because the hearing teachers in the current study did not have native-like competence in ZSL, they were handicapped when either different dialects or registers of ZSL were used by their deaf pupils. Aarons and Reynolds (2003, p. 204) pointed out that Sign Language, just like other languages, had different registers for formal and less formal occasions with polite and less-polite signs, slang, fast signing, in-group signing and all the other variations that other languages boast. A hearing teacher who did not know these dialects and registers was likely to have restricted communication which would result in weakened teaching more than any perceived weaknesses of the language.

The idea of dialects in Sign Language was misconstrued by the hearing teachers who used it to propose that deaf people from different countries would not get confused with the others' signs. This appeared to be propagation of what Schmaling (2000) called the misconception that there was one universal Sign Language. She pointed out that Sign Languages in different countries of the world were part of the Deaf culture there and so there were as many Sign Languages as there were distinct Deaf communities, each with its dialectal, regional and sociolectal differences (Schmaling, 2000, p. 42). In this light it was clear that Sign Language could not be inherent to deaf children because just like any other language it was acquired in a community of users of that language such as deaf peers, as pointed out by Reilly and Reilly (2005).

Many of the teachers who accepted that Sign Language was a natural language just like any other spoken language raised the issue of there being no national sign language in the country, thereby making their work difficult. Chimwe at school A said: "Even the country

does not yet have a Sign Language which may be called this is the Sign Language" (Zimbabwean English for: The country does not yet have a proper national Sign Language). Gwara at school B said: "The government should set aside a budget for compiling a national Sign Language so that for example the sign for boy is the same here and at other schools. There should be no variations. Sometimes these deaf people disagree among themselves saying the signs in the current dictionary are incorrect. They say you hearing people did this, not us." It was evident that sometimes hearing researchers perceived and captured signs for the dictionary from their hearing perspective, rather than the Deaf community's perspective. This caused the results to be rejected as lacking validity by the Deaf community. The teacher's argument that there should be no variations in the Sign Language also indicated a hearing person's discomfort with the rich register and other variations of the language alluded to by Aarons and Reynolds (2003).

On the surface the lack of standardisation of ZSL would appear to be a significant issue especially in light of the need to use the language for academic purposes and also the fact that there has not been much research on the language. Closer scrutiny however revealed that the standardisation of ZSL could not be an issue that should stop the use of the language at the different primary schools. Aarons and Reynolds (2003) said that the variations in Sign Language became an issue when there was a need to accommodate hearing people who could not really claim knowledge of Sign Language, in this case teachers of the deaf with no training in Sign Language at all. Penn and Reagan (1994) observed that when Deaf people from different communities in South Africa gathered, they communicated without difficulty but communication difficulties arose once hearing people were involved. It would therefore appear that the need to standardise arises out of the need to accommodate hearing teachers. This in turn suggests that perhaps it is the teachers who need to be trained in Sign Language

so that they become conversant with the registers and dialects in the language rather than try to come up with a standard national language. The need for government to compile a national Sign Language, with no variations, could also reflect the misconception that this was a language that had to be created artificially as opposed to a naturally evolving language which could be developed through use in a community such as a school for the deaf.

Those teachers who accepted Sign Language as a natural language also recognised the difficulties of trying to learn the language while at the same time being expected to teach it. Nzou at school C said: "While we are learning Sign Language from the children and other teachers and have not yet mastered it we are expected to use it to teach which makes our work very difficult." Expectations that teachers could use a language that they had not yet mastered to teach appeared to be not only unrealistic but could also reflect the stigmatised nature of Sign Language. The expectation that teachers would teach a language they were learning was further confounded by the informal reversal of roles between teachers and pupils as deaf children were expected to teach their hearing teachers this language privately. These unrealistic expectations reflected that even those who averred it was a natural language which could be useful for teaching might still not regard the language as up to the same standard as other natural languages.

On the basis of the various misconceptions about Sign Language, many teachers believed that Sign Language had many weaknesses which would make it unsuitable for use in assessment. For example Mavhu at school B said: "Although we might borrow some signs for teaching but come exam time, you might be allowed to say sign to them and you end up maybe giving them the answer because there is no sign for that." Saying that 'there is no sign for that'

probably showed a lack of awareness that Sign Language continued to evolve just like any other language and so could ultimately have signs for all concepts. Awareness of this would enable the teacher to look for signs on all the concepts in the curriculum. In the same group Gwara said: "What you end up doing is explaining the examination. You explain until you get to the answer. So it is very difficult." This teacher's observation was confirmed by a reported incident at another school where a teacher interpreting a grade seven examination was stopped by the principal who said he was telling the candidates the answers (see 9.2.4 *Mainstream curriculum and examinations* in chapter 9). This incident and what Gwara was saying could corroborate the notion that teachers were not competent to interpret examinations into ZSL as they ended up providing the candidates with the answers.

On the other hand it is also possible that the interpretation of examinations into Sign Language was so useful that the deaf candidates more easily understood the questions, and so could provide more correct answers. Paradoxically this could alarm hearing educators like the principal and other teachers who were not conversant with ZSL and were accustomed to deaf children struggling with academic work. Some principals and teachers might have low expectations of deaf learners and doubt any outstanding work they were said to have produced. The field of deaf education is hampered by low expectations for the deaf learners (Johnson *et al.*, 1989; Moores & Martin, 2006; Storbeck & Magongwa, 2006). In both scenarios it would appear that even though government has done its part to allow the signing of examinations (Secretary for Education, 2007b) the professionals on the ground were still uncertain of how to take advantage of this permission. In the meantime, some of these professionals resist the government policy directive by prohibiting signed interpretation of examinations. Overall, the misconceptions that teachers have about Sign Language, their views about language as a deficit for deaf children as well as their attitudes towards deafness

in general and the learning of speech in particular all combined to contribute to teachers' views on deaf children's ability to learn. Teachers' views on deafness and on language are therefore brought together in a summary that reflects deaf children's ability to learn in the next section.

8.4 Deaf children's ability to learn: they don't hear so they don't understand

Many specialist teachers raised the issue of challenges faced by deaf children as they learned various subjects on the curriculum. Specialists in the focus group discussion at school A initially agreed that deaf learners could not achieve anything academically and had to concentrate on developing vocational and self-help skills. In that discussion Chimwe said: "We have a problem as educators in that even though history tells us loudly that these children cannot do anything academically, we still maintain a time-table with academic subjects to be followed rigidly. It is just not possible". In support Tema added: "I feel that we are just burdening these children considering that most of them don't understand the curriculum. They should just concentrate on handicraft skills rather than be forced to do subjects which don't help them in future. It is just burdening them with too many subjects which they are not going to use".

The group was generally agreed that it was no use teaching so many academic subjects in which the deaf were not only incapable, but which would not help them in the future. Rim said: "We should sit down as people on the ground and decide on what is good for our pupils, things that will help them in future when they learn such trades as carpentry, sewing and so on. We should then concentrate on developing academic areas such as measurement so that

they can use these in the development of these skills" In agreement Zenda added: "It is no use making them do academic material which they can't (do well in) and which won't help them in future anyway. I support her idea of giving them self-help and vocational skills, especially those with multiple disabilities. In our classes some can't even count three things and yet we keep on forcing them to do academic work''. She added, "I have never heard of a deaf person going to secondary school."

Although Zenda had initially indicated support for the idea that deaf children with multiple disabilities such as those who are deaf and mentally challenged should concentrate on self-help and vocational skills, she later generalised this to encompass all deaf learners. Her statement that she had never heard of a deaf person going to secondary school seemed to confirm this and it provoked the following response from Kondas. Kondas said: "There are some among the deaf who can do academic work well e.g. Mary. Aren't you aware that she has five Ordinary level passes? Don't bunch them all and say they can't". Beside Zenda's response to this: "She has? I didn't know", the group did not otherwise directly respond to this revelation of a deaf learner succeeding in secondary school. This revelation dismissed Chimwe's assertion still caught in the historical local belief that deaf pupils had never succeeded academically. However in an apparent attempt to downplay the success story, Nyepo said: "Some may be gifted in Art and things like that. Those things don't have much language as one can demonstrate for them. The teacher can also show a good article and compare to a bad one." In saying this, the specialist minimised the deaf success story by averring that only a select few pass very specific, non-language intensive subjects. Nyepo's observation could also reveal that deaf learners were regarded as capable of imitative learning while the reference to their being gifted in Art might reflect that they were intuitive learners.

The notion of deaf children's inability to do academic work was also vented in the specialist focus group discussions at schools B and C. At school C Mbara observed: "They are visualisers such that they learn better with concrete media. They tend to forget easily." In the same group Tantan added: "It's silly to teach the H.I. about oxygen and nitrogen which they are never going to use." Grace explained: "Such scientific concepts are meaningless to them because they are abstract. What is the point of teaching idioms and proverbs? Where will they use them?" At school B Moyo said: "Teaching them to read one word will make you tired because you will be trying to do the impossible". Gwara explained: "H.I. children need a lot of time to learn very little things." Tembo said: "They perform better in subjects such as Maths, practical subjects and sports which do not have too much reading and language".

The participants in the specialist focus groups at schools B and C were in agreement with each other as there was no dissenting voice unlike at school A. This lack of dissent may be because there were no extremely hopeless sentiments explicitly expressed in the two groups such as the one in school A: "I have never heard of a deaf person going to secondary school." The absence of such a provocative sentiment might be attributed to two developments specific to these two schools for the deaf. One of them had a secondary school section and the other had integrated some deaf learners into nearby secondary schools. Teachers at these schools had been exposed to deaf learners going on to secondary school. Nevertheless, the sentiments expressed in these two specialist focus group discussions indicated that they believed that deaf children were not able to handle academic work, especially at secondary school level, just as in the first group discussion. This is because reading and using abstract scientific concepts as well as figurative language were pre-requisites for upper primary and

secondary school level academic work. Therefore if the teachers said these pre-requisites were of no use for deaf learners, then the implication was that secondary school level academic work was out of the question for deaf learners. The teachers were cautious but implied their pessimism by explaining that the deaf were visualisers, that they forgot easily and that they required a lot of time to learn very little. Although they were more cautious and implicit, specialists exposed to deaf learners undertaking secondary school level work were also pessimistic about deaf children's learning ability. This might indicate that they still had prejudices from the time before their schools introduced secondary school level work as they were not actively involved at that level.

In the non-specialist focus group discussions, deaf pupils' ability to learn was also raised as a significant issue detracting the teachers' efforts to teach them. In some cases deaf children's inherent incapacity to learn was explicitly cited. For example Fadzai in the non-specialist focus group discussion at school B said: "The problem with the deaf is that you introduce a topic at the beginning of the week, let's say addition. If you ask them later in the week you have to repeat because they have forgotten most of the stuff." In that group discussion Edzai explained: "Their memory is very short." Reva in the non-specialist focus group at school A explained that deaf children lacked the motivation to learn. She said: "You could be putting up a test on the chalkboard and they appear unconcerned about trying to find the answers from their books. They just sit there signing whatever they will be signing to each other." Some teachers disputed the outright 'nature' explanation of these challenges and instead offered what Plomin (2009) called a 'nurture' explanation. For example in the same focus group discussion Mari explained the lack of motivation which Reva had brought up by saying: "I think they lack socialisation so they may not have heard anything about the importance of a test and so are not anxious about it. They just think it is simply writing for

the sake of writing." Whether deaf learners were viewed as naturally slow academically or environmentally socialised to perform at low levels academically, the end result was that many of these teachers perceived them as having learning deficits.

On the surface there did not appear to be any difference between what the specialist and the non-specialist focus groups were saying. Many in these groups appeared to agree on the incapacity of deaf learners. The specialists' position was however more nuanced towards challenges external to the deaf learner. For example they cited the deaf learners' need for more time to learn what hearing children learned in a short time as in "They need a lot of time to learn very little things". Moyo at school B explained: "So you can really say in an H.I. class of five or six whatever those children know, for example in the reception classes, it's you the teacher. It portrays what you have taught them because if you do not tell them, even their names, they do not know. So as a result they need more time to learn what others learn within a short time. You need more time to teach the deaf, of which that time we don't have". Such explanations of needing more time to teach were complemented by the teachers' expressed need that the children should spend two to three years in a grade in which hearing peers spent one year. These were external challenges about which either the education system or the teacher could do try to alleviate. On the other hand the non-specialists did not move much beyond deaf children's forgetfulness and having general difficulty in understanding material. The non-specialist observations such as "their memory is very short" were more inclined towards incapacity to learn which is innate, and about which the teacher could do little or nothing. Even though the specialists made similar statements about forgetfulness, they moved onto other issues external to the deaf learner about which something could be done. There would therefore appear to be these nuanced differences between the specialist and non-specialist teachers' positions.

The individual interviews revealed similar concerns with forgetfulness. For example a specialist teacher at school C, Svayaz said: "… at the end of the day you must just give them information because deaf children have low memory. They forget easily. Teach them right now they will say 'we've understood ... we've understood' and yet ask them in the afternoon what you taught them and … nothing! (laughter). They can't remember." Asked why this should be the case for the deaf learners, Svayaz responded: "That problem is natural to them. It's natural". This was one instance of a specialist who believed that this challenge was innate. The participant's laughter in this context was not easy to understand. However the same specialist, when asked whether she thought deaf children had the capacity to undertake secondary schoolwork said that they did. She said: "The main hindrance for these children not to go to secondary school is that they are not given material in their language – to read with their language, right? Sign Language. Then you give them the tests in that language. Just like a British or a Chinese – they are given tests in their own language. So these children we must accept that they are also deaf and give them their examination in deaf language. So that way a lot of them would understand and we would have a lot of them going to secondary school". This response showed some awareness of external factors which hindered deaf children's learning and so it contrasted with the earlier innate position. It is possible that the same individual held contradictory views of deaf learners because of lack of exhaustive reflection. On the one hand she believed they were naturally forgetful while on the other hand she also believed that instructing and examining them through Sign Language would enhance their chances of learning. As a result of not logically concluding her reflections, this specialist did not see the contradiction between saying forgetfulness was natural to deaf learners and also saying that the medium of instruction and examination was inappropriate for them.

Closer analysis of the non-specialists' position on the issue of deaf pupils' ability to learn revealed some reasons which seemed to emanate from the teachers' socialisation into Shona culture. For example Mazambara at school A said: "*Nekuti havanzwi, havanzwisisi. Havana chavanoziva nokuti havanzwi*". (Shona for: Because they don't hear they don't understand. They know nothing because they hear nothing). This kind of reasoning made intuitive sense especially in the Shona language which she used. In Shona the word for 'understand' (*kunzwa* or *kunzwisisa*) is the same as or is sometimes derived from the word for 'hear' (*kunzwa*). So when the teacher said in Shona that deaf children did not hear that was the reason that they did not understand then this would be self-evident from the language and therefore reasonable. Non-specialists tended to attribute the learning challenges faced by deaf learners more directly to inherent incapacity than the specialists. Other reasons such as not being motivated to do well because of not knowing the importance of tests might have been based on scientific research. Casbarro (2005) observed that a normal level of anxiety is actually motivational while high or low anxiety is detrimental on test performance. This means that if deaf learners have not been socialised to appreciate the importance of tests because of lack of appropriate communication, they would not be sufficiently anxious to perform well in the tests. Overall whether the teachers viewed the deaf learners' challenges as innate or as having been socialised into them, the net outcome was that the challenges were generalised into learning disabilities. This was the import of saying that they were forgetful and they did not understand. In other words deafness is considered as the equivalent of a disability of learning much as seen in slow learners (learning disabled) and learners with mild mental retardation. Aarons and Reynolds (2003) also found similar perceptions of deafness being considered as the same as mental retardation in South Africa. Such perceptions are reciprocally influenced by teachers' attitudes towards deafness and deaf learners as well as their views of language.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how teachers' attitudes towards deaf learners reciprocally influenced the teachers' perceptions about deaf children's ability to learn and what these children should learn. Among the things some teachers regarded as important for the children to learn was the production of speech, as deaf children were perceived as primarily mute. Some of the teachers thought speech was significant and had the view that deaf people were a minority group which would be better off if it were assimilated into the majority hearing-speaking world. This assimilationist mandate was underpinned by the assumption that hearing and speaking were superior to not hearing and not speaking which resulted in hearing views on language. Deafness was viewed as a silent disability and the children had to be taught the perceived superior language – spoken language, which can be written. Their own Sign Language was viewed as inferior and unsuitable for teaching and learning, at least not in its present un-standardised form. Teachers' own lack of competence in Sign Language was not reflected on. Various myths fed these views of Sign Language. These views of deafness and language played an important part in informing what teachers thought were their main concerns in teaching deaf learners in separate residential institutions. Teachers' views on deaf education in residential institutions therefore come next in Chapter 9, which is the last results chapter in this study.

CHAPTER 9

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON DEAF EDUCATION

9.1 Introduction

In light of the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about deaf pupils' ability to learn presented in the previous chapter, this chapter presents and analyses data on what teachers knew about teaching deaf learners in special residential schools. In analysing the data, *Teaching processes in deaf education* as well as *Teacher professionalism* and *Teacher professionalisation* emerged as the overarching themes which were then used to organise various sub-themes. Each sub-theme was illustrated by detailed excerpts from the interviews. The interviews were conducted in English but many of the participants would code-switch and speak in Shona. Therefore as was done in the previous chapter, excerpts from the interviews were largely in English as the Shona was translated into English (see chapter 4 for translation details). Where particular Shona words used by participants cannot be fully captured in an English translation however, the Shona words were used verbatim in italics, with the closest English meaning placed in brackets immediately afterwards. As in the previous chapter, pseudonyms were used instead of the teachers' real names, while letters were used in place of the schools' real names to protect participant identities and confidentiality as well as maintain the integrity of each institution as far as possible. The following sections present and analyse the various themes starting with those emerging from interviews as shown in figure 9.1 which summarises the main themes.

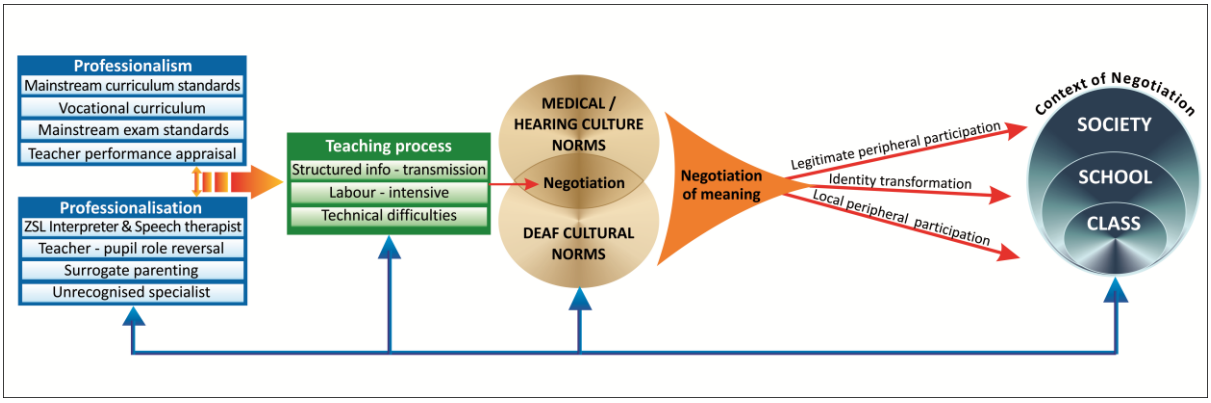


Figure 9.1: Themes of teacher knowledge about teaching deaf children

Figure 9.1 shows that teachers object to the use of a mainstream curriculum which they say is unsuitable for deaf learners. They say that this curriculum necessitates repetitive, labour-intensive teaching processes. They also say that the signed interpretation of mainstream examinations is not feasible in light of the deficiencies of ZSL and an unrealistic expansion of role from specialist teacher to interpreter and speech therapist. Perceptions about the intensity and difficulty of teaching deaf learners reciprocally influence views on curriculum, examinations, teacher role, status and reward.

9.2 Teaching processes in deaf education

Particular views of deafness and deaf pupils' ability to learn are associated with particular ways in which deaf learners are to be taught, perceptions of the ease or difficulty of teaching them and what they are actually taught. These views on deaf education are primarily presented as data from group interviews while the individual interview data are used to complement these issues as in the previous chapter. For ease of presentation and analysis, data on the theme *Teaching processes in deaf education* are split into the following four sub-themes: *Structured, repetitive information-transmission; Labour-intensive, serious work; Technical difficulties in subject-specific issues* and *Introspection on teacher deficiencies*.

9.2.1 Teaching processes: Structured, repetitive information-transmission

Many teachers raised the challenges facing them, and the various methods they used in teaching deaf children. Specialist and non-specialist teachers raised similar concerns about the constant need for repetition. Repetition was generally attributed to the students' forgetfulness, conceptualising at a slower rate and general difficulties in understanding (see 8.4 in chapter 8). As a result of the foregoing concerns, the specialists in the focus group discussions at each of the three schools agreed that it required more time to teach deaf children. At school B the group said more planning and more conscious effort were needed. For example Moyo said: "I think with the deaf you have to put a lot more conscious effort for them to understand. You can't take anything for granted, whereas with the hearing there are so many things which they learn on their own." Mavhu added: "H.I. children learn everything from the teacher or anybody who takes conscious effort. If you don't tell them, they won't know it". These views indicated a teaching process which was mechanical and structured rather than incidental, because nothing could be taken for granted. The learners had to be told everything, otherwise they would not know. When children did not learn language or other concepts from natural exposure and stimulation, there was a tendency among educators to teach more explicitly (Ameri-Golestan & Nezakat-Alhossaini, 2013; Kelly, 1998). However Evans (2004) argued that the more explicit the teaching, the less the students became actively involved in a learning process that was supposed to be their own. Lessons were likely to be teacher-directed as children could not be trusted to make meaning for themselves if circumstances were such that nothing could be taken for granted. The dominant view expressed by the teachers was captured in the 'acquisition' metaphor of learning (Sfard, 1998) which complemented the view of teaching as 'transmission'. A one-sided focus on explicit teaching is reductionist (Bruin, 2014) and in this case it reduced the complex process

of teaching and learning to giving and taking. Incidental, social participation teaching processes which Wenger (1998) called 'social infrastructures that foster learning' were missing in the reductionist focus. This meant that the children could not be trusted to, as Evans (2004, p. 23) put it, "participate in deciphering the code of learning" in the micro-community of the class. In line with the acquisition metaphor, Gwara brought up the issue of having to do much more preparation for lessons than would be the case for hearing learners. She said: "I think it is quite challenging when you teach the deaf. You need to put in a lot of planning first before you can teach the deaf. …teaching the deaf is very different from teaching the normal ee-e hearing children". In the same group discussion, Nyarai indicated that teaching deaf learners meant the teacher could never make assumptions. She said: "Never make assumptions. Never take anything for granted. What you think they know they may not know anything about. You can't assume that at their age they should be at this level. Just take each day as a new experience". Emphasis on conscious effort and a lot of planning beforehand suggested teaching inclined towards a structured, transmission process. Some of these sentiments are in support of a structured process but others might not. The need for a lot of planning could indicate a teaching process that was structured rather than incidental. Although an incidental teaching process also required planning, the fact that the planning was said to be more than that required for hearing children in the mainstream indicated more rather than less structure to the lesson. Saying that nothing could be taken for granted as the deaf children might not know anything about what teachers took for granted showed that learners were regarded as blank slates such that the teacher, rather than the learners had to direct the process. However, when the teachers said they had to take each day as a new experience, this indicated a more incidental process in which what learners initiated took centre stage.

All three specialist focus groups said they engaged in more repetition than they would for hearing children in mainstream schools. At school C Tantan opened this line of discussion when she said of deaf children: "You know their capacity of acquiring concepts is so slow. You compare that child to a normal child and say, Lord but I am not ready for this". Nzou concurred: "They (deaf learners) need more time and more repetition for them to understand a concept. When you compare (them) with hearing children who are in the mainstream, you say a thing once maybe an instruction and they get the instruction the first time. But with our (deaf) children you have got to repeat the instruction and make sure that they have got the instruction". The emphasis on repetition was consistent with the belief in a structured process to facilitate the rote-learning of concepts. As their capacity for acquiring concepts was said to be slow, repetition was not only teacher-centred, but also reinforced the view that they were inferior to hearing children. These considerations added up to a teaching process that generally subordinated deaf learners.

At school A, the specialist group's position as articulated by Tema summarised the relationship between the need for more repetition and the need for more time. Tema said: "There is no point in having 30 minute time limits for lessons for deaf children as they just need to be taught until they understand. If that means I start teaching a concept at 8 until 10, let it be. So long as the concept is grasped. If we insist on 30 minute time slots they understand nothing at the end of the day." Teachers argued that deaf learners had to stay longer in the primary school because they needed more time to be taught. For example at school C Tantan said: "From January to December I cannot complete teaching the syllabus for that grade". Mbara concurred: "They need an additional three to four years in the school." In other words because deaf learners were taught in repetitive, more conscious ways they needed to be taught for longer periods until they mastered the concepts. Mastery of concepts

over longer periods meant that they had to stay in primary school longer than the seven years for hearing children. This might have indicated a desire for mastery learning (Carroll, 1989). In itself, mastery learning was commendable in that it presumed that all children could learn if they were provided with appropriate learning conditions, including time. This alone would be inadequate for mastery learning if other conditions of learning such as appropriate teaching approaches remained unchanged.

In the non-specialist discussions at school C, the group connected repetitive teaching to concrete learning and the teachers' learning of Sign Language. Mugwa in this group said: "The deaf need a lot of repetition, you must keep on repeating until they grasp." In agreement, Bhachi added: "The teacher should use real media for example bringing real fruits and vegetables to teach. You can't just say to them 'isn't it that you know fruits and vegetables'. So if you give them real media, they will then provide you with the sign names for those things and you provide them the English names. That way you learn Sign Language quickly." Thole agreed and added: "In many cases there is need to actually demonstrate in order to illustrate. If you just tell them and they don't see the article they can't visualise it." These examples of using concrete media related to what the specialists at this particular school also raised. This might be a coincidence resulting from similar experiences in the classes but could also reflect thorough induction by the specialists. Whether based on induction training or experience, these teachers believed that deaf children were concrete learners. Marschark and Wauters (2011) wrote that 1960s research showed older deaf children's cognitive functioning to be at Piaget's concrete-operational stage. This has been superseded by research, for example Convertino, Marschark, Sapere, Sarchet, and Zupan (2009), showing differences on cognitive tasks as implying divergence, rather than deficiency. In the current study, deaf learners were limited to signing the concrete objects

brought to school by their teachers and so the teaching process dwelt on the children's deficiency. Such teaching missed the opportunity to capitalise on the divergence of Sign Language which would have involved signing abstract, rather than only concrete concepts.

In the foregoing, the non-specialists brought up the dimension of learning signs from their pupils, resulting in a reversal of the roles of teacher and learner. This reversal would alter the usually one-way transmission of information from teacher to pupils, if pupils were allowed to take a lead in it. However, even this remained teacher-directed. Thole's explanation at school C illuminated this. She said: "I cannot always bring real media to school every day and that worries me." This meant that the teacher decided on the concrete material thereby denying the children an opportunity to lead and see these hearing adults as learners in need of their assistance too. In addition, what the children learnt was limited to the concrete objects the teacher brought and so remained context-embedded.

The individual interviews brought up issues about the processes of teaching that were similar to those raised in the focus group discussions. For example in explaining the constant repetition that she engaged in when she taught, Jacket a non-specialist at school C said: "In the mainstream I could teach different subjects moving from one time slot to another, following the timetable. Now I can't just move on when the deaf children have not understood. *Pano apa ndinongodzana panhu pamwe*" (Shona for: At this school I just dance on the same spot). The Shona metaphor of 'dancing on the same spot' is particularly apt as it reflected the implications of repetition, lack of forward movement and restrictions with the potential to become boring. Lack of forward movement was said to be a consequence of the children's forgetfulness and slower rate of conceptualising. The metaphor of dancing on the

same spot captured the essence of rigid, structured teaching processes in which one was not freely experimenting with and enjoying other styles. Notions about having to teach deaf children everything in very conscious ways and at suitably slow rates were supposed to match their slowness. This is authoritarian as the learners are portrayed as particularly helpless and in need of direction in everything from the teacher. Teachers therefore viewed deaf learners as subordinates for whom information transmission was more appropriate.

Information-transmission teaching with its rote learning was explicitly cited as appropriate for deaf pupils by a non-specialist in the focus group discussion at school A. Nyaku said: "We end up doing exercises where they fill in gaps in sentences, just teaching them to recall. What we do is tell them the answers then after a short while we give them jumbled answers and ask them to choose the correct one for each sentence". In this process the learners were not taught to understand, but merely recite. Although repetition was an essential element of reading practice, Kelly (2003) argued that this could best be done with stimulating materials as monotony would dampen motivation. Evans (2004) added that language learning typically occurred in meaningful contexts, through natural interactions and experiences with other speakers of the language. The filling-in of previously provided words in sentences did not meet any of these criteria. Generally, drill and practice meant for the acquisition of skills, facts and concepts is a process consistent with a behavioural perspective of teaching and learning which emphasized the student as an individual learner (Antia, Stinson, & Gaustad, 2002). According to Sawyer and Greeno (2009) this emphasis on individual training which organises materials for optimal acquisition, ignored how interactions in the community of the class shaped learning. Since these drill processes resulted in a student passively receiving information and following directions (Antia *et al.*, 2002) they could also cause the lack of motivation to learn cited as a problem by the teachers. Ironically, the teachers said they used

drill methods to complement the deaf children's rote-learning style. The teachers observed that the pupils were forgetful and so decided to teach them to recall. It would appear that there was a cycle in which teachers perceived learners as only capable of rote-learning. They then taught them to recall, using drill methods. The learners were more than likely to find this boring and in turn they appeared to the teachers as having a short attention span, unmotivated to learn and therefore in need of even more drills. It was quite possible that it was this cycle which limited teaching and learning rather any learning disabilities or motivational deficits deaf children might have. Such a cycle also affected the amount and difficulty of work teachers said they had to do in order to teach deaf learners as discussed in the next section.

9.2.2 Teaching processes: Labour-intensive and serious work

The intensity of work involved in teaching deaf learners was a constant issue for many specialist and non-specialist teachers. They indicated that the teaching of deaf children was labour-intensive. They said the intensity was a result of the combination of more conscious effort and repetitive teaching in which the teacher was the centre of what went on. This had caused teaching to become very demanding. The specialist focus groups at schools B and A attributed the increased intensity of work in teaching deaf learners to individualisation. Chimwe at school A said: "We have a lot of individualisation that is why our classes are smaller than in the mainstream." In that discussion Kondas argued: "But individualisation is affected here because the learners are so different. Some have multiple disabilities while others have normal intelligence. If the children in the class are that varied this affects teaching as one will try to cater for all." The teacher's work increased because she had a mixed ability group and had to attend to each child's individual needs. Gwara in a different focus group discussion at school B also attributed the teacher's increased workload to

individualisation of instruction. She explained: “Remember when you teach hearing children you are teaching children in a class, but when you teach deaf children you are teaching individuals in a class where you are trying to do one on one teaching as opposed to teaching many children at the same time”. Like Chimwe at school A, Gwara explained that individualisation was the reason they had smaller classes than at mainstream schools for hearing children. Evans (2004) observed that although small class sizes allowed for individualised teaching, these small classes also highlighted that teacher-directed instruction was most beneficial to the students. In other words small class sizes indicated that the deaf learners were deficient and needed the teacher’s individual direction more than they needed their peers’ interactions in the class community. This not only negated the view of deaf learners as normal but also caused a heavy workload through individualisation. In partly explaining the heavy workload of South African mainstream teachers, Jansen (2004) said that the majority of them were under-prepared to deal with the curriculum. Applied to the situation of the teachers of deaf pupils in the current study, this implied that teachers who said they had a heavy workload might not be sufficiently trained either to treat deaf learners as a normal class or to implement individualisation in their small classes.

The lack of training on how to implement individualisation was supported by the observation that there was uncertainty in the specialist focus group about how Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) were implemented. Asked how individualisation was affected by the co-enrolment of hearing learners into deaf pupils’ classes, there was silence in the group for some time before Gwara said: “Our classes can go up to 15 because of inclusive education which brings in hearing children into the classes.” Probed on how they were individualising instruction in actual practice under these circumstances, there was a lengthy silence before Nyarai explained: “I first assess and note individual strengths and weaknesses. From there I

devise some individual special plans. I only group them for Content[28] subjects, but English and Maths I individualise." The silences might indicate uncertainty. It is worth noting that this explanation did not clarify how an IEP was put into practice. This concurred with Andreason, Asp-Onsjo, and Isaksson (2013) who found that because guidelines for implementing IEPs in Sweden were inadequate, schools did not critically consider what an IEP was and how to implement it.

When the group was pressed further to discuss the performance of the deaf and hearing pupils in a co-enrolled class, Nyarai said: "Their (deaf) performance is not bad. I actually think they strive much more than the hearing students. They really try their best". It appeared from these reluctant responses that these specialists were more reticent about evaluating the co-enrolment of hearing children than had been the case with non-specialists at the same school. For example Banhai in the non-specialist group said about co-enrolment: "Teachers are human beings, they have attitudes. Some would just leave the deaf and go with the hearing because they benefit. With the deaf, one needs to go over and over again on the same concept. The parents of the hearing child would want to see their children progressing yet I am trying to work with the deaf too". Even though the non-specialist talked more freely than the specialists on co-enrolment, it could also be significant that she talked about teachers in general as if to deflect attention from her own experiences with co-enrolment. The reasons for the specialists' reticence could not be ascertained, but could be related to the possibility that they were aware that this local model differed from those reported elsewhere. Co-enrolment in the literature usually entailed team-teaching or co-teaching involving two teachers, one signing for deaf pupils and another speaking for the hearing pupils (Kirchner,

[28] Content subjects are the group of subjects including Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Science and Social Studies.

2004; Stinson & Kluwin, 2003; Tang, 2014). It was also noteworthy that the non-specialist mentioned the parents of hearing learners as wanting to see progress and not parents of the deaf children. This could be because parents of children with disabilities are plagued by feelings of pessimism, hostility, shame (Mpofu, *et al.*, 2007), denial, projection of blame, guilt, grief, withdrawal and rejection (Takavarasha, 2010). They were probably feeling too helpless, depressed and inadequate (Gupta & Singhal, 2004) to become interested in their child's academic progress, especially if they did not get support, skills and unbiased information on deafness (Storbeck & Moodley, 2009). These parents were less likely to put pressure on teachers to ensure their deaf children were making academic progress than parents of hearing children.

The specialist focus group at school B attributed the increased intensity of work more directly to more conscious effort and repetitive teaching, rather than individualisation. In that discussion, Moyo said: "It is so taxing to teach the deaf child. By 10 am you will be exhausted, especially if you try to do reading. Just one word will make you tired." In a different discussion group at school A, Kondas had similar sentiments: "*Musaita zvekutamba.* I tell you *panofiwa pano*" (This is not child's play as there is a lot of work. We really sweat it out here). If the teaching of only one word took so much time and was so exhausting, one gets the impression that the teacher was doing technically difficult work. Evans (2004) said the teaching of word-based skills such as vocabulary was related to an emphasis on explicit teaching in deaf education. In agreement Livingston (1997) stated that traditionally programmes for teaching deaf learners had emphasised word-based skills because they were easier to teach but she pointed out that such an approach emphasised the mechanistic features of language. Teaching only one word for half the morning might also indicate that the teacher was not conversant with what Taylor and Taylor (2012) called aspects most germane to its

'teachability' such as moving from bottom-up to top-down illustrations, examples, analogies and demonstrations. In other words the teacher thought that until students master the basic building block of the one word, they could not move onto sentence and paragraph level. This mechanistic bottom-up focus ignored the possibility of emphasising more global, discourse structures. This approach would not only help the learners understand more than one word at the same time, but would capitalise on the class community since discourse was amenable to cooperative work in groups. The metaphor of the teacher's work not being child's play portrayed the occupation as demanding and serious, without room for fun in the class community. These perceptions of their work translated into teaching processes which were equally serious and rigid. The non-specialist focus group discussion at school A objected to this seriousness and advocated for more relaxed conditions so that children would not feel the pain of being in school (see 7.4.3 in Chapter 7 for excerpt). These non-specialist teachers were pointing out some of the things that could make children dislike school as they associated schooling with being miserable and serious all day long. Play is a viable means of assisting children with self-expression from an emotional and communication point of view (Shen, 2009). The only other time this matter of being miserable in school was raised was in passing in a specialist focus group discussion at another school. In response to a follow-up question on whether the school had the capacity to look after children younger than five years of age in its boarding facilities, Nzou at school C said: "Winter comes and goes, they (deaf children) will be warm and comfortable for the greater part of the year." The specialist was less concerned about the affective aspects of learning than the non-specialists. Ignoring of affective aspects could be attributed to single-minded, serious pursuit of academic goals inculcated in specialist training. However, this narrow-minded focus was misguided in that academic pursuits were easily undermined by unfulfilled affective aspects. Overall, the non-specialist discussion had a broader focus on affective and academic aspects and this width of

ideas recurred when subject-specific issues were discussed to a greater extent in non-specialist than specialist discussions as presented in the next section.

9.2.3 Teaching processes: Technical difficulties in subject-specific issues

A notable difference between the specialists and non-specialists in their discussion of teaching processes was that the non-specialists tended to discuss more subject and topic-specific teaching processes. For example Dhongeri at school B said: "When we are doing comprehension exercises, I don't sign the whole passage but I read the passage and from my understanding I interpret the passage and then they can answer the questions". This concurred with Storbeck (1999) who found that teachers of deaf pupils in South Africa saw SASL as the quintessence of Deaf education and that one of their roles was to interpret for these learners. In order to make the Shona or English passages understandable the teachers had to use technical skills of translation. In this case the teacher made it clear that she did not translate literally but did what Evans (2004) called conceptual translations to enable the learners to understand the discourse. This was a technical decision which focused on discourse, rather than word by word translation. This mind-set was surprising given that teacher-education did not have a ZSL/spoken language, bilingual emphasis. It could have been as a consequence of trial and error, the teachers realised that the only way that the deaf learners understood the comprehension passages was if they were translated into Sign Language first. This raised a technical difficulty as expressed in one principal's question: "(When you translate into Sign Language first) …some of the children will pass even if they don't understand Shona, so are they passing Sign Language or Shona?" Despite the principal's misgivings, it appeared to be quite feasible to teach and examine one language using another language. For example in a study among hearing students in Zimbabwe, Chiwome and Thondhlana (1992) found that

some teachers preferred to use English as the medium of instruction in the teaching of Shona, and some Shona students preferred writing their essays about Shona in English. By extrapolation, it should be possible to translate Shona into ZSL and examine deaf learners if the ideal of a language being used to examine itself is not feasible.

Another subject-specific issue raised in the non-specialist group at school B dealt with the difficulty in teaching Mathematics. Chingai observed: "In Maths number stories are more difficult for them but if you just do simple addition, multiplication and so on they can easily tackle that." Factors which might be contributory are the experiential deficits and difficulties in reading and comprehending written English text, as well as a curriculum focussed on computation and basic skills thereby limiting deaf students' opportunity to engage with story problems (Pagliaro, 2014; Pagliaro & Ansell, 2002). Gregory (1998) explained that some of the words which are critical in developing mathematical understanding are the words with which deaf children have the most difficulties, logical imperatives such as 'if' and 'because'. Pagliaro and Ansell (2002) added that they have difficulties with conditionals, comparatives, negatives and inferential language.

The subject-specific discussion also touched on Mathematics at school A. Rai said: "When we are doing subtraction together as a class they do well. They actually sign to me UNDERSTAND, but once I ask them to work independently they no longer know what to do". Asked what mode the class discussion would be, she explained: "We sign, talk and use actual objects to subtract and they do well and participate actively. It is only when I say do it on your own that they no longer know." Pagliaro and Ansell (2002) wrote that teachers who presented mathematical problems in some form of manually coded English borrowed some

features of Sign Language while maintaining the syntactic and grammatical structures of English. The accuracy of the English representations have been questioned (Johnson *et al.*, 1989; Moores, 2010). This could explain why, when confronted with only the written English version of the mathematical problems without the aid of signs, the deaf class would no longer know what to do.

Another subject-specific issue that was brought up in the same non-specialist focus group discussion dealt with spellings. Mari said: "Deaf children have difficulty with spellings, they can't spell. They know how to sign a word like 'elephant' but if you ask them to write the word they sign DON'T KNOW. They don't know any spellings and so this means if I don't supply answers in multiple choice tests they do not know what to write because they only know how to sign." The spelling challenge that this teacher raised contradicted Grushkin (1998) who found that typically, deaf students' spelling skills surpassed their reading comprehension skills. It could be that this teacher had a one-sided focus on the teaching of spellings which Bruin (2014) called reductionist. A holistic approach would not use reductionist, one-size-fits-all spelling strategies. It would use sound-spelling (phonic) patterns for those learners who could benefit from auditory approaches and pictures or orthographic patterns of words to take full advantage of deaf learners' visual nature. Evans (2004) explained deaf learners' better spelling by saying that the visual nature of spelling suited deaf children's visual nature and also the mechanistic approach of teaching them which emphasised letter and word-building rather than global discourse structures. Taking advantage of deaf children's visual nature would also incorporate finger-spelling as a tool for exploring relationships between letters, words and signs (Roos, 2013).

Most of what the non-specialists discussed as subject-specific processes pointed towards an occupation that was technically difficult. In one case the teacher did not require just teaching skills but also interpretation skills. In another case the teacher seized on the complex issue of how to ensure there actually was transfer of what had been learned cooperatively as a class to individual independent work. In yet another case the teacher tried to devise ways of by-passing what were possibly sound-based spelling difficulties in her tests of constructs other than spellings. All these attempts indicated an occupation requiring not only content knowledge but also knowledge about pedagogy in disciplines as diverse as linguistics and mathematics. In addition the teachers needed to have knowledge of assessment, measurement and evaluation in education. This intricate web of what teachers needed to know and do made the occupation of teaching deaf learners technically difficult. It is worth noting that it was the non-specialists who raised most of these subject-specific difficulties. Since the curriculum in specialist teacher-education did not have an emphasis on subject-specific difficulties (see Chapter 5), this oversight might have made the specialists regard subject-specific challenges as unimportant and therefore they became less sensitive to such difficulties. The issue of teacher sensitivity and introspection on deficiencies is discussed in the next section.

9.2.4 Teaching processes: Introspection on teacher deficiencies

Non-specialist teachers discussed their own deficiencies more openly, acknowledging that often they were deficient in the process of teaching. Muza at school C said: “Even some of the things I teach I realise that I am not teaching it the way it should but they still grasp the ideas. Most of the time they follow the lead of the hearing children in the class.” Asked to explain this she said: “My class has hearing and deaf pupils. The hearing children are quicker to grasp because the teacher’s explanation is fully understood whereas for the deaf it lacks.

This is because some of us cannot properly explain. But you can see that if only you could properly explain they would grasp the idea from you". This acknowledgement of deficiency was repeated in two separate non-specialist focus groups. Sasa at school A said: "I don't have enough sign terms to use when teaching," while Fadzai at school B said: "Finding the exact signs to match the words you want to say is difficult". To try to alleviate some of these difficulties Sasa said she found lip-reading useful. She explained: "Lip-reading comes in handy especially in the event that I don't know the sign for a particular word so the child will know what I am saying. The ones who can lip-read actually tell the others what I have said. This is why we sit down when we teach, so we can be at the children's eye-level."

Acknowledging that one was deficient in carrying out any task should be the first step in trying to remedy the deficiency. It was therefore important that these non-specialist teachers had reflected on their communication abilities and acknowledged their shortcomings. This kind of introspection eluded many specialists who when they talked of communication in the teaching process usually laid the deficiencies elsewhere: on the language, the learners or the government. Many specialists might feel that since they have already been trained, their own capabilities were beyond reproach and so deficiencies must therefore lie elsewhere. On the other hand, the non-specialists might have introspected more freely because they still had not received specialist training, which they expected to solve these challenges. However, the non-specialist teachers' reflections had not gone far enough as was evident in their solutions. In the first instance, depending on hearing children to provide the lead was likely to result in undesirable consequences for the deaf children such as lowered self esteem and lack of self confidence. In any case this limited the deaf learners to what the hearing children could do and no more. Lip-reading as a solution was also likely to have similar undesirable consequences, and in addition there was no guarantee that the lip-reading interlocutors would

always do this correctly. These defective solutions aside, it was a plus that the non-specialists tended to be more introspective about their own deficits than the specialists.

The combined specialist and non-specialist discussions on the processes of teaching deaf learners were epitomised in the metaphor of 'dancing on the same spot' with its images of repetitive lack of forward movement and rigidity. These repetitive, information-transmission teaching processes occurred in a technically difficult field and had implications on how the national curriculum used in all mainstream and special schools was regarded by the teachers in the special schools for the deaf, as discussed under the broad category *Teacher professionalism in deaf education* in the next section.

9.3 Teacher professionalism in deaf education

The views on deaf education expressed in the previous section (see 9.2) have a bearing on teachers' conduct, demeanour and their perceptions of quality and standards guiding teaching in deaf education. What teachers knew about teaching deaf learners, the roles teachers played in the institutions emerged in interviews and were linked to the teachers' conduct and demeanour. These roles were categorised as teacher professionalism. The following sections therefore present and analyse data on *Teacher professionalism* under the four sub-themes: *Mainstream curriculum standards for deaf learners*; *Vocational curriculum for deaf learners; Mainstream examination standards for deaf learners* and *Teacher-performance appraisals*.

9.3.1 Teacher Professionalism: Mainstream curriculum standards for deaf learners

The technical difficulties and intensified work involved in teaching deaf children made many teachers say that the national curriculum and public examinations were unsuitable for deaf learners in special schools. For example in the specialist focus group at school A, Tema said: "The problem is that the books they use are meant for children in the mainstream. Now to take that detail and try to give it to the H.I. children becomes very difficult". In the focus group discussion at school C, Stick said something similar: "The curriculum we are using is meant for the mainstream so our (deaf) children have difficulties because they have a language deficit". Both discussion groups cited the mainstream curriculum as a problem, causing difficulties. The difficulties lay in 'giving' material from the books, which implied teaching process difficulties. The use of the word 'giving' depicted a process in which the teacher would be more active and the receiving learners presumably passive recipients who were supposed to be 'acquiring' knowledge. 'Acquisition' as a metaphor of learning was a depiction which concurred with the dominant information-transmission processes teachers said they used to teach deaf learners (see 9.2.1 in this chapter) and described as reductionist by Bruin (2014). This was congruent with the perception of deaf children as having a language deficit as the teacher in the school C discussion explained.

The specialists at school C were quick to point out that they were not advocating a different curriculum for deaf learners. Mbara said: "We are not suggesting a change in the curriculum but just to say in the normal stream they take seven years isn't it? If these ones take 10 or so years it will be okay." In agreement Nzou explained: "We do not want to water down the curriculum but just change the time frame. We should not water down the curriculum so that they write the same grade seven examination and get the same certificate as everyone else

(seventh grade is the last grade in the elementary school).” However after these statements had been made, members of this group went on to advocate measures that amounted to a modified curriculum. Tantan said: “Our children are very good at practicals so they need to be given more time to do practicals and less on academic work so that they can later live a normal life. Many people are earning a living from this you know.” The group generally agreed. They might have been aware that watering down the curriculum was discriminatory but when they discussed details of what should be done, they were unaware that the measures they advocated actually did dilute the mainstream curriculum. The specialists at school A were more emphatic about deaf learners being unsuitable for academic work because they did better in practical subjects.

9.3.2 Teacher professionalism: Vocational curriculum for deaf learners

The observation that deaf children excelled in practical subjects was used by many teachers to advocate greater emphasis on those subjects because deaf learners were said to be going nowhere with academic subjects. At school A, in the non-specialist group Mari said: “These children should only be taught to write their names and do basic mathematics then they are released to go and do technical-vocational subjects.” This view was not further discussed in that group, but in the specialist group at the same school it had widespread support. Zenda in the specialist focus group discussion said: “It is no use for them to do academic subjects which they do not make use of in the future, subjects that they cannot master, it is just forcing matters.” Nyepo in the same group said: “They should just concentrate on handicraft skills – the girls learning sewing and boys learning carpentry and gardening, after all they don’t go for secondary education.” Chimwe added: “We should deliberate as people on the ground to decide on what is good for our pupils, things that will help them after school. I am thinking of

building, carpentry, sewing and so on. We would then look at the specific academic areas that are needed in order for one to excel in each of these practical areas, for example measurement. These areas would then take centre stage in our primary school syllabus." In the same group Zenda advocated that books be designed specifically for deaf learners. She said: "I don't know whether it is not possible to have textbooks specifically for deaf children which are different to those used in the normal schools. There should be a basic book with signs and pictures to help them. Right now all we have is the Sign Language dictionary."

It is worth noting that the teachers who were more explicitly in favour of modifying the curriculum for deaf learners were at a school where there were no deaf learners doing secondary school work. This could indicate that exposure to deaf learners doing secondary school academic work might have made teachers in the other two schools aware of the need for the deaf learners to pursue the ordinary academic curriculum in the primary school. They would be aware that the primary school academic curriculum was the foundation for secondary school. Teachers who did not have this exposure pointed out that there was no need for the deaf children to learn academic subjects that they could not master, after all they did not go on to secondary education. As a direct result of exposure to deaf learners who only proceeded to learn handicraft skills after the grade seven examinations, the teachers at this school advocated a modified curriculum emphasising the pre-requisite skills that enable one to learn such handicraft skills and de-emphasizing mainstream academic subjects and examinations.

9.3.3 Teacher professionalism: Mainstream examination standards for deaf learners

An examination-related version of curriculum modification was advocated by Zenda at school A, who said: "Right now they (deaf children) write the grade seven examinations which do not help them." This implied that deaf children should not write the public examination. This idea did not receive direct support from the group. It had indirect support with contributions advocating a more technical-vocational thrust than an academic one, but no one else explicitly stated that the public examination was not useful for deaf learners. Kondas contradicted the idea that the examination was not useful. She said: "I have a feeling that among the deaf there are those who do benefit. Those ones should do academic work and write the examination." No one in any of the other discussion groups suggested that examinations for deaf learners were not useful, instead, various forms of modification of the examination were discussed.

Modification of examinations meant different things to different educators of the deaf depending on what they believed about teaching deaf children in general or the use of Sign Language specifically. The principal of one school said: "In this country they say you can sign to interpret the exam. I'm not happy about that. (When you interpret) isn't it just providing the answers?" A specialist at a different school corroborated; his own principal also perceived interpretation of examinations as provision of answers. Svayaz at school C said: "I was invigilating the grade 7 examination and I would read and try to sign for them what the question said but the Head (Principal) said no, stop it. You are telling the children the answers." This perception could have a lot to do with misconceptions about Sign Language. Pagliaro and Ansell (2002) found that when signing story problems in ASL, the use of location, repetition, movement and hand-shape could link the problem statement closely to its

solution. This meant that someone who did not know much about Sign Language would be likely to think that the candidates were being given the answers. The point of concern in the current study is the prohibition of signing all examinations based on generalising the perception that ZSL used to interpret the Shona examination simply provided the candidates with the answers. The principals' misgivings about signed interpretations might also have been based on the observation that teachers who invigilated in the schools are, by their own admission, not proficient in ZSL. They are not trained interpreters either. These considerations could justify the principals' prohibition. However this school level prohibition appeared to be in violation of a government policy, *Special examination arrangements for learners with disabilities and other special needs* (Secretary for Education, 2007b). This government policy stipulated that principals should provide Sign Language interpreters to sign examination instructions or questions to deaf learners who were normally taught through signing if they could not access the questions through other means. Principals regarded this modification as an unethical provision of answers to deaf candidates by untrained interpreters who are not proficient in Sign Language. It is evident that there is a mismatch between the policy vision and the reality in the schools.

Other teachers, both specialists and non-specialists, said deaf learners should write alternative examinations, rather than mainstream examinations. Fadzai in the non-specialist focus group discussion at school C said: "Deaf children write the same examination as hearing children. I wouldn't suggest that they write different examinations but that simple terms should be used for the deaf children because of their more limited vocabulary." Tantan in the specialist focus group discussion at the same school made a similar remark. She said: "In the exam they (examiners) bring long passages and comprehension questions that require explanations. If all the examiners want to find out is whether the children know or not, it would be better to ask

the deaf candidates to just fill in (blank spaces in sentences). It would be easier for the children that way." Mbara in the same discussion group argued against the writing of alternative examinations saying that this would be watering down the curriculum. She suggested that the learners just needed more time in school before they could write the regular examination. Her colleagues were not suggesting a different examination but an alternative form of the same examination. Mbara had could not see how the same level of difficulty would be maintained if for example simpler terms were being used especially in language examinations. It would appear that some teachers were suspicious about alternative assessments which they called a different examination. The concern was with the equivalence of any alternative assessments which they viewed as lowering standards. Generally the modification of curricula and examinations was closely related to how teachers perceived their own appraisals.

9.3.4 Teacher professionalism: Teacher-performance appraisals

The issue of teacher performance appraisals was raised by the interviewed teachers. Many teachers in special schools for the deaf said that they should not be compared with those teaching hearing children in mainstream settings. Tema, a specialist at school A represented this view when she said: "We are wrongly whipped into line by officials who say we are useless because we have a zero pass rate at grade seven. They compare our (deaf pupils') grade 7 results to those for normal people." This was a paradoxical statement. By talking about 'normal people' the teacher portrayed her deaf pupils as less than normal, i.e. inferior, while at the same time she complained that government officials called teachers of these children useless, i.e. inferior. Tantan, another specialist at school C said: "When they say that we have a zero per cent pass rate they forget that at least I was able to make someone write

his name." This highlighted the low expectations of what deaf learners could achieve because the ability to write one's name might be a more appropriate goal for a child with severe mental challenges, rather than a deaf child. These low expectations were evident in various teachers' comments. Some argued that the children were being taught too much content and should have their own syllabus. For example a non-specialist at school B, Aripo said: "The books we are using were designed for the mainstream, yet we are saying these children are disadvantaged. Reduce the content." Reduction of content was congruent with the views of deaf learners as deficient, and less than normal. The teachers' views generally indicated that across the three schools they felt that it was not valid to compare their teaching of deficient learners with that of peers teaching hearing and presumably normal children at mainstream schools.

Both specialist and non-specialist teachers agreed that comparisons between them and mainstream teachers were unfair. As the starting point was different, the outcome could not be expected to be the same and so there should be no comparison. By advocating that interpretation of outcomes should factor in the different starting points, teachers were making the point that what deaf learners needed was criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced assessment. This learner-centred approach to assessment focussed on what the individual learner needed to know and did not need to compare with other learners. By an extension of the same logic the teachers were saying their own performance as teachers should not be compared to the performance of other teachers elsewhere. These arguments are reasonable for as long as there were other set criteria against which learner and teacher performance could be judged. A complete absence of standards to benchmark performance was likely to result in the acceptance of generalised low outcomes for all deaf learners such as being satisfied with enabling them to read and write their names, as in the quotation above. The

expressed view that deaf learners were not 'normal' was also likely to lend itself to a process of attempting to normalise them to the extent that the low expectations would allow. These standards were unacceptably low but were to be expected in light of teacher-education which consistently emphasised the deficiencies associated with deafness in an oral approach.

Whether the emphasis was on oral or sign-bilingual approaches, high standards were more likely to be beneficial to both learners and teachers especially if a system of accountability were put in place by a knowledgeable inspectorate. Both specialist and non-specialist teachers, however, regarded inspectors from outside the school as ignorant about deaf education. It was constantly suggested that these outsiders should therefore first consult them rather than just inspect their work, and offer mainstream advice which was unsuitable for the special school. Gwara, a specialist at school B said: "Last week a group of visiting inspectors told us to start scheme-planning like in the mainstream. They don't know that our lessons are situational that is why we plan on a daily basis. We need people who know to inspect us and those who don't know should ask us." The teachers said that long-term planning was unsuitable for deaf learners as they were best taught what was happening in the here and now for them to understand various situations. They also said that, unlike in the mainstream, they often had to repeat lessons and therefore there was no need to re-plan lessons that were being repeated.

Teachers said that despite their specialist concerns, government officials still imposed mainstream school expectations and so they ended up teaching for the officials rather than for the benefit of the deaf learners. Teaching for the officials involved rushing through work in order to have the required number of written exercises in the children's books just to satisfy

principals and inspectors. For example Tantan at school C said: “We tend to teach for the head (principal) who requires to see seven Maths exercises (every week) and so we rush through. We also rush through work, just browsing through in order to cover the syllabus so that the deaf learners can at least write examinations.” On the issue of having the pupils write a predetermined number of exercises per week, Tema at school A said: “This only helps those who come to inspect as they find that the children wrote Content, English and so on, but the children surely do not benefit”. The purpose of raising standards of teaching through performance appraisal was defeated when teachers rushed through work in order to be appraised as having completed the work. The teachers suggested that inspectors had to be people who had gone through the Special Education system. For example Tembo at school B said: “We need people (inspectors) who are well versed with deaf people. They (government) should give a chance to people who are in the system by promoting them.” Rim at school A said: “We need people with hands-on experience in higher offices who would know that we are wasting time as they (deaf children) cannot write (examinations)”. As it was however, some of the inspectors without hands-on experience in deaf education were reported to be marvelling at the very idea that teachers managed to communicate with deaf children. For example Mavhu said dramatically: “They (inspectors) came here and asked (lowers voice) ‘you tell me all these children are deaf? So how do you communicate? How do you go about it?’ (Raises voice back to normal). They know nothing yet they are making policies for you and will assess you and award a mark.” The lowered voice indicated the incredulity in the inspector’s voice while Mavhu’s own tone was indignant. While an ignorant inspectorate was undesirable, even knowledgeable inspectors with hands-on experience in deaf education would still have to do quality control to avoid the setting of low ceilings such as only striving to teach deaf children to write their names and exempting them from examinations.

Non-specialist teachers used less sophisticated, less specific ideas than the specialists in their justifications of unwillingness to be appraised using the same measures as their peers in the mainstream. For example non-specialists said that special schools catered for disadvantaged learners, which was a rather general analysis. Specialists on the other hand explained that whatever they achieved as teachers should be appreciated as many of the children came to school without mastery of any language, which is analysis specifying the disadvantage and locating it in the deaf education literature. Another difference was that whereas the non-specialists overtly called for the watering down of the curriculum the specialists would say they did not want the curriculum watered down. However what the specialists did advocate implied a reduced curriculum. These differences could indicate that the specialists were aware of deaf education issues and concerns arising in specialist training and so tried to be politically correct. In the more detailed discussions of what to do in practice, the teachers' attempts at political correctness became transparent when they expressed pre-specialist perceptions advocating a watering down of the curriculum.

The issues around what deaf learners should be taught, how they should be taught and the technical difficulty of teaching them specific subjects and topics influence assessment issues. Many believed it was important for deaf learners to be assessed in examinations using instruments comparable to those for hearing candidates. Others argued that any alternative assessments were watered down and consequently made the resultant qualifications inferior. A few said that they should not write the public examination while most were disgruntled with the current teacher-appraisal system.

9.4 Teacher Professionalisation

The views on curriculum and examination standards for deaf learners expressed in the previous section (see 9.3) have a bearing on teachers' perceptions of the roles they are required to play, their status, standing and levels of professional reward as emerged in the interviews. These self-perceptions and the perceptions of others about teachers' roles were categorised as teacher professionalisation. The following sections therefore present and analyse data on *Teacher professionalisation* under the four sub-themes: *Speech therapist and Sign Language interpreter roles*; *Surrogate parent; Teacher-pupil role reversal* and *Unrecognised specialist.*

9.4.1 Teacher professionalisation: Speech therapist and Sign Language interpreter roles

The issue of the role played by teachers in the school emerged in varying forms. Some of the roles teachers had were part of the expected teaching role while others were not. An example of the latter was the expectation that teachers should correct the pupils' speech (see 8.2.2 in chapter eight). Another example was the expectation that teachers should interpret public examinations into ZSL (see 9.3.3 in this chapter). These expectations arise as there were few speech therapists and no professional Sign Language interpreters in Zimbabwe. Under these circumstances teachers of the deaf interpreted for deaf persons even in legal processes in the courts and with the police. This practice was alluded to by Duma in an individual interview at school A. She said: "Instead of getting a teacher from the school for the deaf to interpret for them, the police and the courts need to train their own people. I once made this suggestion to a senior police official but he said there are very few cases involving deaf people and so it would be a waste of time." The practice of using teachers of the deaf to interpret continued because the teachers traditionally performed this role without question. Teachers of the deaf

also interpreted church services for deaf pupils. Mari explained: "When you are on duty that week, you are supposed to accompany the children to church where you will interpret the Sunday service." In Zimbabwe there is no professionalization of Sign Language interpretation, no code of professional ethics, no certification and no controlling body to govern interpretation practices. This is a similar situation to that in which South Africa was 11 years ago as described by Aarons and Reynolds (2003). Storbeck (1999) also wrote that at that time, South African teachers of the deaf took on the responsibility of interpreting. This is the situation in Zimbabwe today and it implies that as there are no quality controls, the expertise of the teachers' interpretation of legal material, examinations and church services cannot be guaranteed. The reluctance to train professional Sign Language interpreters stems in part from the fact that deafness is a low incidence disability. This arrangement potentially infringes a deaf person's right to fair judicial processes as the quality of the interpretation cannot be guaranteed. It raises ethical questions on the quality of the interpretation and whether interpretation should be part of the teacher's role. Interpretation was not really part of teaching but in the absence of professional interpreters, teachers interpret. The reasoning was that the teachers' occupation necessitated regular contact with deaf children. Teachers were therefore presumed to have knowledge of Sign Language and were expected by the policy on *Special examination arrangements for learners with special needs* (Secretary for Education, 2007b) to interpret examinations into Sign Language. When teachers were called on to interpret examinations in the schools, the consequences of their interpretation raised justified or unjustified misgivings to the extent that the interpretation was discontinued by some principals in defiance of government policy. However those outside deaf education, such as religious ministers, the judiciary and the police, were ignorant about Sign Language and unlikely to raise misgivings about the teachers' interpretation in church and legal

proceedings. Teachers therefore continued in this non-teaching role of interpretation outside the school for the deaf without question.

9.4.2 Teacher professionalisation: Surrogate parent

Teachers of the deaf also had other non-teaching roles at residential institutions for deaf children. For example Mari said: "Throughout that week (when you are on duty) you are expected to do dining hall duties to make sure they (deaf children) have enough to eat. You write a report for the head (principal) on the quality of food and the goings on during meal-times". This responsibility arose because the children stayed at the school for the greater part of the year and so teachers were expected to be responsible for their welfare. They were expected to intercede on behalf of the deaf children who were too young and inarticulate to assert their rights and prevent various forms of abuse or neglect. Teachers were not well prepared for some of these added responsibilities. For example Mari said: "If I write an accurate report showing that there was a shortage of food at the dining-hall, what will happen to my good relations with the kitchen staff?" In this case the teacher's allegiance lay with fellow staff members whom she protected at the expense of the children she had been entrusted to represent. This could reflect that the teacher had been given increased responsibility but had not been empowered through appropriate training. In line with this, Tinds said in the same focus group discussion: "A lot of things are beyond our control. For example if they (deaf children) tell you that they are eating food which they do not like there is nothing you can do because it is an administrative issue which has to do with finances." This teacher's helplessness also showed that the teacher had been given increased responsibilities but without the necessary authority to solve whatever challenges she encountered. Teachers' helplessness and allegiance to fellow members of staff might explain

the finding by Sobsey (2003) that children with disabilities who lived in extra-familial situations such as residential schools were likely to be abused by their caregivers.

Many teachers said they expected the responsibility of caring for children when they became teachers; some said they had expected even more of this role when they came to the special school. For example at school B, Tembo said: “I became a teacher because it is a noble profession in which I help people. I had a choice to become a nurse but I chose teaching because I like helping children”. In agreement Gwara at the same school said: “I came into special education because I wanted to help a deaf girl who was at … (mainstream school, name withheld) where I was teaching.” At school C Mbara said: “This institution is well known for harbouring disabled people and as I grew up in the neighbourhood, I have always wanted to help here.” At the same school Nzou said: “I used to live with blind people whom I would help and so I saw no difference with these (deaf children)”. At school A Sasa said: “It is our responsibility to see to it that the child has bathed dressed and so on. If these children had been at home their parents would have been taking care of that”. Teaching was regarded as a caring profession, initially for all children and this became even more accentuated in teaching children with disabilities. It is noteworthy that deaf children were viewed by most of these teachers as disabled. Ways to discipline deaf children was a question asked of the researcher at the end of one non-specialist group discussion. The question was predicated on the belief that it was not right to be seen punishing disabled children (see 7.4.4 for excerpt in Chapter 7). In this question, it was strongly evident that deaf children were perceived as disabled. In this case the teacher’s role of being a firm and fair disciplinarian was threatened because of the teacher’s sympathy towards disability. Pity and sympathy have the potential to spoil the child and so undermine the teacher’s role of caring.

The care demanded from the school was thought in some cases to be more than what teachers had expected. For example in the non-specialist focus group discussion at school A, Tinds said: "Recently we had a parent requesting that his child be kept here over the school holidays. He said just occupy him there". Administration turned this request down arguing that the school had the child for 9 months in a year, and now the parent would not spend only three months with his own child. Tinds said: "So you see for some parents bringing the child here is a way of hiding him from friends, visitors and so on as they are ashamed of the deaf child." The principal at school C said: "Nearly every school holiday we have one or two deaf children who are not collected to go home by their parents. We usually follow-up and sometimes ferry the children to their respective homes". The principal at school B confirmed that similar incidents were regular at the end of the school term and said: "In one incident a few years ago, the parents provided us with a false address and we could not trace them. The matter was reported to the police who approached the Department of Social Welfare to take care of the child as if he were an orphan."

Parents of deaf children and some members of the community believed that these institutions are places of refuge for children with disabilities. This is evident in Mbara's use of the term 'harbouring' to describe how the local community regarded what went on at the residential school for the deaf. Teachers and principals said lack of interest and in extreme cases, the abandonment of deaf children was evidence that some parents have negative attitudes towards disability. It is for these extreme cases that legislation such as section 7 was put in place. Section 7 stated that if any parent or guardian neglects or abandons a child for a period in excess of a year, he or she shall be guilty of an offence. A parent may be deemed guilty of

abandoning or neglecting a child if he or she leaves the child in the care of some other person or institution and thereafter shows inadequate interest in the well-being of the child (Child Protection and Adoption Act, 1996). Such legislation was aimed at deterring neglect and abuse of children but, was woefully inadequate because a year of abandonment was too long before one was adjudged to be abusive. This reactive approach would leave teachers fostering neglected deaf children during the year. In addition in some cases the lack of care from home was not so extreme or pronounced to warrant legal action. Lack of care and love might be more implied by the expectation that the teacher had more responsibility for the child than the biological parents. For example Edzai at school B said: "Some parents were saying to me 'I've brought your kids. How do you survive them?' yet they are the biological parents but they say to me 'your kids'. This is why I stay on because if the parent is not for the child, then who shall be for the child if I leave and go to a mainstream school?" The perceived negative attitudes of parents and communities, some of which might not be punishable by law, need to be addressed through teacher interventions which expand the teacher's role for example to include counselling of parents in preventive programmes.

Preventive programmes for parents were not directly mentioned and the closest teachers came to this was the suggestion that there was a need for awareness campaigns. For example Nzou at school C said: "Parents should be conscientised to bring their children as early as they detect the disability of the child. This would enable the children to learn Sign Language early." This suggestion did not involve parents in the actual early intervention programme as their role was limited to bringing the child to the presumed experts at the school. At school A the closest they came to suggesting preventive programmes for parents of deaf children was when they said parents should be given the opportunity to visit their children at the residential institution on set days. For example Reva at school A said: "There is need to arrange parents'

visiting days because the (school) term is far too long for young children to spend the whole term without seeing their parents. We visit our own (hearing) children who are in boarding schools elsewhere and I think we need a similar arrangement here." Obviously at this school there were no such arrangements. Set days when parents could visit their deaf children during the school term as suggested would help in improving perceived negative attitudes towards deaf children. Parents could get support from other parents and also learn from the many deaf children at various stages of their school careers. As it stands the teachers simply said parents had negative attitudes towards their disabled children. They did not factor in the possibility that some might still be grieving and others could have given up because of lack of support from the teachers. The teacher's role of supporting parents to cope with their children's deafness and accept it was something that neither the specialists nor the non-specialists mentioned. Instead teachers tended to blame parents for their negative attitudes towards their deaf children. For example in the specialist focus group discussion at school C Tantan said: "They (parents of deaf children) have negative attitudes towards H.I. and do not want to be associated with disability." In agreement Nzou said, "A lot of parents who bring their children here pretend to be poor so that (their deaf child's) school fees are paid by Social Welfare. Yet the same parents can afford to send their other non-disabled children to expensive schools." These suspicions of parents' attitudes and motivations could be alleviated if the teachers expanded their own professional roles to support and involve the parents more in the schools for the deaf. Formally organising that the parents visit their deaf children as suggested by one teacher might be a first step towards an organised preventive programme to proactively alleviate what teachers perceive as negative attitudes of such important stakeholders.

9.4.3 Teacher professionalisation: Teacher-pupil role reversal

While an expansion of teacher role beyond the classroom could help the parents, the teacher's role and responsibility to children in the classroom was also significant and was raised in many interviews. In various interviews it was acknowledged that deaf pupils taught their teachers Sign Language (see 8.3.2 in chapter 8). Professional teachers became learners, while their supposed pupils become informal teachers. This reversal of role raised ethical questions on whether the professional teachers could use the language they acquired from deaf pupils to teach effectively to extend the children's knowledge. The extent to which teachers were capable of teaching effectively would determine how they perceived their status, standing and levels of professional reward as raised in interviews by the teachers of deaf children.

9.4.4 Teacher professionalization: Unrecognised specialist

Status, standing and levels of professional reward were issues which often emerged in various interviews with specialist teachers. Many teachers raised the issue of inadequate remuneration. For example in the specialist focus group discussion at school B, Moyo said: "After all the hard work you don't even get enough for your table. So a teacher will say 'why bother?'". In agreement Gwara explained: "There is no incentive for teachers to work hard enough to help these children." Mavhu added: "Government has done nothing especially if we look at remuneration for us teachers who did Special Education as an additional course." In the specialist focus group at school C, Tantan said: "Sometimes we are de-motivated because no one recognises specialist teachers. We have been complaining for years that we are different from someone teaching at a mainstream school but we get the same salary. In fact the person at the mainstream school gets an additional allowance paid by the parents and I don't, yet I have more work to do." Asked to explain why they did not get allowances paid

by parents, Mbara in that group explained: “We don’t get allowances because most of these parents are poor and so cannot afford to pay school fees let alone an additional allowance for the teacher. A lot of the money here (at the school) comes from Social Welfare or donors who insist that it should benefit the child directly.” It is in response to this that Nzou argued that parents were not poor but pretended to be poor in order to avoid paying school fees because they had negative attitudes towards disability (see 9.3.1 in this chapter for excerpt). At school A Chimwe said: “It is sad that specialist teachers used to be better paid before independence but now the specialists are no longer paid.” In the same group Nyepo asked: “I would like to know whether outside this country teachers like us get the same salary as mainstream teachers.” No one in the group was certain, but they agreed that specialists had to earn more than general practitioners.

In the non-specialist focus group discussions, the discontent with salaries emerged at school B only. Banhai said: “Remuneration is not enough or at par with what we do. It is too far, far below what we put in.” In agreement Edzai said: “They should do something about it because they no longer recognise teachers at special schools.”

The discontent with low salaries continued in the individual interviews. For example Svayaz said: “When government removed specialist teachers’ allowances we were told that we were teaching few children for example seven and those in the mainstream were teaching many more, for example 45. We were told that there was therefore a balancing out in terms of workload because of different class sizes and we couldn’t argue that we needed an additional allowance”. In one case this government argument was also expressed by some mainstream teachers. For example Bia said: “One teacher from the mainstream asked me why we needed

a higher salary when we had less work. They think because we have fewer children we have less work."

Although both specialist and non-specialist teachers raised the issue of remuneration, this was a more emotional issue for the specialists than the non-specialists. The specialists talked about sadness, and being de-motivated in their work whereas the non-specialists did not. Even though both specialist and non-specialist groups used their increased workload as a justification for more remuneration, the specialists went further and used their additional qualification in Special Education to justify the need for higher remuneration. The additional qualification argument might be countered because some mainstream teachers also have additional qualifications in areas other than Special Education. It is worth noting that the teachers differed on what made the current remuneration unfair. Some said their income had to be higher than what mainstream teachers are paid since special school teaching has a heavier workload. Others said their income had to be at least the same as that for mainstream teachers because currently those in special schools were getting less since most parents of deaf children could not afford to pay the teachers' allowances. It is also interesting that given an opportunity to justify to government their need for a higher income than colleagues at mainstream schools, the specialists said they could not, as they had fewer pupils than in the mainstream.

In light of their various concerns about performance-related pay, bureaucratic mainstream-related controls and the challenges involved in teaching deaf learners, teachers were asked whether they are satisfied with their job. One said she was satisfied. Zare a non-specialist in an individual interview at school A said: "The local community marvels that they cannot

even ask a deaf person where he is going and yet I spend the whole day teaching them in signs. They are always saying we are doing a difficult job. At least the people can see that I am doing a great job. I also get uplifted from knowing that I am doing something in somebody's life." This teacher was satisfied that the local community in which she serves recognised her hard work. She was also intrinsically rewarded by being able to serve the learners. Other teachers said that they were not satisfied. Lack of recognition by the government was said to be de-motivating many teachers. For example Nyepo said: "Government doesn't seem to know that specialist teachers exist". In agreement Chimwe explained: "The people representing Special Education in government don't know what they are doing. They are supposed to be vocal about salaries and what we are supposed to do in the classrooms." The lack of recognition through appropriate material rewards and direction on the best special education practices were de-motivating these teachers.

9.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented and analysed data on the teaching processes teachers said they had to engage in as they taught deaf learners. Data on teachers' roles, their views on status, standing and levels of professional reward in deaf education were analysed. It emerged that teachers engaged in information-transmission, repetitive teaching as they did not expect the learners to engage in incidental learning. This made teaching a labour-intensive, demanding and rather serious job which had technical difficulties. Non-specialist and specialist teachers were in general agreement on these ideas. The non-specialists, however more readily acknowledged that they were deficient in the teaching process whereas introspection eluded the specially trained teachers. Specialist teachers placed the deficiencies elsewhere: on the language, the learners or government policies. As they had already been specially trained, the

tendency was to attribute deficiencies elsewhere. Conversely non-specialists were more introspective as they believed that deficiencies would be put right once they underwent specialist training. Lack of specialist training therefore seemed to allow for introspection. These reflections did not go far enough as was evident in their solutions. It also emerged that the same deaf learners who were not trusted by their teachers to make meaning for themselves were actually teaching their teachers Sign Language in a reversal of roles that would be unacceptable for any other spoken language. Only one teacher pointed out the difficulty of being expected to use Sign Language for teaching while learning the language at the same time. It also emerged that the same teachers who were being taught ZSL by their pupils were expected to interpret public examinations into Sign Language by a policy that idealised their proficiency in the language. The reality on the ground was that some principals had to discontinue interpretation of examinations into ZSL as the quality of the interpretations could not be guaranteed. Teachers also had other non-teaching roles besides interpreting but had not been adequately prepared to undertake these roles. Although teachers recognised that some parents had negative attitudes towards deaf children, they did not realise how they could support those parents who might be grieving or helpless about their situation. Since the teachers themselves regarded deaf children as disabled and in need of sympathy and care, they might first need to work on their own perceptions before expanding their professional roles to support parents in need. Expanding their professionalism beyond the school community might however be the last thing on teachers' minds as they averred that they were de-motivated by their status, standing and levels of professional reward which they said were unsatisfactory. They felt that their remuneration had to at least equal that received by colleagues in mainstream schools, but ironically they did not want their teaching performance compared with these colleagues. They argued that they taught learners who were disabled and so it was unfair to compare the examination results of these learners to

non-disabled peers for purposes of appraising the teacher's teaching performance. The criterion-referenced alternatives that the teachers proposed however indicated that they had set very low ceilings of achievement for deaf learners. Both specialist and non-specialist teachers believed inspectors who were supposed to do quality control and appraise them were ignorant about the significant issues in deaf education. Teachers said despite their specialist concerns, inspectors imposed mainstream school expectations on the special schools and so teachers ended up teaching for the officials rather than for the benefit of the deaf learners. In Chapter 10, which is the final chapter in this study, these and related issues from all the preceding data presentation and analysis chapters are discussed more fully.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

The previous four chapters presented findings of this study on the teachers' experience of teaching deaf children in residential special schools for the deaf. This final chapter uses the situated perspective (Robbins & Aydede, 2009) as discussed in Chapter Two, to discuss the major findings of this study on what teachers knew and believed about teaching deaf learners. Initially this was done by using the phenomenological tradition (as discussed in Chapter Four) to synthesise the 20 themes from preceding chapters and this affirmed a summative, essence description of the meaning of teaching deaf learners in Zimbabwe as shown in 'Essence of Teaching' in figure 10.1.

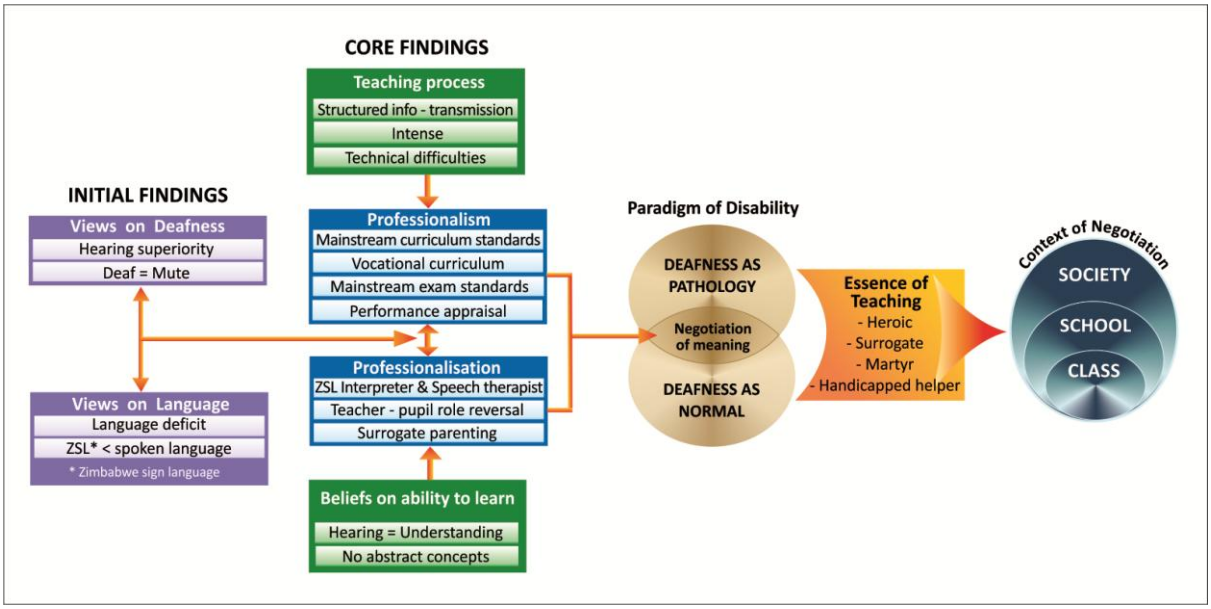


Figure 10.1: Teacher knowledge and beliefs about deaf pupils' ability to learn and how they should be taught

Data from the themes were discussed in such a way that the teachers' beliefs about deaf pupils' ability to learn addressed the teachers' knowledge on teaching deaf learners (i.e.

research questions 1.6.1 and 1.6.2). Data from these first two questions were subsequently mediated through the situated context of policy within an understanding of deafness as either normal or pathological. This mediation yielded a discussion addressing the third research question, namely, to relate teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching deaf learners to their experience of teaching (see table 10.1 below). This chapter then concludes with recommendations based on the implications of this study's major findings.

Table10.1: Relating Beliefs and Knowledge Themes to the Experience of Teaching

Themes on Beliefs about Deaf Pupils' Ability to Learn (4)	**Themes on Knowledge about Teaching in Residential Institution for Deaf (10)**	**Mediating Themes on Policy Context in which Meaning is Negotiated (6)**	**Negotiation of Meaning: Deafness as Normal or Pathological**	**Experience of Teaching [Participation & relations with pupils/ other teachers]**
1.Views on deafness; 2.Views on language	5.Assimilation (into the superior Hearing culture)	15.Staffing; 16.Teacher education; 17.Access to instruction	Deafness as inferiority, pathological	Teacher-dominated: remedial and therapeutic. No introspection on own deficiencies. Charity.
2.Views on language	6.Weak communication	18.Organisation of learning; Teacher education	ZSL as impeding remedial teaching of language	Teacher-dominated: Spoken language remediation as teaching; Multilingual confusion for deaf as language handicapped.
3. Views on ability to learn	7. Teaching processes (for) 8.Deaf as learning disabled	Teacher education	No understanding without hearing; Deficient, concrete learners	Teacher-dominated: No introspection on own deficiencies; Low expectations of deaf learners; Demanding, technically difficult and requiring exoneration from mainstream appraisal standards. Exclusion from policy formulation; Frustrating: Inadequate time to teach.
3. Views on ability to learn	9.Teacher-professionalism	Organisation of teaching; Access to instruction; 19.Access to assessment	Deafness as inability to match mainstream standards	Strategic resistance: teaching to the test; Open resistance to ZSL interpretation of exams in collusion with principal
	10. Surrogate parenting 11.Teacher-professionalisation	20.Parental involvement; Teacher education	Speech therapy to remedy and ZSL interpreting to accommodate deficiency	Diffuseness of role and parent-blaming for surrogate parenting; No introspection
4.Deaf as normal		Teacher education; Access to assessment	Deaf cultural norms: Signing is not ZSL	Teacher-pupil role reversal: Deaf pupils as teachers of a ZSL perceived as inadequate - Acquired and developed by children.
	Teaching as: 12.Heroism; 13. Handicapped help; 14.Martyrdom	Staffing; Teacher education	Deafness as pathology requiring sacrifice	Conquering deafness; Fulfilment with low expectations of deaf learners. Coping with bureaucratic controls and mainstream standards from which teacher should be exonerated. Charity and sacrifice.

10.2 Synthesis of Themes

The 20 themes discussed from Chapter Five to Chapter Nine and numbered in columns 1, 2 and 3 in table 10.1 above are now synthesised into a succinct summary of the experience of teaching deaf learners. The experience entailed teacher-identity transformation starting with ostensibly altruistic, socially conscientious commitment to teaching deaf rather than hearing pupils. Teaching deaf children in residential institutions was primarily a charitable experience in which teachers tried to cope with perceived deafness-related and policy-imposed impediments. There was usually a sense of sacrifice in some teachers and fulfilment in others because of the opportunity to make a difference through offering benevolent, charitable service to deaf children who were perceived as less fortunate human beings with an invisible disability.

When they began teaching, all these teachers struggled to communicate with the learners and most also struggled with their emotions. Many lost confidence in their ability to teach and some became depressed. Most teachers approached the task with the common-sense assumption that they had to learn ZSL. They were dissuaded from doing this by the principals who told them not to 'go to the deaf children' by way of learning the children's Sign Language. Not going to the children was supposed to make the deaf learners 'come to the teachers' through speaking. Through trial-and-error many of these teachers soon learned that in order to cope in the classrooms, they had to sign. So they were taught how to sign by their pupils. As teachers learned to sign, communication improved and there was a sense of relief. This relief turned into rather premature triumph as teachers felt victorious because now that they could communicate, they assumed they could teach. Some maintained this hero identity, teaching to the best of their abilities and interpreting examinations into ZSL, even though the

signed interpretation of examinations was often prohibited by principals who doubted the process. On one hand government policy envisioned an ideal teacher fluent in ZSL, and on the other hand the reality was that teachers not only struggled to communicate in ZSL but were also ignorant of what it really was. This meant that the policy expected too much from teachers as policy ideals were not matched with the reality on the ground. In addition, there was no form of action on the part of government to make its expectations realisable. In general, these under-prepared teachers heroically struggled without support and training from the government to meet policy ideals which were high. Many of them remained optimistic that they were succeeding despite the principals' scepticism and prohibition of signed interpretations of examinations. Many of these heroes remained active, dominant participants in the teaching-learning situation: structuring the learning situation, transmitting information as simply and directly as possible, learning ZSL informally from the deaf children.

Other teachers noticed that the learners did not understand much of what they taught and explained this as an understandable difference between mainstream school teaching and special education. The difference between mainstream and special school teaching was understandable in light of deaf children's perceived linguistic and experiential deficit because of their hearing loss. These were external impediments which restricted the extent to which teachers could help, thus the teacher's identity was transformed into a handicapped helper. Many of these handicapped helpers interpreted deafness as a learning difficulty requiring remedial teaching and speech therapy. Deaf learners' perceived forgetfulness and language deficit however restricted the extent to which the teacher could help. In this way special education exonerated teachers from the usual standards of mainstream schools so that teachers perceived themselves as succeeding when deaf learners accomplished appropriately lower order tasks such as writing their names or discordant speech. The teachers were limited

by the children's limitations in the extent to which they could push children to achieve higher order tasks. Many of these handicapped helpers became subjects of the external conditions: the linguistic and experiential deficits, the learning difficulties, ZSL which was perceived as a telegraphic language. All these conspired to make the teachers subjects of the situation and therefore largely passive, peripheral participants in the teaching-learning situation.

Some teachers perceived various mainstream curriculum requirements and other measures to regulate teaching in the special school as futile because of these learners' experiential and linguistic deficits. Even when mainstream academic material was repeated, mastery was elusive and many teachers suggested that these learners should not be doing academic subjects and writing public examinations. Principals and inspectors however still expected teachers to plan all lessons and ensure that all required written work in these subjects was reflected in the children's exercise books as an accountability measure. These requirements were reported to be futile as deaf children were more enthusiastic about technical-vocational subjects in which they were said to be performing a lot better than in academic subjects. These teachers' identity was transformed to martyrs undertaking futile, if not punitive chores. They were victims who were not exonerated from performance appraisals which compared them to colleagues in mainstream schools, did not have a say in policy formulation and were helpless to rectify the situation in the special schools. External appraisals were particularly resented as teachers said the inspectors were not knowledgeable about deaf education. The pedantic enforcement of rules by a reportedly less knowledgeable inspectorate resulted in rushed teaching. Many felt martyred to punitive mainstream curriculum requirements and resorted to passively covering the syllabus, regardless of whether the deaf learners understood or not, and therefore teachers lost the internal motivation brought about by seeing pupils doing well.

The mainstream curriculum requirement that was said to be particularly unsuitable for deaf children was the requirement to have multilingual education for these children who teachers perceived as language-handicapped. Teachers said the children already had their own Sign Language, but were required to learn a difficult-to-teach Shona in addition to the language of instruction, English. Most teachers said that although deaf children already had ZSL, the language had serious limitations when used for abstract scientific and religious concepts. ZSL was said to need proper development and standardisation before it could be used to interpret English word for word. As it was, teachers said they actively used this defective ZSL only to have better informal communication than the biological parents had with the deaf children. The better communication teachers had with the children became a centripetal force pulling the deaf child towards the teacher, while weaker communication was a centrifugal force pushing the child away from his or her parents. Teachers blamed parents of deaf children as generally having negative attitudes towards their disabled children. They said that many parents had poor parenting skills and neglected their deaf children while some abandoned them at the residential schools, leaving the teachers as surrogate parents. What reinforced the idea of teachers as surrogate parents was that the children were at residential institutions where the biological parents did not have ready access to them, in some cases for the whole term. Teachers therefore actively took over the parenting role: seeing to the child's various needs, fighting to overcome the child's prior ZSL experiences in the formal learning situation as Sign Language was perceived as a barrier rather than an aid in acquiring spoken language. Teachers overlooked the opportunity offered by residential school life to involve Deaf adults to model ZSL so that it could become part of the multilingual education already mandated by government. Teachers also got carried away with being foster parents and neglected to empower the biological parents to improve their parenting.

In the foregoing summary, multiple layers of the experience of teaching were evident. At the macro-level, government formulated and imposed education policies from outside the school without consulting teachers and it was revealed that teachers felt marginalised and that they regarded many of these policies as unrealistic. Teachers were acutely aware that they were at the periphery when it came to policy formulation and performance appraisals and wanted this changed. At the micro-level, teachers were more actively involved than either their pupils or the biological parents. Teachers tended to dominate the teaching processes by 'giving' information that they expected pupils to passively 'acquire'. They could not trust the pupils to discover and construct meaning cooperatively themselves. Teachers also fought to overcome the children's prior ZSL experiences in the formal learning situation as these were perceived as negative. By doing these things, teachers unwittingly made the deaf children peripheral participants in formal academic learning. Paradoxically the teachers were largely unaware that they themselves were peripheral participants in the social interaction that deaf children engaged in using ZSL. Teachers also tended to marginalise parents by blaming them instead of intervening to assist them. In the following sections, this essence description of the experience of teaching is discussed in ways which address the three research questions more directly in the detailed context of literature on deaf education. To facilitate this, headings derived from each research question are used to organise the discussion.

10.3 Knowledge about teaching deaf learners: Structured repetitive teaching for unmotivated learners with deficient memories

In many instances teachers believed deaf children's forgetfulness was a challenge to teaching and learning. The teachers said deaf children's memory was very short. There did not appear to be any surface difference between what the specialist and the non-specialist teachers were

saying as they concurred about deaf learners' short memory. The non-specialist teachers however were more inclined to attribute memory deficiency to innate causes about which little or nothing could be done as they said that deaf children were naturally forgetful. As a result of perceived memory deficiencies, many teachers said that deaf children were incapable of learning abstract ideas and so should just concentrate on vocational skills training in what Al-Makhamreh (2013) called a rehabilitation approach. Hauser and Marschark (2008) pointed out that this was a relegation of deaf people to the ranks of the linguistically and mentally deficient in concurrence with Aarons and Reynolds (2003) who found that in South Africa, deafness was sometimes associated with mental retardation. In the current study some non-specialist teachers' views were influenced by the teachers' socialisation into Shona culture which associates linguistic with mental deficiency. For example Mari explained: "*Nekuti havanzwi, havanzwisisi. Havana chavanoziva nokuti havanzwi*." (Shona for: Because they don't hear they don't understand. They know nothing because they hear nothing). This kind of reasoning makes intuitive sense especially in the Shona language which she used. In Shona the word for 'understand' (*kunzwa* or *kunzwisisa*) is the same as or is sometimes derived from the word for 'hear' (*kunzwa*). The assumption here was that learning was a process of knowledge transmission from an expert such as a hearing-speaking teacher. Non-specialist teachers tended to attribute the breakdown in knowledge transmission more directly to deaf children's individual, inherent incapacity than the specialists did. A deaf child's learning in social relation to other deaf children was not even considered. Teachers simplistically attributed 'not understanding' to lack of hearing while ignoring the children's successful co-participation through Sign Language in the informal activities of the school community. Deaf children's informal learning through Sign Language was ignored in preference to the supposedly superior ideas 'transmitted to the student through the mediation of qualified teachers who were subject specialists' (Fuller,

2007, p. 18). In this way deafness was viewed as a defect of the intellect (Hauser & Marschark, 2008; Lane, 2008). This is a hearing perspective in which understanding was thought to come through hearing the spoken language while the visual avenue and the manual modality of Sign Language were overlooked. In this perspective the spoken language defects of deaf learners overrode any strength they might have in Sign Language.

The specialist teachers' beliefs were generally more nuanced towards challenges external to the deaf learner. For example the specialist teachers cited the deaf learners' need for more time to learn what hearing children learned in a short time. Such explanations of needing more time to teach were complemented by the teachers' expressed need for the children to spend two to three years in a grade whereas hearing peers spent one year in a grade. These were challenges external to the child and because they were not perceived as part of the child, teaching could be used to alleviate them. This is however weakened by the teachers' recognition of learning as only happening in formal classrooms because the quick learning from deaf peers cited by Reilly and Reilly (2005) was ignored. The teachers' environmental inclination concurred with Hauser and Marschark (2008) who cited studies which explained apparent deficiencies in deaf children's memory as generic language difficulties, lack of real-world experience and educational disadvantage. These studies generally did not recognise learning outside the formal classroom setting. Both specialist and non-specialist teachers expressed a hearing perspective on deaf children's memory. The reason was that neither group of teachers was apparently aware that signing deaf children had greater memory than hearing children on visual tasks as Sign Languages use this medium (Hauser, Cohen, Dye, & Bavelier, 2007). Hauser and Marschark (2008) explained that deaf children's memory deficiencies were apparent in sequential tasks such as those involving spoken languages while Hermans (2014) found that deaf children had noticeable deficits in auditory working

memory. Focussing only on these deficiencies is therefore a hearing perspective which ignored an alternative visual focus in which deaf learners would have the advantage of demonstrating greater memory.

On the basis of the beliefs of hearing people about deaf learners' language and memory deficits, teachers said that they knew that incidental learning not only of language but also other concepts was not feasible. Teachers said that deliberate, individualised teaching in small classes was the most appropriate way for deaf children who learned more consciously. Teachers said that small classes of up to seven pupils allowed them to individualise instruction as they could attend to each learner's needs. Research in mainstream education has however, shown that reducing class sizes did not necessarily improve learning outcomes (Bruhwiler & Blatchford, 2011; Erscardibul & Calero, 2013; Hattie, 2005). In addition, in deaf education Evans (2004) observed that small classes and individualised teaching indicated that clinical approaches were necessary for remediating pathology. Small classes reinforced the idea that deaf learners were deficient and abnormal rather than normal. In line with this, in the current study teachers said that special teaching in small classes involved use of concrete media and repetition of concepts over long periods of time. This concurred with Hermans (2014) who found that teachers tended to train deaf children directly in areas such as language where they were perceived as deficient. These remedial strategies necessitated individualisation. Individualisation of instruction was contrary to what Marschark, Convertino, and Larock (2006) called the paradigm shift in deaf education where there was movement towards cooperative learning. Cooperative learning would recognise and develop the sense of community that deaf pupils bring from the dormitories and playground into formal learning in the classroom. In this way learning shifts from what Fuller (2007) called an individual matter to become a social matter.

Specialist and non-specialist teachers raised similar concerns about their deaf students who needed constant repetition and supervision. They averred that nothing was to be taken for granted as the learners had to be told everything otherwise they would not know. This showed that the teachers could not cope with teaching the deaf children as normal learners. Teachers perceived the teaching of deaf learners as an information-transmission, structured and mechanical process rather than a natural and incidental process. Explicit teaching as Kelly (1998) said, was what teachers tended to use when children did not learn language or other concepts from natural exposure and stimulation. However Evans (2004) pointed out that the more explicit the teaching, the less actively involved the students became in a learning process that was supposedly their own. Lessons were likely to become teacher-directed as children could not be trusted to make meaning for themselves in circumstances where nothing could be taken for granted. Marschark, Richardson, Sapere, and Sachet (2010) explained that information transmission was associated with a teacher-focussed approach whereas teaching should be learner-focussed as a way of promoting conceptual change in order to improve student outcomes. The dominant 'transmission' view of teaching expressed by these teachers of deaf learners was complemented by what Sfard (1998) called the 'acquisition' metaphor of learning. The teachers' emphasis on explicit, transmission teaching highlighted the pupils' acquisition or passive reception of knowledge thereby de-emphasising learners' active participation. This inclination towards a structured, transmission process was the antithesis of an incidental, social participation teaching process in what Wenger (1998) called 'social infrastructures that foster learning.' Learners' micro-community in class was de-emphasised in a situation where the children were not trusted, as Evans (2004, p. 23) put it, "to participate in deciphering the code of learning". The implication was that there was a one-sided focus on explicit teaching which is reductionist as it reduces the complex process

of teaching and learning to a mechanical process in which teachers give and learners take (Bruin, 2014). In the current study, this reductionist approach is captured in Tema's statement: "The problem is that the books they use are meant for children in the mainstream. Now to take that detail and try to give it to the HI children (then it) becomes very difficult." The teacher's perception was that difficulties lay in 'giving' material from the books. The use of the word 'giving' portrayed a process in which the teacher was more active and the learners as passive recipients who were supposed to be 'acquiring' knowledge. According to Fuller (2007, p. 17) the acquisition metaphor reflected that learning is conceived as a product that takes the form of codified and stable knowledge, reified in books and distributed to those in receipt of formal schooling. The 'acquisition' metaphor of learning was also congruent with the perception of deaf children as having a language deficit.

Since deaf learners were taught in repetitive, more conscious ways they were regarded as needing to be taught for longer periods until they had finally mastered the concepts. This mastery of concepts over longer periods again indicated that teachers unnecessarily viewed deaf children as pathological learners who would have to stay in primary school for more than the seven years that hearing children normally take. In itself, mastery learning (Carroll, 1963, 1989) was commendable as it presumed that all children could learn if they were provided with appropriate learning conditions, one of which is the time that they require in order to learn. However in the current study, the circumstances in which teachers said that deaf children required more time did not suggest that the teachers would use the additional time to introspect. Lack of introspection leads to the continuation of the same remedial teaching which uses concrete, repetitive approaches inclined to information-transmission. For example in explaining the constant repetition she engaged in when she taught, one teacher said: "... Now I can't just move on when the deaf children have not understood. *Pano apa*

ndinongodzana panhu pamwe." (With these children, I just dance on the same spot). The Shona metaphor of 'dancing on the same spot' was particularly apt regarding the implications of repetition, lack of forward movement and restrictions with the potential of becoming boring. It is exhausting and wasting energy. The metaphor of dancing on the same spot captured the essence of unnecessarily restricted teaching processes about which one did not engage in any self reflection in order to be creative and experiment with enjoy other styles and enjoy them. In leading her pupils in the dance, the teacher drags her rather uncomprehending deaf pupils who are not given a chance of leading the dance in class.

Although repetition is an essential element of reading practice, Kelly (2003) argued that repetition was best done with stimulating materials as monotony would dampen motivation. Evans (2004) said that language learning typically occurred in meaningful contexts, through natural interactions and experiences with other speakers of the language. Generally, drill and practice did not attempt to duplicate natural language acquisition processes as they were meant for the acquisition of skills, facts and concepts in a process consistent with a behavioural perspective of teaching and learning which emphasized the student as an individual learner (Antia *et al.*, 2002). According to Sawyer and Greeno (2009) this emphasis on individual training ignored how interactions in the community of the class could shape learning. Since these drill processes resulted in a student passively receiving information and following directions (Antia *et al.*, 2002) they could also be the cause of the lack of motivation to learn which the teachers of deaf learners cited as a problem. Pupils become bored if they perceive a situation as low value, meaningless or irrelevant (Daschmann, Goetz, & Stupnisky, 2014; Pekrun, Goetz, Daniels, Stupnisky, & Perry, 2010). Luckner and Sebald (2013) said that in order to avoid this, adults should be knowledgeable about the preferences of children, respectful of these preferences and provide opportunities for them to make choices, solve

problems, plan and initiate. In this light, use of the mainstream curriculum negates what Marschark, *et al*. (2006) and Storbeck and Magongwa (2006) called a deaf-centred or Deafcentric curriculum, that is one in which content was altered to suit the interest and cultural orientations of deaf learners. Disregarding these considerations, teachers in the present study said they use spoken language drill methods to compensate for deaf children's memory deficits. Had the preferences of the deaf learners been solicited there could be pupil initiated activities using the three-dimensional, kinaesthetic Sign Language of deaf people that Johnstone and Corce (2010) state that deaf pupils prefer. Instead, the teachers observed that the pupils were forgetful and so decided it would be appropriate to drill them so that they can recall. It would appear that there is a cycle in which the teachers perceive the deaf learners as only capable of rote-learning. They then teach them to recall using drill methods. The learners are likely to find this boring and in turn they appear as having a short attention span, unmotivated to learn and therefore in need of even more drills. It is quite possibly this cycle which limits teaching and learning rather any learning disabilities or motivational deficits deaf children may have. The difficulties that teachers in the current study said learners experience with number stories rather than simple mathematical operations were not due to learning disability. According to studies by Pagliaro (2014) and Pagliaro and Ansell (2002) these difficulties emanated from teaching approaches which remain focussed on computation and basic skills thereby limiting deaf students' opportunity to engage with story problems. It is ironic that deaf children who learn naturally through Sign Language narratives (Reilly & Reilly, 2005), had limited engagement with story problems in formal learning situations because teachers did not have ZSL skills and so chose to focus on computation and basic skills which de-emphasised the sense of community in learning.

The intensity of work involved in teaching deaf learners was an issue constantly raised by many specialist and non-specialist teachers. They indicated that the teaching of deaf children was a labour-intensive process. Teachers' work was reported as being intensified by the combination of more conscious effort and repetitive teaching in which the teacher was the centre. Teachers' perceptions of deaf learners as helpless and in need of direct teaching and constant supervision placed the teacher at the centre. This established the professional identity of the teacher as authoritarian and resulted in the teaching process becoming intensive and demanding. The focus on individual children's needs made the process even more demanding as teachers catered for mixed ability groups and had to attend to each learner's individual needs. Mitchell and Karchmer (2011) explained that because of the interaction of their individual needs, strengths and experiences, the population of deaf students was even more diverse than that of hearing students. As a result, Spencer and Marschark (2010a) said the one consistent and well-documented conclusion across the literature in deaf education was that no one system, no one approach would be optimal for all deaf students. This suggests individualised teaching of these students with widely varied needs. Neisser (1990) pointed out that the trend of individualising instruction, even in general education, is a humane approach which started in schools for the deaf. However in the current study, the individualisation in schools for the deaf was labour-intensive as the focus was on learner limitations and deficiencies rather than strengths. Teachers of deaf learners in the current study imply that they became over-involved and authoritarian as they tried to overcome student deficiencies. Harber (2005) said that such teachers were less likely to recognise learners' own experiences as worthwhile resources and make use of interactive teaching methods such as classroom discussion and debate. This not only closes off most opportunities for developing critical and creative thinking among learners, but also intensifies the teacher's involvement. The apparent authoritarian over-involvement of teachers in what

goes on in the classroom indicated that the teachers were under-prepared to take on what Nijhuis and Terpstra (2014) called the teacher's role to facilitate and support learners in their own learning process. An increased focus on learning as social participation would involve designing what Wenger (1998, p. 225) called 'social infrastructures that foster learning' through peer interaction in class. Teachers do not trust the learners to 'own' the learning process thereby making the teacher the centre and 'owner' of all that went on making teaching a rather labour-intensive and demanding experience.

To summarise this section, the specialists' and non-specialists' discussions of the processes of teaching deaf learners were epitomised in the metaphor of 'dancing on the same spot' with its images of repetitive lack of forward movement. These repetitive, information-transmission processes occurred in the teaching of reading, mathematics and other subjects where the deaf children were perceived as concrete thinkers with little general knowledge and thus having learning difficulties or disabilities. Ironically even though these learning disabilities were said to be based on deficient memories and lack of motivation to learn, they appeared to be caused by a hearing perspective of deafness as deficiency. This perspective leads to remedial, individualised instruction which negates normal, cooperative learning in a community that many deaf learners are suited for. This is not to ignore the reality that among deaf children there are many with another disability such as a learning disability and for whom remedial approaches are more suitable (Knoors & Vervloed, 2011). The concern was that teachers generalise remedial, simple and direct teaching approaches to all deaf learners while overlooking what Reilly and Reilly (2005) found to be the successful participation of most deaf children with peers in the informal school community. Teachers' stereotypes of deaf children hampered creative approaches to teaching and were justified by the children's perceived deficiencies. A major deficiency which teachers said contributed to deaf children's

learning difficulties was related to spoken language. This is discussed separately in the next section.

10.4 Beliefs about ability to learn: Spoken language defects and self-taught ZSL

Teachers in focus groups as well as individual interviews continually raised issues on deaf children's limitations in spoken language as restricting learning. For example, one principal said: "These children are really language-handicapped. Instead of talking about 'deaf' we should be talking about 'language-handicapped' because that is where their disability lies." The principal believed that even though deaf children's impairment was hearing, their disability and handicap was language-related. In saying that deaf children were language-handicapped the principal was talking about the learners being restricted in accessing and using the spoken language used for teaching, learning and literacy. This concurred with Holte *et al.* (2012) and Herman (2014) who said that even children with mild hearing loss are affected in the acquisition and mastering of a spoken language. However, Morgan (2014) found that most deaf children do not have language impairment. They did not have such conditions as dyslexia or what Alloway and Stein (2014) called a 'specific language impairment' therefore they had the capacity to acquire and use a language. Although this is true, the unavailability of early intervention services meant that many of them did not use this capacity and as Caselli (2014) and Herman (2014) observed, many deaf children had a deficit in language development prior to entering school. Many of them continued to lag behind in literacy because of the initial deficit. This is based on findings showing that deprivation during a sensitive period for the development of a particular domain has a profound, negative effect on the course of subsequent development on that domain (Fox *et al.*, 2013). The specialist teachers were therefore using such findings on early childhood development to say

that many deaf children had a linguistic lag. However some lags may be worsened by teaching approaches which view deaf learners as similar to hearing learners in all respects except that they do not hear. For example the literacy lag can be attributed to teaching approaches which take the components of reading development as qualitatively similar for deaf and hearing students although progression for deaf readers was delayed (Paul, 2009). In this Qualitative Similarity Hypothesis (Paul & Lee, 2010) the expectation of a significant discrepancy between the literate abilities of deaf and hearing learners was framed within a medical deficit model where deafness is regarded as a handicap rather than a receptive or expressive difference. However if a socio-cultural frame were used and deafness viewed as a receptive or expressive difference (Brueggemann, 2004), the focus moves away from deaf children's deficits onto what they can do as the fuller context and processes of their thinking, reading and writing are considered. Teachers' focus on the dominant culture's literacy and spoken language lead to an over-generalised belief that the children had a language-handicap as this ignored Sign Language. Baumann and Murray (2009) pointed out that for many centuries scientists wrongly assumed that the basis of language was speech. As a result of this, the concept of normalcy in language for many teachers related to spoken language. In what Baumann and Murray (2009) called the 'frame of hearing loss', deafness has long been viewed as hearing loss – an absence, a void, a lack. In this case it is believed to be a loss of language and so deaf children's ability to learn is perceived as compromised as focus remains solely on stimulating the learners using spoken language in which the learners are deficient. This is based on what Fuller (2007) called a standard paradigm of learning in which knowledge is conceived as a codified, stable product that is reified in textbooks. In this case teachers thought that knowledge was codified through spoken language and reified in books thereby making knowledge inaccessible to deaf learners unless they acquired spoken language. The principal and many teachers believed deaf children without speech lacked

language as they were unable to hear, and therefore acquire and reproduce the spoken language of their parents. The implication was that the principal and many teachers wrongly equated speech with language and so what they knew as the language necessary for teaching and learning was restricted to the spoken language which can be written.

The specialist and non-specialist teachers' group and individual interviews persistently raised the significance of deaf children's inability to speak and the importance of learning to talk. In some instances it was actually deaf children's inability to talk that motivated teachers to want to teach deaf learners. It is the frame of hearing loss (Baumann & Murray, 2009) in which the lack of speech is considered abnormal. Speaking is something which was emphasised in many interviews and inability to speak was often the first thing many teachers noticed about deaf children. The importance attached to learning to speak in order to be included in speaking society, is explained by Knoors and Marschark (2012) as the social desire for deaf children to eventually integrate fully into the larger society. Spoken language had long been seen as being at the core of human society and human cognitive development (Blamey, Sarant, & Paatsch, 2006). Access to spoken language has greatly improved for deaf children as a result of advances in identification of hearing loss in infancy and developments in amplification systems (Ackely & Decker, 2006; Raeve, Baerts, & Colleye, 2012). These developments imply that deaf children have improved feedback from other speakers whom they can use as models while at the same they are better able to monitor their own speech production. This in turn implies that, all other factors being constant, deaf learners should produce more speech than before the advances in technology.

All the advances in technology are however countered by late identification and intervention which begin after the sensitive period for the optimal acquisition of language. In the current study many specialist teachers evaluated their teaching of speech to deaf children in light of these considerations which they knew hindered the teaching of speech and spoken language to deaf children. The teachers were aware of the importance of what Fox *et al.* (2013) called a sensitive period of development, which in this case is the window of opportunity for language development which when missed leads to less than optimal speech and language development. Musengi *et al.* (2013) observed that in Zimbabwe detection of hearing loss is usually late and intervention only begins on entry into school at the age of 6 or 7 years. Many deaf children therefore miss the window of opportunity for developing speech and language. This situation is compounded by the observation that in the schools for the deaf the teaching of speech is done by teachers as Burning, Gona, Buell, Newton, and Hartley (2013) observed that in low income countries many professional specialists were simply not available. These teachers are not qualified speech therapists and would fit the description by Ingersoll (2002) as professionals practising 'out-of-field' because speech therapy is not teaching. An additional hindrance observed by Musengi *et al.* (2013) was that deaf children in Zimbabwe had to leave the only amplification devices they had when they go home on vacation as these costly devices belong to the school. In the current study many specialist teachers were not enthusiastic about teaching speech as they said that the results of speech training and auditory training were disappointing. In this light the observation made by Neisser (1990) that speech training should not be the overwhelming, dominant part of teaching in schools for the deaf, is an observation that is supported by many specialist teachers in the current study. The reason is that the desire for deaf children to eventually participate fully in society (Knoors & Marschark, 2012) faces barriers from late intervention and this in turn hinders the children's current participation in learning in the class community as it takes valuable time from

academic content. In this context it was not surprising that enthusiasm for the teaching of speech to the deaf learners was raised by the more naïve non-specialist teachers as a novel specialty, something that they now did as part of their duties at the special school and which colleagues at mainstream schools did not do. In contrast the specialist teachers evaluated their teaching of speech more fully and were generally more sceptical about their success even though they ventured further to look at alternatives to spoken language, such as Sign Language. The place of Sign Language in the schools for the deaf was an issue that was constantly brought up in the interviews.

The teachers' concern with spoken language development overlooked the input from fluent Sign Language users which Herman (2014) said is very important. Reilly and Reilly (2005) and Anglin-jaffe (2013) said it is a language that deaf non-signers learn naturally from signing peers. In the group and individual interviews some teachers believed that ZSL and the Deaf culture from which it emanates impeded acquisition of the (spoken) language of teaching and learning. For example Fadzai at school B said: "They (deaf children) cannot write pure or correct sentences because Sign Language is in short, it cuts, shortcut." In various discussion groups teachers believed that Sign Language was broken English or a telegraphic language which omitted a great deal of information. There was misconception that Sign Language was not a real language because it only uses a few key words which miss many important concepts. This corroborates the finding by Kiyaga and Moores (2009) that many teachers of deaf children in sub-Saharan Africa do not believe that Sign Languages are real languages. A related implication was that the deficiency in reading and writing English language emanated from the children's knowledge of ZSL which is telegraphic. There is the misconception that Sign Language was unsuccessfully trying to be like English hence the statement that it is broken English. In this belief the frame of hearing loss was evident in that

hearing people's language is regarded as the norm against which deaf people's Sign Language is judged in a patronising manner, and found to be deficient. Such misconceptions are compounded by inappropriate teacher-education which did not emphasise evidence-based teaching practice. Stokoe (2005) initiated the modern scientific study of Signed Languages which proved that they were real languages while Sass-Lehrer (2011) cited research showing that Sign Language could spur rather than impede the development of spoken language. Overlooking this evidence meant that teachers continued to think Sign Language was a deficient system that was attempting to be like a spoken language, but failing and therefore impeding acquisition of the spoken language.

On the basis of such misconceptions, some specialist teachers believed that ZSL should not be on the curriculum as it did not help the children to learn. For example Moyo said: "They may sign but you don't find that language in any of the books so it does not help them. It is better to do away with that language." Teachers said Sign Language was inadequate for academic purposes as it had no written form and so was not in books. These teachers sidelined the language as they said it was unable to reify knowledge in books and misinterpreted this to mean the language was unable to codify knowledge. This was contrary to research showing that Sign Language is a naturally evolving language (Stokoe, 2005). In addition these teachers held a 'stable product' view of knowledge which prevented them from seeing knowledge as a process in which any new advances could be codified in new words or signs. These teachers also overlooked how deaf children made important connections between finger-spelling and printed letters or words as well as between signs and concepts (Schirmer & Williams, 2011). Hearing teachers who are not proficient Sign Language users would miss this social interaction among deaf-signers which Dyson (2008) found to be important for early writing development. As a result of teachers being what Wenger (1998)

called legitimate peripheral participants in this social interaction through Sign Language, they did not deliberately foster the interaction in formal, classroom learning situations.

Other specialist teachers were not explicit about prohibiting ZSL but they did imply that it was not a useful language for teaching. Some specialist teachers believed that Sign Language was intrinsic to deaf children as they sign fluently even though this is not formally taught in schools. This belief misinterpreted what Morgans (1999) called the resilience of deaf children in the face of hearing educators who prohibit Sign Language because the children continued to use the language underground, because they had a will to communicate. The literature has shown that deaf children's acquisition of language at school is not restricted to spoken language but also includes the acquisition of Sign Language (Marschark, *et al.*, 2006; Marschark & Spencer, 2010; Reilly & Reilly, 2005). Reilly and Reilly (2005) pointed out that just like any other language, Sign Language is naturally acquired in a community of users of that language. In the current study, this natural community of users was neither fully recognised and nor used by the hearing teachers in the formal class community. This made the Sign Language activities of deaf children what Wenger (1998, p. 154) called peripheral participation in the formal class community. The deaf-signers did not fully participate in class because ZSL had been sidelined and so potential to learn was lost. Similarly, the teachers did not fully participate in the informal social interactions of the deaf children and so could not make use of the children's experiences as a springboard to teach them new ideas. Paradoxically the teachers attributed the peripheral participation of the deaf learners in class to lack of motivation while ignoring their own role in removing ZSL from the family of natural, real languages. This was contrary to Johnson (2010) who pointed out that a natural Sign Language could be used in a bilingual approach in which the goal was to produce deaf children who were bilingual in Sign Language and (at least) the written forms of a spoken

language. The absence of teacher-education which fostered appropriate sign-bilingual approaches did not help teachers to appreciate the importance of deaf children's prior ZSL acquisition in the teaching of English and Shona.

Teachers discriminated Sign Language on the basis of these various misconceptions and unwittingly increased their own participation in formal teaching-learning situations while decreasing the participation of deaf children. Many teachers said that there was no national Sign Language and believed that the variations in ZSL would make it difficult to use as a language of instruction. Aarons and Reynolds (2003) pointed out that the variations in Sign Language became an issue when there was a need to accommodate hearing people who could not really claim knowledge of Sign Language, in this case teachers of the deaf with no formal training in ZSL. Studies showed that when Deaf people from different communities in South Africa gathered, they communicated without difficulty, but communication difficulties arose once hearing people were involved (Aarons & Akach, 2002; Aarons & Reynolds, 2003; Penn & Reagan, 1994). Based on such findings, it would therefore appear that in the current study the need to standardise was raised by the teaching community to enhance their participation. Since the deaf members in the class communities understood each other, it was the teachers who needed to be trained in ZSL so that they became conversant with the registers and dialects in the language. Many teachers might not realise that it is they who need to become conversant with the appropriate ZSL register for teaching specific academic aspects as they believe that it is the language itself which should be standardised. There is one quite daunting factor which is responsible for some of these misconceptions. Teachers do not have appropriate role models from who to learn ZSL because they learn the language from their pupils in an ad hoc manner (see section 10.7.1 in this chapter). Formalising their learning from older deaf children or engaging Deaf adults to teach ZSL would make the teachers

appreciate the language more. In a Kenyan study Johnstone and Corce (2010) found that Deaf teachers were a significant resource for their school communities. In the absence of such models, the teachers learned inadequate Sign Language and so ended up believing the language itself had many inadequacies. Some teachers and at least one principal believed that interpreting the examination into Sign Language resulted in explaining the examination until the interpreter provided the answers. These misgivings about signed interpretations are based on the observation that teachers who invigilated in the schools were, by their own admission, not proficient in Sign Language. Napier *et al.* (2010) pointed out that ideally, interpreters should have equivalent level receptive and productive skills in each language in order to interpret reliably in both directions. In the current study most teachers were not sign-bilingual thereby prompting the scepticism about interpreting examinations into ZSL. However school level prohibition of interpretation of examinations into ZSL was contrary to government policy, *Special examination arrangements for learners with disabilities and other special needs* (Secretary for Education, 2007b). This government policy stated that principals should provide Sign Language interpreters to sign examination instructions or questions to deaf learners who were normally taught through signing if they could not access the questions through other means. The school-level prohibition of signed interpretations of examinations resulted in deaf candidates having limited access to the examination and therefore participating at the periphery of the academic community. It is also possible that the interpretation of examinations into ZSL was so useful that the deaf candidates more easily understood the questions and so provided more correct answers. This possibility is supported by the finding by Pagliaro and Ansell (2002) that when signing story problems in ASL, the use of location, repetition, movement and hand-shape might link the problem statement to its solution. If this characteristic is generic to Sign Languages, this would explain the deaf candidates' improved performance when examinations were interpreted into ZSL.

Paradoxically this result could alarm hearing educators like the principal and other teachers who were not conversant with ZSL and were accustomed to deaf children who struggled with academic work. Some principals and teachers were so accustomed to the peripheral participation of deaf learners because they had low expectations of them and doubted any outstanding work deaf candidates were said to have produced. The field of deaf education is hampered by low expectations for the deaf learners (Johnson *et al.*, 1989; Moores & Martin, 2006; Storbeck & Magongwa, 2006). In any case it would appear that even though government had done its part to increase students' participation by allowing the signing of examinations (Secretary for Education, 2007b) some professionals on the ground were uncertain of how to take advantage of this and so they resisted a government policy directive.

A few teachers at each of the three schools partly complied with another policy directive, *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* (Secretary for Education, 2002) which allowed the use of ZSL in schools. These few teachers accepted Sign Language as a real language which they used in teaching situations. For example Dhongeri at school B said: "When we are doing comprehension exercises, I don't sign the whole passage but I read the passage and from my understanding I interpret the passage and then they can answer the questions." The central role of Sign Language in teaching was acknowledged by such teachers. This concurred with Storbeck (1999) who found that teachers of deaf pupils in South Africa saw SASL as the quintessence of Deaf education and that one of their roles was to interpret for these learners. In Zimbabwe in order to make Shona or English passages explicable the teachers had to call on their skills of translation into ZSL. In this case the teacher made it clear that she did not translate literally but used what Evans (2004) called conceptual translation and Napier *et al.* (2010) called free translation so that the learners could understand the discourse. As Zimbabwean teacher preparation programmes have not

emphasised sign-bilingualism, the teacher's use of such conceptual or free translations which recognised ZSL and a spoken language as distinct languages were surprising. It might have been through trial and error that, the teacher realised that the best way deaf learners could understand the comprehension passages would be when they were freely translated into Sign Language first. These translations would increase the participation of both teachers and pupils even though this could be enhanced if the teachers had more exposure to sign-bilingual approaches of teaching. Without such exposure, teachers might stigmatise or trivialise ZSL by using it as an inferior, minority language rather than as an equal of any spoken language. This would be contrary to the intention of sign-bilingual programmes which view the life of a deaf person as involving the negotiation of two languages (signed and spoken/written) so that they can participate in multilingual, multicultural communities (Power & Leigh, 2011). In contrast to this view, many teachers said deaf children should not learn more than one language.

Teachers pointed out that children with typical (normal) hearing usually had only two languages, English and Shona. Teachers used this point to argue that deaf children were being overburdened by having three languages: English, Shona and ZSL. In all focus group discussions with specialist and non-specialist teachers it was agreed that the Shona language was unnecessary and should not be taught to deaf pupils who were said to be finding it easier to learn English than Shona. Some teachers said that they had to translate Shona into English in order to help their deaf pupils to understand Shona comprehension passages and questions. Shona was therefore regarded as an unnecessary, difficult-to-teach burden. In several discussion groups the teaching of Shona idioms and proverbs was thought to be particularly difficult, and therefore unnecessary. This concurred with Johnstone and Corce (2010) who found that in Kenya, students who were deaf typically struggled with the local KiSwahili

language requirements as they did not have a strong foundation in that language. This was unlike English, the language of instruction starting from fourth grade.

In the current study, English was also regarded as easier to teach than Shona as English was the language of instruction for all subjects from grade four and, deaf learners had greater exposure to that language than to Shona. In light of this, deaf children would therefore be less familiar with the more complex aspects of Shona, such as figurative language than they would be with similar aspects of English. Morgan (2014) explained that pragmatic skills such as knowing the context and inferred intent of the speaker were usually weak in deaf children because of impoverished interaction and communication. Such deaf children would therefore have limited success in assimilating proverbial information of languages where there was limited interaction and communication because of underdeveloped pragmatics. As many deaf children were weak readers who plateau at the fourth grade level and so could not read widely this meant that they were unable to use information across multiple contexts to compensate for instances where contexts did not reveal meaning of particular figurative expressions (Trezek & Paul, 2011). This notion of initial disadvantage being cumulatively accentuated over time was first described by Merton (1968) who called it the 'Matthew effect' after Matthew 13 verse 12 which says, "… from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away." The Matthew effect is made operational by teachers who develop low expectations of deaf pupils on perceiving an initial deficit. For example the teachers said proverbs were not useful and assumed that deaf people only needed to acquire very basic language, unlike hearing people who found figurative language useful in many contexts. This is contrary to Aarons and Reynolds (2003) who argued that deaf signers made use of the rich registers and other variations found in Sign Language. By implication, if deaf signers found figurative language in Sign Language useful, then if their interaction in other

languages were enriched and communication improved, they should be able to find figurative language useful in those languages as well. Teachers who wrongly believed that deafness precluded the understanding and use of figurative language deny the children even the figurative language that they have in ZSL. Ultimately this denies the children full participation in the richness of communication and therefore in the learning community. In many instances it was not just figurative language in Shona which teachers found unnecessary because of deaf children's underdeveloped pragmatics, but the entire language was queried as an unnecessary burden which confused the learning of English. The teachers in all three schools said that as the children already had Sign Language, Shona became an unnecessary burden to learners who might be better off concentrating on English. This would avoid a perceived language overload. It is worth noting that the teachers exonerated themselves from teaching ZSL by stating that deaf children already had Sign Language. Deaf children's formal learning of ZSL was out of the question for many teachers who were themselves not proficient in the language. Based on the teachers' beliefs that the children already had ZSL and that it, like Shona, would add to the children's language burden, many teachers sidelined these two languages.

The notion of too many languages being burdensome was supported by a naïve balance theory of bilingualism. Teachers appeared to hold this theory based on what Cummins (1980) called the separate underlying proficiency model which believed that the mind had a restricted amount of room for languages. Baker (2008) cited Bialystok (2001) who argued that nothing known about memory substantiated the idea of a language overload and in any case the fact that so many children have grown up with more than one language with no obvious trauma should put an end to this notion. Quite to the contrary, Baker (2008) said research revealed that there was ample cerebral space, not only for two languages but for

other languages. He pointed out that there were cognitive advantages in being bilingual or multilingual as there was transfer between the languages. It was surprising that even though many teachers indicated that they had learned ZSL from their deaf pupils and began having improved communication with them, the teachers for the most part saw deficiencies in this language and did not recognise the cognitive advantages of being multilingual in English, Shona and ZSL.

To sum up the preceding two sections, it was noted that many teachers believed that deaf learners lacked language, memory, motivation to learn and the world experience necessary for learning. The teachers' focus was on the child, whom they appeared to blame for 'owning' the various deficiencies. These perceived pathologies affected many teachers' understanding that the teaching of deaf children was necessarily remedial. As the teachers believed that deaf children's learning was pathologically-based, this inclined the teachers to be therapeutic, repetitive and prefer a technical-vocational to an academic curriculum. They say that they did not want these learners to be overburdened with too many languages which confused them and impeded learning. Teachers experienced this kind of teaching as special education. According to Neisser (1990, p. 274) in the teaching profession, 'Special Education' meant teaching "exceptional" children: those who were mentally retarded, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, deaf and blind. Each disabling condition is viewed as posing particular challenges which require Special Education. In the current study, teachers said that for deaf learners the challenges and deficiencies which required Special Education were derived from the learners' language-handicap. Teachers implied that these deficits constituted special educational needs which required special teaching. Special teaching was facilitated by small classes which highlighted that teacher-directed, individualised instruction was most beneficial for the students. However these small class

sizes unnecessarily emphasised that the deaf learners were deficient and that there was need for the teacher's individual direction more than the need for peer interaction in the community of the class. This negated the view of deaf learners as normal which would be facilitated by larger classes as cooperative learning communities that using the children's most accessible language: ZSL. Ironically this did not happen primarily because the teachers did not understand what ZSL was and were not fluent in it. Teachers were wary of exposing deaf children to languages they perceived as unnecessary such as Shona and ZSL. The next section discusses how these beliefs and knowledge inform the teachers' experience as they play various roles in the schools for the deaf.

10.5 The experience of teaching

Teachers' regarded the teaching of deaf learners as a remedial occupation and they also believed deaf pupils' learning ability to be deficient. This means different things to various teachers but all of them said that their challenges were not appreciated by government policies which were supposed to direct their work. Teachers argued that they had not participated in the formulation of these policies. In light of this, they said that they had to work their way around the unrealistic government policies. They felt they were under the strain of having to deal with the language-handicaps as well as unrealistic policies. The following is a discussion of the teachers' experiences using two dimensions. One dimension focuses on what teachers perceive as deafness-related limitations (from themes in columns 1 and 2 in Table 10.1) as well as policy-related limitations (from themes in column 3 in Table 10.1). The second dimension uses the policy context (column 3 in Table 10.1) and paradigms of disability (column 4 in Table 10.1) to highlight how the teachers negotiate the meaning of their teaching and non-teaching roles within the community of the residential schools.

10.5.1 Teacher roles: Reversed, extended, diffuse and unprepared for

The labour-intensive, demanding process of teaching deaf pupils was said to be taxing. For example teaching the reading of one word took more than two hours after which the teacher was tired but had no success because she said she had attempted the impossible. If the teaching of only one word takes so long and is so exhausting, one is left with the impression that the teacher was doing technically difficult work. Evans (2004) said that the teaching of word-based skills such as vocabulary is related to an emphasis on explicit teaching in deaf education. In agreement Livingston (1997) said that traditionally programmes for teaching deaf learners had emphasised word-based skills because they are easier to teach but she pointed out that such an approach emphasised the mechanistic features of language. This ignored what Whitehurst and Lonigan (2011) called contextual, outside-in units such as narratives which are important in order to make sense in reading. Teaching only one word for half the morning reduced the teaching of reading to a bottom-up approach and ignored equally important top-down illustrations, examples, analogies and demonstrations. In other words the teacher thought that until her pupils mastered the basic building block of the one word, they could not move onto sentence and paragraph level. This reductionist focus on a mechanistic bottom-up approach ignored the possibility of emphasising more global, discourse structures to help the learners understand more than one word at a time in the community of the class. It ignored what Lang (2011) called the provision of meta-cognitive skills to enhance reading. Meta-cognitive skills and a contextual, discourse focus would be enhanced by recognising learners' developmental precursors of formal reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2011). This would recognise learners' own experiences as worthwhile resources (Harber, 2005) for example those from Deaf culture and ZSL. Knoors and Marschark (2012) cited studies showing that there was a positive correlation between Sign Language skills and

reading proficiency for deaf children. Making connections between finger-spelling and printed letters or words as well as between signs and concepts (Schirmer & Williams, 2011) would be worthwhile resources. Such an approach would be within what Wenger (1998) called 'social infrastructures that foster learning'. Paradoxically, teachers said that they benefit from learning ZSL from their deaf pupils but many still did not recognise this as a worthwhile resource that could be used for formal teaching and examination. While the *Report of the Presidential Inquiry into Education* (Nziramasanga, 1999) acknowledged that specialist teachers learned ZSL from their pupils, the report did not explore the effects of this on the experience of teaching. In the current study all teachers, except one, took it for granted that they would be taught Sign Language by their pupils and teach the pupils at the same time. The expectation that teachers could possibly use a language they had not yet mastered for teaching seemed not only unrealistic (Baker, 2008) but more importantly it reflected perceptions of the language as being unreal (Kiyaga & Moores, 2009) rather than what Stokoe (2005) called a natural, real language. This expectation was further confounded by the reversal of roles between teachers and pupils. The one teacher who pointed out the difficulty of learning a language and at the same time being expected to teach in that language was symptomatic of the need to formalise this role reversal so that it becomes a positive experience for teachers and pupils. In order to achieve this, the role reversal has to cease being viewed from a pathological perspective in which children informally teach adults a system of communication which is regarded as deficient anyway. Reframing the teacher-pupil role reversal entailed viewing it from a socio-cultural perspective in which the deaf children's increased responsibilities in teaching a real language were acknowledged as important. Openly acknowledging the role played by deaf children who become 'teachers to their teachers' in ZSL learning would raise the children's self-esteem. It would be a true sign that something in their experience was worthwhile. In the socio-cultural frame, when teachers

switch roles and become learners of ZSL, it would give these adults an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which they were dependent on the children. This would make the teachers what McDougall and Davis (2011) called 'life-long learners' and had the potential to transform their appreciation of Deaf culture in general and ZSL in particular. As it stands, the current arrangement does not enable the teachers to acquire sufficient ZSL to participate in formal teaching situations using this language. The learning of ZSL from pupils was one of several non-teaching roles that teachers undertook at the special schools.

Some teachers played the role of speech therapists. Most specialist teachers were dissatisfied with this role while some non-specialist teachers were impressed by their new role. The non-specialist teachers assumed that in Special Education, articulation training was a teaching role while many specialist teachers regarded it as diffusion of their role from teacher to speech therapist. The specialist teachers thought this diffusion of role inappropriate because teachers are not professional therapists. According to Harber (2005) teachers were expected to assume many other non-teaching roles for which there was little or no support, advice and assistance in the schools, resulting in confusion about roles and responsibilities. In the current study some teachers assumed the role of school audiologist without question. These teachers were satisfied although one expressed the need for further training. The low status of children causes teachers to have a low status (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2007) and so working with hearing aids rather than only with children changed the teacher's role and in some way raised their status. Other teachers looked after the health, social and pastoral needs of the children in these residential institutions. This child-minding role was accepted by many teachers who blamed some of the biological parents whom they accused of poor parenting. Teachers stated that in some cases they had to become surrogate parents. Nothing in their teacher education had prepared them for these extended roles and many were uncertain about their

responsibilities. These roles extended well beyond the classroom in what Hoyle (1974) called extended professionalism (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2007). In a study in Kenya, Burning *et al.* (2013) found that the assignment of extended roles to teachers had resulted in suboptimal practice for children with hearing impairment. In the current study, the teachers said that they had not been prepared for this diffusion of roles at any stage in their teacher-education. Eriks-Brophy and Whittingham (2013) also found that the unique requirements of deaf students were not emphasised in teacher-education in Canada. In Zimbabwe, in addition to not emphasising these unique requirements of deaf students, teacher-education did not bridge the gap between the ideals of policy and the practical realities on the ground as discussed in the next section.

10.5.2 Dislocation: ZSL and mainstream curricula ideals versus teachers' reality

Many teachers expressed dissatisfaction with bureaucratic controls and policies that they perceived as unrealistic. Teachers coped with the various controls and policies in different ways. Some resisted certain policies such as those which stipulated that deaf learners' examinations could be interpreted into ZSL and that ZSL could be taught as a subject from primary to secondary schools. This resistance was based on scepticism about the ability of teachers to professionally interpret examinations into ZSL as well scepticism about the ability of ZSL to capture all the concepts from the language of the examination. In the first instance doubts on whether ZSL could capture academic concepts in an examination were explained by the Kiyaga and Moores (2009) finding that most teachers of deaf students in sub-Saharan Africa did not believe Sign Language to be a real language. The same study's other finding that most of these teachers are not all that capable of using Sign Language could also explain the scepticism about teachers' ability to interpret examinations into ZSL. What this means

was that although government policy envisaged a teacher of deaf learners who used ZSL skilfully, the reality on the ground was that the teachers were largely unskilled in the language. Another reality was that the place of ZSL in relation to other languages already on the timetable was not specified by the government policy. This kind of situation is what Jansen (2001) called a dislocation between policy vision and the practical realities in schools. Faced with this dislocation in the current study, some teachers simply ignored the policies in a move that could be regarded as open resistance.

Another policy the teachers thought similarly dislocated related to the implementation of the mainstream curriculum in schools for the deaf. This implementation was based on what Neisser (1990) called the mainstreaming assumption that because they were residential institutions, the schools for the deaf were highly restrictive. It became crucial therefore, to use a curriculum from the mainstream in order to make institutions less restrictive. Taking into account what Spencer and Marschark (2010a) said about there being no one curriculum that was optimal for all deaf students, it could be argued that a uniform mainstream curriculum in the institutions was restrictive as it did not take into account the individual differences of deaf learners. As it is, teachers were experiencing difficulties implementing the mainstream curriculum and so some of them had resorted to coping mechanisms such as making deaf pupils copy completed exercises so that there was a record of work covered which could be shown in order to satisfy bureaucrats such as principals and inspectors. The 'policy images' of deaf children doing all the exercises in all subjects just like hearing children conflicted with the reality of some deaf children who were multiply disabled (Knoors & Vervloed, 2011; Storbeck & Moodley, 2009). Deaf children who are multiply disabled have special needs and therefore cannot cope with some of the academic subjects. In anticipation of unfair criticism from bureaucrats, frustrated teachers cheated the system in

order to get by. What worsened this strategic resistance was that there were many instances in which teachers over-generalised the inability of multiply disabled deaf students to include all deaf learners. This meant that even deaf students who would have been able to cope with the academic task might be considered as unable to participate in the mainstream curriculum. Although a differentiated, individualised curriculum would be appropriate for deaf learners of different aptitudes this had in some instances been misconstrued to mean a more vocational than academic curriculum for deaf learners generally. This took the teaching of deaf learners into the framework of learning disability and mental retardation (Aarons & Reynolds, 2003; Neisser, 1990) and was contrary to the observation by Spencer and Marschark (2010a) that no one curriculum was optimal for all deaf students. The framework of mental retardation was patronising as it regarded deaf learners as abnormal and too inferior to participate in the ordinary curriculum. Teachers used the mental retardation framework to exonerate themselves from accountability for deaf students' learning outcomes as further discussed in the next section.

10.5.3 Participating and relating in school: Deafness as an exonerating construct

On the basis that some teachers perceive what they did as impossible (such as teaching the reading of one word), it was not surprising that they were not satisfied with their work. Luckner and Hanks (2003) cited lack of visible student progress as a reason for teachers being dissatisfied with their work. In the current study some teachers had low expectations of deaf learners' academic and social outcomes as a result of lack of visible student progress. Such teachers missed what Hargreaves (2009) cited as the 'psychic' or intrinsic reward of teaching, that is the pleasure of seeing children doing well academically. Many teachers had resigned themselves to accepting low student outcomes. Some said that deaf learners were

doing very well considering their limitations but this was proof that the teachers had set a low ceiling and had low expectations of deaf learners. Low academic achievements of deaf learners cited in the literature such as Qi and Mitchell (2011) have a relationship with what Garberoglio *et al.* (2012) call diminished efficacy beliefs in teachers of deaf students who feel that they lack the power to improve students' achievements. Teachers with low expectations of deaf learners are commonplace in deaf education (Johnson *et al.*, 1989; Storbeck & Magongwa, 2006). As a result of low expectations of student outcomes, some of these teachers were prematurely satisfied with student attainments. For instance in the current study a teacher who said that it was sufficient to teach deaf learners to read and write their names would be satisfied with this easy-to-achieve goal. In a United States survey, Luckner and Hanks (2003) found that most teachers of deaf students were satisfied with their jobs. This concurred with the current study in which a few teachers explicitly said they were not satisfied with their jobs. For example Svayaz said: "I am not a deaf, you know, and I enjoy kids who can talk as they have some interesting behaviours. But with these silent children they have difficulty telling their feelings and so on." It was evident that this teacher had a hearing perspective in which deaf pupils were supposed to express themselves in the same way as hearing children in order to participate in the learning community. The absence of 'hearing normality' unsettled this particular teacher. Other teachers who expressed dissatisfaction with the job linked job satisfaction with adequate remuneration. They said that they were not being adequately paid considering that they were teaching learners with special educational needs. As some of them had further qualifications as special educators, they expected their employer to recognise the specialisation by at least rewarding them more than colleagues who taught in the mainstream. They said they get paid less than colleagues in the mainstream because parents of deaf children were fewer and therefore unable to contribute

more than a modest amount towards allowances for teachers[29]. Some teachers reported that colleagues in the mainstream said that the teachers in specials schools had fewer pupils and therefore an easier job and so did not deserve to be rewarded at the same or higher levels than mainstream teachers. This perception concurred with Hargreaves *et al.* (2007) who found that teachers of low-achieving children with special educational needs in England had low status despite their qualifications and training because the public regarded them as 'babysitters' whose work was more concerned with mothering and care than teaching and learning (2007, p. 65). Even though some of the teachers in the current study said that they were dissatisfied because of lower salaries and would put in more work and enjoy the work if they were adequately rewarded, this perception was not supported by the literature. For example Hargreaves (2000a) observed that in the teaching profession, stronger professionalization such as higher salaries, did not always mean greater professionalism, such as higher standards of practice. This means that even if the teachers were to get higher rewards, they might still not be satisfied with their jobs because of the lack of intrinsic rewards that Hargreaves (2009) mentioned. It is noteworthy that in the current study, while a higher salary would be a welcome stimulant, it was generally not a deciding factor in most participants' decision to become teachers.

Other teachers were satisfied with their work and remained committed to achieving something with the deaf learners but some of them went to the other extreme where they took their work so seriously that they had no room for fun in class. For example Kondas said:

[29] These allowances are monies contributed by parents of children attending any school in Zimbabwe and are shared among the teachers in that school in order to supplement the generally low teachers' salaries paid by government (about US$400 per month for a teacher with the required basic qualification of a teaching diploma or degree). The allowances which are paid from parents' contributions (commonly referred to as incentives) are additional to government salary and are variable from school to school depending on parents' ability to pay. The parent contributions are in addition to the school fees that parents are expected to pay.

"*Musaita zvekutamba.* I tell you *panofiwa pano*" (This is not child's play as there is a lot of work. We really sweat it out here). The metaphor of the teacher's work not being child's play depicted the occupation as demanding and serious, without room for fun in the class community. Such perceptions of their work were congruent with teaching experiences that are clinical, serious and rigid. This contrasted with the high value that Squire (2011) placed on play in general education. Play is a vital way of assisting children with self-expression from an emotional and communication point of view (Shen, 2009). However, to suggest shorter days for deaf learners as one participant in the current study did, misconstrued the play-way approach. This was part of the pathologising discourse which undervalued deaf learners, using the labelling of deafness to relieve deaf learners of the responsibility of studying for the same length of time as hearing peers. Graham (2008) called the use of labels for children with disabilities in this way an 'exonerating construct'. The teachers in the current study could be using deafness to exonerate the pupils from studying like others on the grounds that their learning was deficient. This call for exoneration however contradicted the general calls made by most participants in the study that deaf learners should be allowed even more time to learn than hearing peers.

Exoneration was not restricted to deaf pupils but included teachers who said that they should be exempted from comparisons with their colleagues who taught children with normal hearing. Many teachers averred that because they were teaching children with special educational needs, their teaching performance should not be compared to the performance of those teaching hearing children in mainstream schools. This wariness could be explained by the finding by Hargreaves *et al.* (2007) that teachers who taught students who perform less well in public examinations because they had special educational needs were regarded as lesser teachers than their mainstream colleagues. In the current study teachers of deaf

children might therefore be cognisant of the risk that their own perceived status was judged on the status of the children with whom they worked. Many teachers also viewed external appraisals negatively. They expressed reservations about the professionalism of government inspectors whom they said did not understand deaf education. This concurred with the findings by Hargreaves *et al.* (2007) in their study in England. The teachers in the current study wanted a more knowledgeable inspectorate, promoted from within their ranks otherwise deafness should be understood as an exonerating factor in performance appraisals. The teachers strongly believed that deaf learners had special educational needs which were not fully understood by outsiders and so they wanted former colleagues to appraise them. The current situation of appraisals carried out by those who had no experience in the field was regarded as unfair and dissatisfying. Overall the study shows a contradiction between macro policy which is progressive, and teacher-preparation curriculum documents which perpetuate not only a deficit model of teaching deaf learners, but are also overwhelmingly skills-oriented rather than knowledge-based. Teachers' beliefs and approaches to teaching are shaped by this largely deficit perspective from curriculum documents and broader societal discourses around disability. The key message of this thesis is that it is only the dominant discourses of the hearing world that shape deafness as a deficit but if hearing teachers' thinking were to be shifted, approaches to teaching and the experience of such teaching would be substantially different. Several conclusions were drawn from the foregoing discussions and are used to make appropriate recommendations.

10.6 Recommendations

The study makes several recommendations whose implementation could contribute to an improvement in the experience of teaching and learning in residential schools for the deaf in

Zimbabwe. Many of these recommendations come from suggestions made by the teachers and principals who participated in the focus group and individual interviews. The rest of the recommendations are based on this study's findings, which revealed that some issues needed to be addressed in order to improve the experience of teaching in these residential schools. As was discussed in Chapter Five, the government of Zimbabwe has legislation and policies meant to promote and guide the education of pupils with disabilities, including those who are deaf. There is however a mismatch between policy and practice (Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Suubi, 2013). Some of the recommendations made here address this disjuncture between policy and practice.

Several government policies need to be amplified so that teachers in schools for the deaf can implement them. The *Curriculum Policy: Primary and Secondary Schools* (Secretary for Education, 2002) shows that the mainstream curriculum is bilingual or multilingual. It also states that ZSL is a subject for the Hearing Impaired. The policy does not however explain who should introduce and teach ZSL as well as what their levels of proficiency in the language would be. Silence on these important aspects has resulted in the language not being adopted as a subject in any of the schools for the deaf, more than ten years after the policy was formulated. Therefore the first recommendation would be that teachers should be assisted so that they can introduce and teach this new subject. Experts who could assist teachers in this area would be linguists specialising in Sign Language or other linguists working closely with Deaf native-signers.

Deaf native-signers would be language models that can assist linguists and staff in the special schools to define the levels of fluency appropriate at various grade levels. Policy *Guidelines*

to Staffing of Special Needs Provision (Secretary for Education, 2007a) which is meant to stop out-of-field teaching (Ingersoll, 2002) does not define or explain levels of ZSL fluency which staff in the special schools ought to have. It is therefore recommended that the required ZSL fluencies for teaching at various levels should be specified and assistance in achieving them sought from native signers. Related to this, it is also recommended that teacher-education programmes should complement these efforts. The current situation is that there is a disjuncture between the thrust of teacher-education and government's staffing policy for the schools for the deaf. Most teacher-education programmes aspire to cover more than one special educational need and so they end up not covering such areas as ZSL and deaf education in depth. The one programme which offers teachers specialisation in a specific area such as deaf education, focuses on the deficiencies of not hearing and providing teachers with skills on how to try to restore hearing and speech. Teacher-education policy should therefore complement the Sign Language thrust of the government policy *Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provision*. Teacher-education could do this by offering pre-service and in-service teachers ZSL as a language and Sign-Bilingualism as full courses. This would help teachers to introduce Sign-Bilingualism in compliance with government's multilingual mainstream curriculum policy. Outsiders such as the SASL experts at Wits[30] could be invited as consultants in the development and introduction of such courses. The courses should be premised on the acquisition of specified levels of proficiency in ZSL before any teaching of pedagogy begins. The SASL experts from Wits would have the advantage of an easier transition to ZSL because of the similar cultures in the two neighbouring countries. Some of them are also Deaf native signers who would become models for teachers, deaf pupils and the Deaf community in Zimbabwe. Continuing professional development in the schools could

[30] Wits is the shortened form of the name University of the Witwatersrand. This institution has experts in South African Sign Language (SASL) in the Centre for Deaf Studies and the School of Language and Literacy, both of which are in the Faculty of Humanities.

also be formally organised so that teachers are not informally taught ZSL by their own pupils. It is therefore recommended that, ideally Deaf adults or, where these are not readily available, deaf pupils in higher grades should regularly teach ZSL to teachers in schools for the deaf. This should be done in formally organised, daily workshops at the schools. The older deaf pupils are more likely to stretch the teachers to higher levels of fluency than younger deaf pupils could.

Another policy document, *Special Examination Arrangements for learners with Disabilities and other Special Needs* (Secretary for Education, 2007b) has met with some resistance partly because of the aforementioned uncertainties on teachers' levels of ZSL proficiency and also because of internal inconsistencies within the policy itself. There is a mismatch between the policy vision of signing for deaf candidates and the reality of teachers whose levels of proficiency in ZSL are uncertain and therefore whose competence to interpret examinations into Sign Language cannot be ascertained. In addition there are internal contradictions in the policy where on one hand it allows teachers who interpret examinations to change syntax as they sign. On the other hand the same policy has an injunction that signing invigilators should not modify subject-specific vocabulary. It also prohibits the candidates from signing their answers. In this case the message that the examination is being interpreted into another, real language is contradicted. The signing is a potentially confusing transliteration of the written language of the examination rather than an interpretation. It is therefore recommended that the policy should recognise and allow the use of subject-specific vocabulary in ZSL. It is also recommended that the policy should allow the candidates to sign their responses to the questions. Both recommendations are based on the notion of ZSL as a real language and concur with the overall spirit of the policy which aims to make the examination more accessible to the candidates.

In addition to lacking support and development that would enable them to interpret examinations into ZSL, teachers also lacked support in various other non-teaching roles. One such role was the counselling and support of parents of deaf pupils. Although teachers recognised that some parents had negative attitudes towards deaf children, they did not know how they could support these parents who might be grieving or helpless about their situation. It is therefore recommended that continuing professional development should expand the teachers' professionalism beyond the classroom so that it also includes support and counselling of parents as well as early intervention skills. It is recommended that in order for this expansion of professionalism to be effective, the teachers themselves need support and development that would enable them to work on their own negative perceptions such as low expectations of deaf learners.

As a result of the finding that non-specialist teachers were more introspective and that they more readily acknowledged their individual deficiencies than the specialists, it became evident that specialist teacher-education was de-sensitising introspection. It is therefore recommended that specialist teacher-education should strive to inculcate an 'action research' ethos to teaching. In this approach teachers would regard all they know, whether about speech or Sign Language, as tentative and experimental so that they avoid becoming rigid and impervious to continual improvement. This is because the current specialist teacher-education appears to take what is known about deafness and teaching as fixed and certain, thereby de-sensitising teachers to the important possibility that even with knowledge from specialist training, they could be wrong. This was one instance in which the use of focus group discussions in this study was vindicated. Reflective thinking can be promoted at the

three levels suggested by Ylijoki (2001) as individual, interactional and cultural levels. At individual level, it is essential for teachers to reflect on which kind of story they are protagonists in, so that changing the story the teacher is living by would alter the teacher's relation to teaching. Introspection should be complemented by interactional reflection to avoid the pitfalls of individuals who have undergone the process denigrating others who have yet to appreciate Deaf culture as happened in my autoethnography (see footnotes 23 to 26 in Chapter 8). At the interactional level, understanding one's narrative could lead to improved interactions with deaf pupils, their parents and policy makers. In order for teaching to improve it is important for teachers, pupils, parents and policy makers to be part of the same story. At a cultural level, knowing the dominant narrative could make visible the tacit norms and values concerning the prevailing teaching culture at a particular institution. This was not done in this study in order to maintain anonymity and institutional integrity but could be done for self-reflective sessions that do not intend to publish results. It is also recommended that teachers undergo teacher-preparation which is balanced in two ways. There is need for a balance between a medical perspective that focuses on individual deaf learners with their deficiencies and a socio-cultural perspective that focuses on large classes that are considered normal and taught normally. There is also need for a balance between a skills-orientation associated with teacher-training and a knowledge-based orientation associated with teacher-education in order to produce not only skilled but also open-minded teachers for deaf education.

Finally, it is recommended that further research should investigate the extent to which the policy *Curriculum to be followed in the Special Education Institutions* (Chief Education Officer, 1989) ensures that pupils with disabilities in institutions follow a less restrictive, mainstream curriculum rather than a watered down institutional curriculum. Such a study is

suggested by the teachers who said that a mainstream curriculum for all deaf pupils was inappropriate and therefore restrictive. Teachers said that they individualised instruction, but the extent to which they did this could not be ascertained. Some teachers said that technical-vocational subjects were more suitable for deaf pupils while others said such subjects distracted from the goal of teaching academic subjects. Research could examine the extent of individualisation in instruction and selection of vocational or academic subjects in order to determine whether or not current practices in the schools were more or less restrictive for the deaf learners. The experiences of deaf pupils in the residential special schools would complement the understanding of teachers' experiences documented in the current study.

10.7 Conclusion

This final chapter summarised the study on the experience of teaching deaf learners in residential schools in Zimbabwe. Main findings of the study reveal that teachers blame everyone else associated with deaf education except themselves for the state of affairs in deaf education. Teachers blame parents of deaf children, government policies, deaf learners and ZSL. Parents are accused of poor parenting which leaves teachers as surrogate parents. Zimbabwean Sign Language is said to be inadequate for instruction and interfering with the acquisition of the spoken language of instruction. Government policies that are supposed to guide deaf education are accused of being unrealistic. In order to be able to teach deaf learners who are perceived to be deficient, teachers circumvent policies they perceive to be unrealistic. Deaf learners are blamed for a number of deficiencies which include not being motivated to learn and having linguistic, experiential as well as memory deficits. As a result of these perceived deficits, teachers engage in remedial, therapeutic teaching which focuses on individual learner deficiencies and is contrary to the spirit of government policy directives

which acknowledge deaf learners' assets and strengths related to ZSL. Teachers repeat the same individualised remedial, therapeutic teaching in small classes over and over again hoping to get different results. In this process of dancing on the same spot there is no introspection. Teachers find ways of working around government policy directives because their own limitations, which they gloss over, do not allow them to implement the policies. Many of these teachers' limitations emanate from teacher-education policies with a decided bias towards a deficiency, individualistic perspective of deafness. Circumventing policies is a cope out made easy by the absence of government support to make the policies realisable. This and other defects in policies results from government not consulting stakeholders such as teachers, parents of deaf children and the Deaf community when policies are formulated. Lack of input in policies results in teachers not 'owning' the policies and continuing to teach deaf children as deficient learners even though this experience frustrates the teachers. Involvement at all levels of policy formulation and implementation could help teachers introspect about their own contribution to the challenges of deaf education. Open-minded introspection on the part of the teachers could result in the acknowledgement of their own limitations and the discovery of worthwhile assets that deaf children bring to class. Discovering such children's assets as fluency in ZSL and an inclination towards narrative learning could result in more cooperative approaches in larger classes. Ultimately the teachers' introspection should be the beginning of various discoveries that lead to flexible teaching in which teachers experiment with teaching approaches resulting in a satisfying teaching experience in the schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe.

EPILOGUE

My own experiences impelled me into researching the experiences of teaching in residential special schools for the deaf. I felt such intense embarrassment and a sense of shame when I discovered that deaf learners could easily learn scientific concepts, and that elsewhere in the world, they were considered normal and were performing far better than I had ever hoped for my own pupils. The idea that my fellow teachers and I were probably doing something wrong thrust me into the exploration of our experiences as hearing teachers in these schools for deaf children.

The research journey itself started with embarrassment but as the autoethnographic part of the study forced me to confront my feelings at the time I had been teaching, I went through even more intense emotions. As I read through my old principals' and inspectors' lesson critiques and tried to recall my responses at that time, the embarrassment became so severe that I initially blocked them. I put off trying to recall these responses many, many times and would do any other chores rather than deal with these feelings. Spurred on by my supervisor's constant probing about what I had really felt during the times I discussed my lessons with principals and inspectors, I was forced to face the facts. As I remembered my initial agreement with the perceptions of deaf children as inferior to hearing children current in those days, I became deeply stressed. I was ashamed that I had at any time in my life accepted such misconceptions about deaf people as reasonable. I tried to distance myself emotionally from the autoethnographic data, but it was impossible. This introspection made me aware of my biases and prejudices. This was an unexpectedly revealing and intensely emotional experience. Writing about oneself results in self-disclosure and exposure (Badenhorst *et al.*, 2013; Chatham-Carpenter, 2010). In writing up the autoethnography I also began to doubt whether I would ever be able to report my findings in a scientifically

acceptable way while at the same time capturing the emotional side of the research journey. A combination of these doubts and my own shame really stressed me.

In the last stretch of my analysis and writing up I suffered from Bell's palsy. Although I cannot say there was a direct cause-effect connection between my stress and the Bell's palsy, I know that the condition is associated with stress. In this condition, I lost control of most of the muscles on the right side of my face. I could no longer close my right eye, or work on the computer. I felt sure that someone must have bewitched me. Bitzer (2007) said that completing a PhD is a 'rite of passage' for entry into the research and academic community. I began to wonder who wanted to deny me this academic identity through supernatural means. It took my supervisor's assurances that she was familiar with my medical condition to pull me out of this trough of despair. With her encouragement, I forced myself to continue. Ironically, as I went on with my writing I became really relieved that I was at last getting these ideas and feelings out. The writing process itself seems to have facilitated the venting of deeply bottled, pent up emotions about my experiences at the residential special school. I never expected any of this to happen because all I had intended was to carry out a scientific inquiry. Autoethnography turned out to be therapeutic for me as I came "…to understand myself in deeper ways and with understanding of self came understanding of others" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

I believe that if the other teachers in the schools for the deaf could be given the same opportunity of self examination and introspection this would allow them to start on their own therapeutic journeys. As Starr (2010) explained, they would become aware of their own positions and be transformed because the self is reiteratively constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. Introspection should be a necessary starting point for many teachers of deaf

pupils in the journey to really understanding themselves, their experiences and turning deaf education in Zimbabwe into a more positive and enriching experience for deaf children and their teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Appendix A1: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Part 1: Identifying information

Date: Time: School code:

Specialist/non-specialist group:

Part 2: Focus group protocol

This is an informal discussion in which we are all equal and so do not feel intimidated as none of our answers are either wrong or right because we are brainstorming and remembering our experiences in this school. It is therefore alright to disagree with what other members of the group are saying and to say things as we have experienced them in this school rather than being bookish. All that you say here will be reported anonymously so that no one outside this group will ever know what you as an individual said.

Part 3: Discussion Items

1.0 Initial and current impressions of teaching at this school.
[***Associated prompts*:** Tell me the story of how you came to be teaching here, your first impressions and your impressions now.]
2.0 Compare deaf and hearing children's ability to learn.
[***Associated prompts***: When you think back on your experiences with hearing children and with deaf children here, how do the two groups of children compare? To what do you attribute the differences/similarities?]
3.0 To what do you attribute most deaf learners' not proceeding beyond primary education?
4.0 The uniqueness of teaching deaf learners.
[***Associated prompts***: How would you describe the teaching deaf learners to a newcomer? What makes it different from /similar to mainstream teaching?]
5.0 Would you use the same methods for teaching deaf and hearing learners? Why? / Why not?
6.0 Is there anything that you think is important for this study but that has not been raised in this discussion?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix A2: Teachers' and Principals' Individual Interview Guide

Stage 1: Context of Participant's Experience

Date: Principal / Specialist / Non-specialist:

Number of years as a teacher and / principal:

Number of years at this school:

Current grade taught:

Tell me about your background and why you became a teacher and now a teacher of the deaf.

Stage 2: Construction of the Experience of Teaching

1.0 Tell me about an incident in your teaching here, one which you will never forget.
2.0 What has been the best part of your teaching experience here? What has been the worst?
3.0 If you could change one thing from your experience of teaching here, what would it be? Why?

Stage 3: Reflection on the Meaning the Experience Holds for Participant

1.0 When you think back on your experiences as a teacher here, explain how you feel about teaching deaf children in a separate boarding school.
2.0 What does it mean to you to be a 'teacher of the deaf' in a special boarding school?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix A4: Example of Teacher-Education Policy Document

A4 UCE/DTE 02/SE MAIN HI/01/02

UNITED COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
in association with
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION
DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (SPECIAL EDUCATION)
MAIN SUBJECT – HEARING IMPAIRMENT SYLLABUS

1.0 PREAMBLE

This syllabus is designed for experienced teachers following a 16 months Special Education Programme for children with hearing impairment. The course comprises an initial three terms of residential study and a term of Teaching Practice.

2.0 AIM:

The course aims to :

2.1 develop teachers who have sound knowledge and understanding of the nature of hearing impairment.
2.2 develop teachers who are conversant with the speech and language problems of children with hearing impairment.
2.3 equip teachers with assessment skills and intervention strategies for hearing impairment.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of programme students should be able to :-

3.1 identify the causes of hearing impairment, possible preventive measures and service delivery models.

3.2 explain the physics of sound and speech perception.

3.3 examine the different types and levels of hearing impairment and related problems.

3.4 compare and contrast the various electro-acoustic gadgets (hearing aids.)

3.5 examine speech and language defects in children with hearing impairment.

3.6 examine the different means of communication used by children with hearing impairment.

3.7 carry out audiometric tests and interpret audiometric results.

-2-

4.0 CONTENT

4.1 Autony and Physiology of the Ear

4.1.1 outer ear
4.1.2 middle ear
4.1.3 inner ear

4.2 Hearing Disorders and their Treatment

4.2.1 common diseases of the ear
4.2.2 congenital and acquired disorders
4.2.3 types of hearing loss
4.2.4 prevalence of hearing loss in Zimbabwe
4.2.5 prevention of hearing loss
4.2.6 services and their accessibility.

4.3 Electro-Acoustic Equipment

4.3.1 individual hearing aids
4.3.2 the induction loop system
4.3.3 hard wire systems
4.3.4 radio systems
4.3.5 vibrators
4.3.6 cochlea implant.

4.4 Effects of HI Language acquisition

4.4 Audiometric Assessment

4.4.1 screen testing
4.4.2 pure tone testing
4.4.3 free field testing
4.4.4 speech audiometric tests
4.4.5 bone conduction tests
4.4.6 impedance audiometric tests
4.4.7 audiograms
4.4.8 interpretation and use of audiometric data.

4.5 Anatomy and Physiology of Speech System

4.5.1 speech organs
4.5.2 speech production

4.6 *Speech Reception*

4.6.1 auditory reception
4.6.2 visual reception
4.6.3 tractable reception
4.6.4 multi-sensory reception.

4.7 *Speech Production*

4.7.1 sensory modalities
4.7.2 breath and voice control
4.7.3 behaviours and skills for the production of consonants and vowels.

4.8 *Language Acquisition*

4.8.1 patterns of language in hearing and non-hearing children
4.8.2 patterns of language acquisition in hearing impaired children with hearing and non-hearing parents
4.8.3 the effects of language on the development of cognitive skills.

4.9 *Oral versus Manual Communication Systems*

4.9.1 philosophies of the systems
4.9.2 historical development and use
4.9.3 alternative non-vocal communication system/sign language
4.9.4 bilingualism.

4.10 *Total Communication*

4.10.1 philosophical and historical basis
4.10.2 use of combined communication strategies.

5.0 APPROACHES

lectures
films
seminars
tutorials
assignments
educational visits
resources persons
practicals
lectures
research (Internet)

6.0 ASSESSMENT

Assessment comprises coursework and a written examination.

6.1 *Coursework* - 50%

Coursework will consist of:-

(i) 2 major assignments - 25%
(ii) Research Project - 25%

To pass, a candidate must score a minimum of 50% in the project.

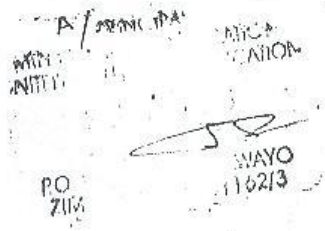
6.2 *Examination* - 50%

Final written examination – consisting of one three-hour theory paper of three essay type questions.

6.3 *Final Symbol*

The final symbol is calculated by adding the coursework average to the final examination average.

The candidate is required to pass each component separately.



Appendix A5: Example of Government Policy Document

1.0. Guidelines to Staffing of Special Needs Provisions

Secretary's Circular No: ..... Of 2007

Distribution

Directors: Head Office
Provincial Education Directors
District Education Officers
Heads of all Primary Schools
Responsible Authorities
Teachers Associations
National Association of Primary School Heads: Chairperson
National Association of Secondary School Heads: Chairperson

1.1. Preamble

As we strive to provide quality education to our learners including learners with disability we need to staff our centres for learners with disabilities with appropriately qualified teachers. It has been observed that in some instances resource units and special schools are sometimes staffed with inappropriately qualified teachers not necessarily because there is no suitably qualified teacher, for example a specialist teacher in visually handicapped is allocated a resource unit for the hearing impaired. The following guidelines are meant to provide a guide in staffing resource units or special schools for children with disabilities to achieve optimum teaching and learning.

1.2. Resource Unit or Special School for the Hearing Impaired

1.2.1. Teach children with Hearing Impairment the teacher in addition to mainstream teaching skills must have the following skills.

1.2.1. Communicate in Sign Language

1.2.2. Total Language Communication Teaching Skills

1.2.2. A teacher with any other qualification would not be effective because he or she will not have Sign Language hence will not effectively communicate with the children. Sign Language is a critical pre-requisite skill for anyone to teach children with hearing impairment.

1.3. Resource Unit or Special School for the Visually Handicapped

1.3.1. The teacher for children with visual impairment should have the following skills to be able to effectively teach in a resource unit or special school for children with visual impairment.

1.3.1.1. Braille skills

1.3.1.2. Mobility and Orientation Training skills

1.3.2. The teacher with the above skills will be able to, in addition to ordinary teaching teach the visual impaired learners Braille, read and mark the children's work which will be in Braille, train the children in mobility and orientation so that the learners are then able to move around independently.

1.3. Therefore the ideal teacher for a resource unit or special school for children with visual impairment is one with specialist training in visual impairment, as he will have the above pre-requisite skills.

1.4. Resource Unit or Special School for the Mental Handicapped.

1.4.1. Over and above the skills of the mainstream teacher, the teacher for the resource unit for the mentally handicapped needs to have the following skills'

1.4.1.1. Adaptive Behaviour Training Skills

1.4.1.2. Task analysis and teaching skills

1.4.2. The teacher with the above listed skills will in addition to teaching the children with mental handicap aspects of the mainstream curriculum be able to teach self help skills which are essential for such learners.

1.5. Staffing in the absence of an appropriately qualified teacher

15.1. Where an appropriately qualified teacher is not available the following should be considered in that order.

1.5.1.1. a specialist trained teacher of another specialist area.

1.5.1.2. a trained teacher with no specialist training

1.5.1.3. temporary teacher should be the last resort.

1.6. Conclusion

Staffing special schools and resource units for children with disabilities with appropriately trained teachers is critical for the provision of quality education to learners with disabilities.

Dr. S. M. Mahere FCIS
Secretary for Education Sport and Culture

Appendix A6: Autoethnography Guide

Part 1: Background information

Date of joining special residential school:

Experience as a teacher:

Experience as a specialist teacher:

Positions held:

Why I am doing this research:

Part 2: Items

1. The story of how I came to be teaching at the residential special school, my first impressions of the learners and what my impressions were when I left.

2. What advice and support was I given formally and informally as a new teacher at the special school?

3. How did my experience change the way I taught and viewed deaf children?

4. Do I think deaf children can learn as well as hearing children? What are my reasons for this position?

Appendix A7: Document Review Guide

Name of department administering policy:

Designation of officer issuing policy:

Type of document: Targeted implementer(s):

1. Aims and objectives of policy:
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2. Stated implementation strategies:
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3. Explicit knowledge and beliefs about teaching in policy:
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4. Explicit knowledge and beliefs about special educational needs, disability or deafness in policy:
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   .....
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   .....
   .....
5. Explicit knowledge and beliefs about residential schools in policy:
   .....
   .....
   .....

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

Appendix B1: Participant Information Sheet

My name is Martin Musengi and I am conducting a research study for the purposes of obtaining a PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand. The title of my research study is '*The experience of teaching at residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe*'. This research intends to identify the ways in which hearing teachers of deaf children give meaning to their teaching practices. It is intended that the findings of this study will be made available to as many teachers of deaf pupils as possible so that they derive greater insight into how they teach as well as why they teach that way. I am inviting you to participate in this research because of your invaluable experience in the education of deaf pupils.

Your participation in this research study would involve being individually interviewed by me during your free time in a session of not more than 2 hours. With your permission, the interview would be audio-recorded so that I have an accurate record of what was said. Let me assure you that the audio-recording will only be used to enable accurate transcription of what was said and what happened. Your participation is voluntary and there will be neither disadvantages for not participating nor advantages for participating. All of your responses will be kept confidential as no information that could identify you personally or your school will be included in the research report. The interview notes and recordings (tapes and transcripts) will not be heard or seen by anyone else except me, my supervisor and two colleagues who will assist me with analysis. You may refuse to answer any question you do not want and may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you choose to participate, please fill in your details on the attached appointment form and place it in the sealed box provided. I will empty the box at regular intervals and I will contact you within 72 hours to make arrangements regarding your participation. Alternatively, I can be contacted by phone on 076 440 804 or by email: Martin.Musengi@students.wits.ac.za

This research study will be written up as a research report in the form of a thesis but may also be written up later as journal articles contributing to the larger body of knowledge on the education of deaf children in Zimbabwe. Your participation would therefore be greatly appreciated.

Best regards,

MARTIN MUSENGI

Appendix B2: Acknowledgement of Informed Consent Form [Participating in Research Study]

I .....(full names) consent to take part in Martin Musengi's research study on *The experience of teaching in residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe*. I understand that:

- Participation in the study is voluntary;

- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to;

- I may withdraw from the study at any time;

- No information that may identify me or my school will be included in the research report so that my responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

SIGNED: .....

DATE: .....

Appendix B3: Acknowledgement of Informed Consent Form [Audio Recording]

I .....(full names) consent to having my interview audio-recorded by Martin Musengi for his research study on *The experience of teaching at boarding special schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe*. I understand that:

- Participation in the audio-recording is voluntary;
- The audio-recording is being done so that he has an accurate record of what I said;
- I may withdraw from the audio-recording at any time;
- No information that may identify me or my school will be included in the research report so that my responses will remain anonymous and confidential.
- The interview that he will record will not be used to judge my teaching abilities in any way.

SIGNED: .....

DATE: .....

APPENDIX C: OTHER DOCUMENTS

Appendix C1: Ethics Clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3084 • Fax: +27 11 717-3100 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

Student number: 580389
2011ECE154C

14 February 2012

Mr. Martin Musengi
Martinmusengi@yahoo.com

Dear Mr. Musengi

Re: Application for Ethics: Doctor of Philosophy

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:

The Experience of Teaching Deaf Pupils at Residential Schools for the Deaf in Zimbabwe

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted. The committee was delighted about the ways in which you have taken care of and given consideration to the ethical dimensions of your research project. Congratulations to you and your supervisor!

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. C Storbeck (via email)

Appendix C2: Application to the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe

University of the Witwatersrand

School of Education

Centre for Deaf Studies

Private Bag 3

WITS 2050, JOHANNESBURG.

16th March 2012

The Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture

P.O. Box CY 121

CAUSEWAY, HARARE.

Dear Sir,

RE: APPLICATION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH STUDY IN BOARDING SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF IN ZIMBABWE

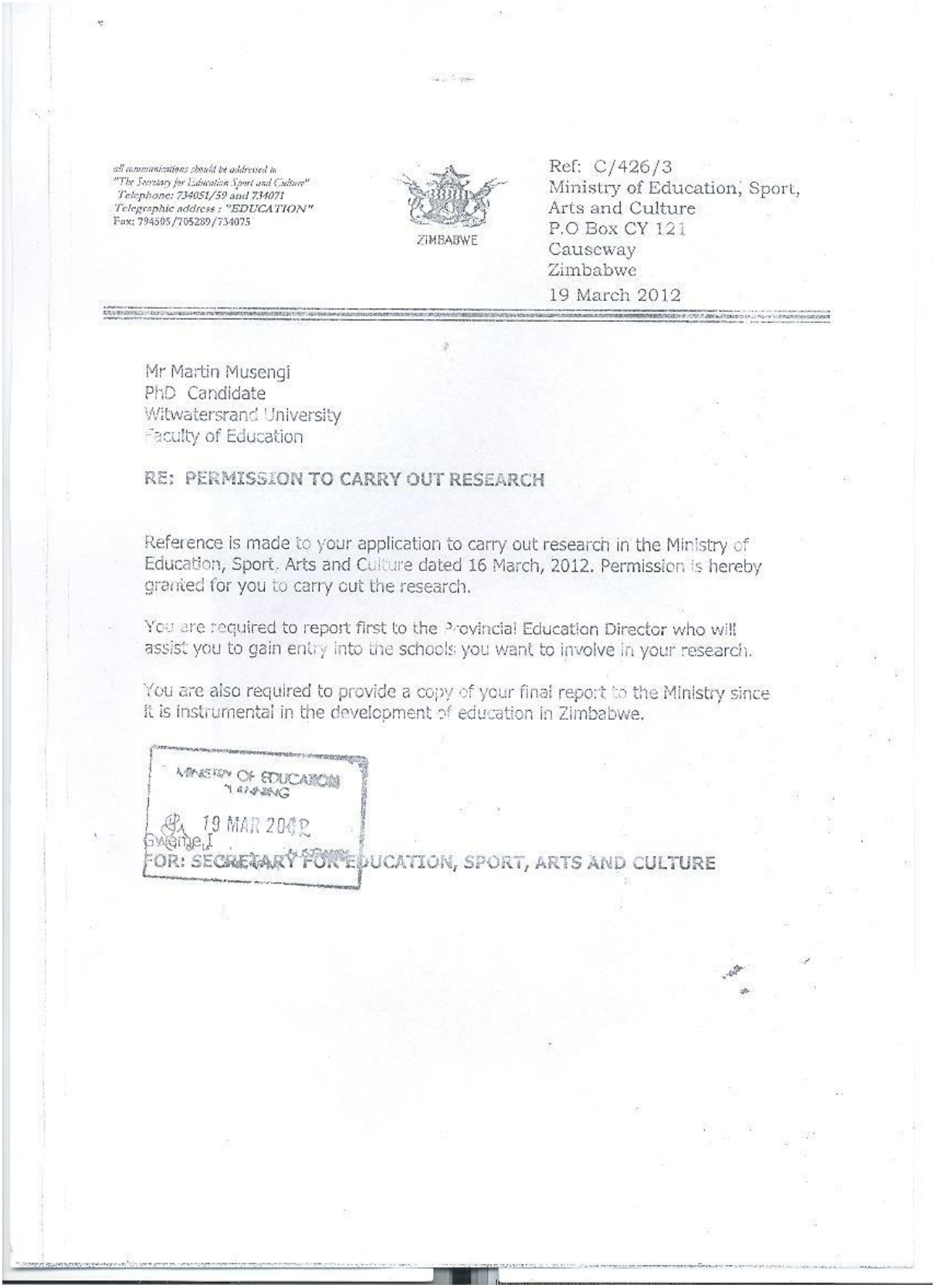
I write to apply for permission to carry out a national research study at the three boarding special schools that cater solely for deaf pupils in Zimbabwe, i.e. Emerald Hill School for the Deaf in Harare region, Jairos Jiri Naran School for the Deaf in Midlands region and Henry Murray School for the Deaf in Masvingo region.

I am a lecturer in the Special Needs Education Department at Great Zimbabwe University and I am currently reading for a PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am undertaking this research as part of my studies. The research study is entitled ***The experience of teaching at residential schools for the deaf in Zimbabwe***. It aims to generate better understanding of teaching practices used in the special schools by describing the teachers' knowledge and beliefs about deafness and exploring how these influence teaching practices. To do this, I intend to interview about 16 teachers and the principal at each of the schools. I hope that the results can be used to gain insights into teaching practices used in the special schools.

Yours faithfully,

MARTIN MUSENGI

Appendix C3: Clearance from the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe



all communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Education Sport and Culture"
Telephone: 734051/59 and 734071
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax: 794505/705289/734075

ZIMBABWE

Ref: C/426/3
Ministry of Education, Sport,
Arts and Culture
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
Zimbabwe
19 March 2012

Mr Martin Musengi
PhD Candidate
Witwatersrand University
Faculty of Education

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your application to carry out research in the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture dated 16 March, 2012. Permission is hereby granted for you to carry out the research.

You are required to report first to the Provincial Education Director who will assist you to gain entry into the schools you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Ministry since it is instrumental in the development of education in Zimbabwe.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
19 MAR 2012
Gwenje.I

FOR: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE