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How black female teachers negotiate their identities as both union members and practicing teachers: A case study

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University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

2016

Declaration

I declare that this research is report is my own work, supervised at the Wits School of Education, Curriculum Studies Division. It is submitted for a Master of Education Degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Andisiwe Nonzame Rosemond Hlungwane

July 2016

Abstract

This study considers black female teachers' conceptions of themselves, their 'identities' as teachers and ways in which they negotiate this in relation to their membership in teacher trade unions. Drawing upon Wenger's model of identity in practice, and recent research into identity construction and teacher activity in trade unions.

The study uses a qualitative case study methodology. It uses semi-structured interviews with four Mpumalanga teachers from SADTU and NAPTOSA, within each trade union the study looked at a representative and an ordinary member of the trade union.

A major finding of the study was that black female teachers partake in the reconciliation of their various identities, by filtering out what they deemed inappropriate and remaining with those identities which they felt led to less tensions with their teacher identity. It was also found that ordinary members of unions are disengaged with their union identity and therefore do little identity work to reconcile their union and teacher identities. The implications of this for teachers and education in South Africa are discussed.

The study calls for further research that explores the process teachers undergo to take ownership of their union identity and therefore develop a sense of agency.

Key words: Communities of practice, teacher identity, teacher unions, union identity, SADTU, NAPTOSA

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Abbreviations

A-Identity	Affinity Identity
ANA	Annual National Assessment
C2005	Curriculum 2005
D-Identity	Discourse Identity
I-Identity	Institution Identity
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
N-Identity	Nature Identity
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
USA	United States of America

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1) Background to the study

> A teachers' strike has shut schools across South Africa just weeks before year-end exams, compounding the failures of a state education system that has left more than half the country's black youths unemployed. Unions representing about 1.3 million state workers started an open-ended strike on Aug. 18, after the government rejected their demands for an 8.6 percent wage increase (Cohen, 2010[1]).

Quotes such as the above are commonly seen in the South African media, leading to both private and public discussions around the professionalism of South African teachers. A good deal of these discussions are critical of teachers and often bring to the fore questions about teacher identity and how people who identify as teachers can justify going on strike indefinitely "just weeks before year-end exams". Being exposed to such discussions led to the conception of this research, as a young black female teacher I began to grapple with the concept of teacher identity and longed to understand various processes that black South African teachers, who are union members, went through in understanding themselves and their role as professional teachers.

The concept of identity has been seen and researched in different ways at different points in time. This body of work takes on a social constructivist approach to identity, identity is seen as being formed within a set of different contexts through interactions with others and the internalisation of these interactions (Gee, 2001). Most people find that they operate in different spaces and interact with different people at various times, these interactions often call on the person to draw on different parts of who they are, they may even be seen in a different light by external observers depending on the context in which they are in (Wenger, 1999).

This is no different for teachers; teaching is a social practice that relies on relationships with others, be it colleagues, students, government officials or parents. Teachers not only negotiate their identity within the teaching profession but have a wide array of roles outside of teaching which also play a role in the way teachers shape and are shaped by their teacher identity. Due to the various social interactions that teachers have in their daily lives, be it professional or personal; there is a constant production, transformation and change in the identities and knowledge of teachers (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The understanding of teacher identity in this

[1] http://www.bloomberg.com/news/article/2010-08-31/south-african-teachers-strike-shuts-schools-compounds-educational-crisis

study is one that is borrowed from the work of Jansen (2001); where teacher identity is understood to be how teachers understand themselves in terms of their profession.

Although much research has been done on the effects of teacher unions on teacher professionalism, little is known about the interaction between membership in a teacher union and teacher identity. South African teachers, particularly those working in the public sector, have the right to be members of a union. One of the key mandates of South African teacher unions is to ensure that teachers are treated fairly by their employer (the government), i.e. to constantly work towards the betterment of teachers' working conditions in South Africa[2]. Ensuring the improvement of teachers lives may sometimes lead to teacher unions calling upon their members to go on strike, this at times results in schools being shut down for the duration of the strike. Members of unions in South Africa often do not have the power to decline going on strike even if striking stands in conflict with the way a teacher conceptualises their role and identity. The process that teachers undergo in dealing with this possible conflict in identity is one of the core issues explored in this research.

Identity in the post-modern era is no longer seen as something that remains the same from birth to death, it is complex and constantly being formed and reformed in relation to the context (Hall, 1992). Because identity is complex, teachers may have multiple and sometimes contradictory identities - teachers therefore have to do identity work to figure out who they are within their practice (Wenger, 1999). Identity work is the work teachers do to understand what from their various identities forms the core their being, i.e. what knowledge, beliefs, and interests are essential to who they are (Wenger, 1999).

The demands placed on teachers by their unions have an effect on their professionalism. Darling-Hammond (1990, p. 25) explains that professionalism is based on three key ideas: Firstly, that "knowledge is the basis for permission to practice and for decisions that are made with respect to the unique needs of clients". Secondly, that "the practitioner pledges his first concern to the welfare of the clients"; and "lastly that the profession assumes collective responsibility for the definition, transmittal and enforcement of professional standards of practice and ethics" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 25). In South Africa unionism and professionalism are often seen as opposite ends of a spectrum (Govender, 2004). These conflicting demands may also have an effect on teachers' teacher identity, which is the core

[2] http://www.sadtu.org.za/show.php?id=2448
http://www.naptosa.org.za/index.php/about-naptosa/objectives

of their practice (Palmer, 1998). Implying that teachers may find themselves having to make decision that do not always resonate with their teacher identity due to the demands placed on them.

Wenger (1999) contends that individuals have to negotiate and reconcile their various identities. This study explores whether teacher negotiate and reconcile their union identity and their teacher identity. Therefore, it is important at this point to emphasise that within this research teachers are seen as having agency, there is an interaction in the way in which teachers negotiate their identity and the nature of their agency. Furthermore, there is constant negotiation between the teacher, the world, his/her profession and his/her union membership (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

That is to say, Wenger's model of identity in practice argues that social identity is created outside of the individual, but the individual makes personal meaning of this identity through a process of internalization. Similarly, social constructivists argue that learning takes place on two planes, firstly external and then internal (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). Bearing in mind the above the question that arises is, how teachers negotiate their teacher identity within the practices of unionism and teaching. The main objective of this research report is to gain insight into how teachers' union activity interacts with their teacher identity.

1.2) Purpose statement

The purpose of this research is to explore how teacher involvement in unions influences their identity and vice versa. This study intends to research teachers' conceptions of themselves, their 'identities' as teachers and ways in which they negotiate this in relation to their membership in trade unions.

1.3) Rationale

Being a young black female teacher I often found myself feeling shame over the reports I would see in the media how black teachers spend a substantial amount of time on strike. I did not always fully understand the reason for the feelings of shame. This led to my choice to look at black female teachers in particular because as I returned to university for my post-graduate studies I was exposed to the concept of "fictive kinship" (Harris-Perry, 2011), in which one takes on emotional ties with those who are similar to oneself regardless of the fact that they not biologically related to them (Harris-Perry, 2011). There are both negative and positive aspects of fictive kinship: when fictive kin do something that is viewed as positive one experiences pride, however, when fictive kin do something that one views as negative

one experiences shame. This concept offered me the opportunity to rationalise and begin to understand the feelings of shame I never fully understood when I would read reports on striking teachers. It was important to me to explore this further by understanding how my fictive kin identify themselves as teachers and union members.

1.4) Research questions

The central question of this research project is:

> How do black female teachers negotiate their teacher identity as both active union members and practicing teachers?

In order to answer this question the research will focus on the following sub questions:

1. How do black female teachers understand their identity in practice?
2. What multiple identities and communities of practice contribute to the construction of black female teachers' teacher identity?
3. To what extent do black female teachers reconcile their various identities and how do they go about the reconciliation process?

1.5) Conclusion

In answering the above questions, this study not only gives me insight into processes teachers who are union members go through as they develop their teacher identity but will also hopefully begin a conversation about the importance of teachers actively engaging in identity work to ensure that they have some agency when operating as teachers who are active members of teacher trade unions.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The discussion in the previous chapter introduced how when a social constructivist approach to identity is adopted, identity is formed in different contexts. This is through interactions with others and the internalisation of those interactions (Gee, 2001). It set the scene, showing how South African teachers who are members of teacher unions may be working in conflicting communities and thus may have to negotiate their teacher identity in the context of being union members and practicing teachers. This chapter initially explores the theoretical framework used to understand the negotiation of identity, thereafter it engages existing literature on the interaction between teacher activity in unions and teacher identity. This existing literature on the interaction between teacher activity in unions and teacher identity is divided into two broad categories. Firstly, research on identity in South Africa and internationally. Secondly, studies on teacher activity in trade unions in South Africa and internationally.

2.1) Theoretical framework

The overarching framework for this research is Wenger's model of identity in practice. Wenger (1999) has done extensive work on how identity is formed within practice. He proposes that various aspects of identity are formed within the various communities of practice, that a person is a member of through a process of negotiation (Wenger, 1999). Communities of practice are seen as any social group that individuals belong to because of shared activities, it is the commonality of the practice that is important in a community of practice (Wenger, 1999). The two communities of practice which will be the focus of this research are teaching and union communities. These communities of practice overlap as they both deal with the profession of teaching, there may often be boundaries between these two communities because of the demands placed on teachers. Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that identity is constructed over and through the interaction between an individual and the communities of practice they belong to. Teachers are constantly engaging in the communities of practice they belong to, these interactions may reinforce certain aspects of their identity and lead to changes in other aspects of their identity. Individuals belong to a number of communities of practice thus their interactions within these all contribute to the ongoing development of individual's identity. This project is particularly interested in the nature of the interplay, if at all any, during the creation of teachers' identities between teacher and union communities to which teachers belong.

According to Wenger (1999) there are various aspects that contribute to the formation of identity namely: "identity as negotiated experience", "identity as community membership", "identity as learning trajectory", "identity as nexus of membership" and "identity as a relation between the local and the global" (Wenger, 1999, p. 149). For the purpose of this study emphasis will be placed on: identity as negotiated experience, identity as community membership, identity as nexus of multi-membership and identity a relation between the local -and the global because they focus on the effects that membership in different communities of practice have on one's identity. Identity as learning trajectories are also affected by membership in various communities of practice but falls beyond the scope of this research. Each of the four aspects in Figure 1 below are discussed below in relation to union activity and teacher practice.

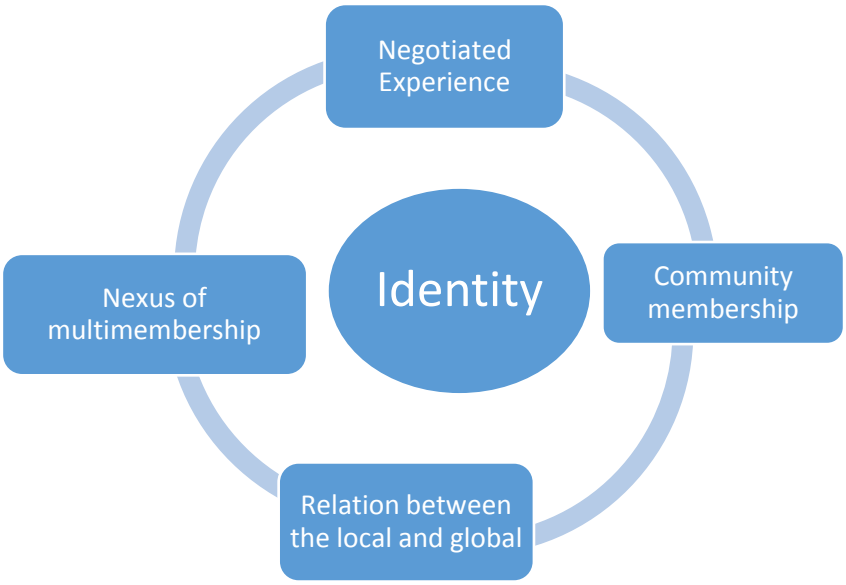


Figure 1 Representation of Wenger's (1999) identities within communities of practice

2.1.1) Identity as negotiated experience

People develop identity through interactions with others in the various communities of practice they belong to; the way they experience their participation in these communities brings different aspects of their "identity into focus" and leads them to negotiate their "way of being in the world" (Wenger, 1999, p.151). According to Lave and Wenger (1991) any form of meaning making is inherently social in nature, although their focus is on knowledge construction this transferable to identity construction. There is a constant interplay between the individual, the community of practice, and the world that leads to negotiation occurring continuously in the communities of practice that people find themselves in throughout their

lives (Wenger, 1999). Therefore one can say that identity is not only how one sees themselves or how one is seen by those around but also the "lived experience of participation in specific communities" (Wenger, 1999).

Teachers, who are active members of trade unions, negotiate their teacher identities in their teaching communities of practice and their union communities of practice. Within each community of practice teachers have different lived experiences of participation, the lived experiences of teachers in the two communities of practice can be complementary or contradictory, which necessitates that they negotiate their identity. There are intentional and unintentional continuous reflective processes that teachers have to undergo as they negotiate their teacher identity, teachers are constantly making choices between the demands placed on them by both the union community and teacher community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The ways in which teachers deal with and negotiate the tensions that arise from membership in different communities of practice is explored in this study.

2.1.2) Identity as community membership

Wenger (1999) suggests that belonging to certain communities of practice involves developing the competences that community of practice entails. Each community of practice has within itself key criteria that one has to meet in order to be seen as successful, competences enable the development of one's identity in three ways. Firstly, when you are competent you know your role within the community of practice and how to interact with other participants in an appropriate manner; what he terms "mutuality of engagement" (Wenger, 1999, p.152). That is, when you are in a community of practice there are written and unwritten rules of engagement, spoken and unspoken boundaries around what should and should not be done within the practice; when you are competent you are aware of these rules and can interact with other participants taking these rules into account. In this particular study teachers have to make choices around what is appropriate not only in their practice as teachers but in their practice as union members. It explores whether what is appropriate in one community of practice is appropriate in the second community of practice and if not, how teachers negotiate such tensions.

Secondly, the competences one has and the role one plays within communities of practice gives one a way to access and engage in the world, this is what is referred to as "accountability to an enterprise" (Wenger, 1999, p.152). Brodie and Shalem (2011) explain that accountability in practice is about individual participants holding each other accountable

to the competence of the practice. They further state that these competences are ever-changing meaning that as the world around us changes our competences change and therefore what is expected of you in a community of practice changes. This research explores how teachers navigate being held accountable to both the union and teaching communities and how they managed to deal with these conflicting demands placed on them when they called upon to show conflicting competences.

Lastly, competences enable you to negotiate within the practice because you have personal experiences to draw from with respect to the practice, which is a "negotiability of a repertoire" (Wenger, 1999, p.152). With experience within a particular community of practice comes the ability for one to easily identify and interpret what is essential, usable and productive in that particular community of practice. However, a key area of interest is what happens when the repertoire of two communities of practice that the same individual belongs to oppose each other? Teachers' community membership in both the trade unions and the profession means that they do not only have to have the ability to negotiate their identity within one community of practice but within both. Whether or not this negotiation process occurs and to what extent will be analysed in this report.

2.1.3) Identity as nexus of membership

Since people belong to several communities of practice, this means the negotiation of identity involves "an experience of multi-membership" (Wenger, 1999, p.158). This multi-membership within different communities of practice may lead to identities that are in conflict being formed, which means that members of these communities have to reconcile these various identities by building social bridges between them (Wenger, 1999). To further elaborate on the idea of reconciliation between different aspects of identity the work of Samuel and Stephens (2000) shows that the only way one can attempt to define core identity is in relation to the various competing identities that one may have due to the different communities of practice to which one belongs. They explain that a teacher's identity is a filtered "understanding and acceptance of a series of competing and sometimes contradictory" identities (Samuel & Stephens, 2000, p. 476).

Sachs (2005) explains that at the core of the teaching profession is a teacher's professional identity, that is what "provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society" (p. 15). It is further emphasised that the professional identities of teachers are not fixed but are

constantly changing and influenced by the various experiences that a teacher has throughout their life (Sachs 2005). This means that teachers not only negotiate their identity within their profession but have a wide array of experiences outside of teaching which also mould and shape their professional identity and certain aspects of these different identities may at times be in conflict with each other. The life experiences, beyond trade unionism, that teachers themselves feel have had an impact on their professional identity are explored in this study.

2.1.4) Identity as relation between the local and global

Communities of practice are not only influenced by local practices, they are also associated with a larger constellations of many practices that affect the way individuals within a practice understand themselves (Wenger, 1999). This interplay between the local and global does not only influence teachers' practice but has an impact on their teacher identity. What occurs in one's day-to-day experiences as a teacher can be as influential on a teacher's identity as those that are more abstract and occur globally (Wenger, 1999). Coming together in communities of practice is not only about the pursuit of some type of employment, it is also concerned with figuring out how we fit into the bigger scheme of things (Wenger, 1999). When one is a member of a community of practice their actions do not only have an impact on that particular community practice, but on society as a whole. Unionised teachers have to negotiate their identity taking into account their actual live experiences and those experiences that may be more abstract, an example of this is when the teacher unions in South Africa decided not to write the 2015 Annual National Assessment (ANA). The decision was beyond the control of the teachers but this more global decision had an impact not only on how teachers are perceived but also on how they see themselves as educators[3].

Wenger's model gives us an understanding of how identity is formed in practice, how the negotiation of one's identity in practice is influenced by the many experiences one has in their lifetime. For teachers this is particularly true as teaching in its natures requires a certain amount of "personal involvement" therefore leading to an inevitable interrelationship between the professional identity of teachers and the other identities that they hold, including that of unionism (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178).

[3] http://mg.co.za/article/2015-09-02-sadtu-calls-for-boycott-of-national-assessments

2.2) Research on identity in South Africa and internationally

There has been an increase in identity research both internationally and locally. Gee (2001) explains this increase can be attributed to the fact that identity permits a more dynamic, context specific way to explore and explain phenomena in society. Identity research is important in education because located at the core the teaching profession is the teacher's identity. This identity as gives teachers an outline for understanding who they are, and what they want to achieve not only in their profession but in life (Sachs, 2005). It is particularly important in the South African context because during apartheid teacher identities were defined in narrow, prescriptive ways which have since been opened and made more flexible, teachers are now having to actively negotiate their own understanding of their identity in practice (Samuel and Stephens, 2000). This section engages local and international research on identity construction; it begins with a discussion of the dominant views on how identity is constructed and is then followed by an exploration of work done on the formation of teacher identity in particular.

Gee (2001) proposes that within education there have been four major ways that identity has been conceptualised over the last 60 years namely: "nature-identity" (N-Identity), "institution-identity" (I-Identity), "discourse-identity" (D-Identity) and "affinity-identity" (A-Identity) (p. 100). He elaborates on each of these identities: nature-identity being those things that people are born with, their "a state of being"; institutional-identity is the identity that is taken up as one takes on different positions within various organisations; discourse-identity refers to the identity that individuals are allocated and often strive for through their interactions with rational individuals; and affinity-identity is the identity that participants choose through certain interests that they may have (Gee, 2001). Affinity groups, much like communities of practice, are made up by people who may have nothing in common except for their common interest or common practice. The N-Identity, I-Identity, D-Identity and A-Identity all play a role in the formation of an individual's identity, that is, the reconciled identity referred to by Wenger (1999). Nonetheless, not all identities are reconciled, however the reconciled identity has been valued because as Samuel and Stephens (2000) explain, the teacher identity is a filtered understanding of the various identities one may have. The question that arises is whether the union identity is one of the identities teachers draw on in their filtered understanding.

Gee (2001) explains that although others play a role in one's construction of one's identity, what reifies others' perceptions is that one accepts and takes ownership of the prescribed

identities. Once we accept how others within and outside of our communities of practice see us, it becomes part of our identity. Of course, this does not apply to all the forms of identity that Gee (2001) proposes, but this can be applied to the communities of practice to which teachers belong. Unionised black female teachers do not only have to negotiate their identity within the contexts of their lived day-to-day experiences and how they see themselves, but also negotiate their identity based on how the world perceives their blackness, their womanhood, their profession and their unionism (Gee, 2001). All of these fall under the different categories of identity of which Gee (2001) speaks; blackness and womanhood are N-Identities, while unionism and teaching can be I-Identities, D-Identities and A-Identities. It is proposed that even though an individual may be a member of a particular affinity group or community of practice it is not necessarily true that one will take on all the attributes of that particular group. In as much as one's identity is partially formed by an interaction between the external forces it in turn has an influence on the institutions that exert these forces. In other words "the self is not a passive entity", "individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications" (Giddens, 1991, p. 2).

Teachers often refer to a particular teacher or mentor that sparked the longing to become a teacher (Palmer, 1998). Perhaps these mentors do not only spark this longing, but also have an influence on the way teachers understand themselves. A teacher's professional identity is their understanding of "how to be", "how to act" and "how to understand" their work (Sachs, 2005, p. 15) despite the type of teacher education teachers may have undergone they often emulate former teachers when they are in the classroom, they revert back to the way in which they were taught (Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Teachers who are union members may not only have mentors who played a role in how they understand their practice but also the way they understand unionism. Therefore two teachers who work in the same context and belong to the same union may have very different understandings of who they are in the context of being as unionised teachers due to having different mentors.

Other people are not the only external force that has an effect on the formation of one's self identity. Identity is also influenced by contextual factors (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A teacher who is working in a supportive environment, with learners from high socio-economic backgrounds may have a different identity to a teacher who is working in adverse conditions. The same can be said about the effects of contextual factors of the unions that teachers choose to belong to on the way they negotiate their teacher identity. A teacher who belongs to

a union that has a great focus on activism may take ownership of their activist identity within teaching more than a teacher who belongs to a union that does not place emphasis on activism. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) suggest that literature on context and identity shows that "the school environment, the nature of the learner population, the impact of colleagues and of school administrators" all have an impact on how teachers form their identity. Smit and Fritz (2008) have had similar findings in an ethnographic study they conducted with two teachers in South Africa and explain that the "situational and social challenges, in and out of the classroom, in the educational landscape that is located in a township or urban community, shape the identity of our teachers" (p. 98). The context in which teachers are located plays a pivotal role in development of the framework s/he uses to understand her/ his identity.

Teachers, through the way they view themselves and their role, influence society as a whole. Unionised teachers in South Africa have had influence beyond the borders of their schools; this can be seen in the role that they have played in many aspects of education (Chisholm, 2005). Teachers' strikes have both positive and negative implications: children lose out on schooling but if the teachers' demands are met they receive increases in salaries and better benefits, such as housing allowances and medical aid. With this in mind, the question that arises is whether the reconciliation of a teacher's union identity and teacher identity will lead to the teacher being able to make connections as to how each of their identities can work together to enable them to bring about the changes for which they long. Samuel and Stephens (2000) point to the fact in South Africa teachers have to maintain a balance between delivering what is expected of them by society and the government while critiquing the education system and being the drive for change. To add substance to this, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p. 183) explain that through the development and understanding of themselves (their identity) teachers gain a form of agency; teachers are empowered to "move ideas forward, to reach goals or even to transform the context" they find themselves in. Teachers with a strong sense of self, who are aware of the changes they want to bring about are more likely to be pro-active and less likely to be swayed into doing what does not align with what they see as the goal of their teaching (Mockler, 2011). This could mean that unionised teachers with a reconciled identity are more likely to engage in political action that does not compromise other aspects of their identity. Therefore if a teacher whose core identity is one that values the provision of quality education to learners more likely to negotiate a path that does not compromise their core identity.

Teachers may form their identity in one of two ways: Firstly, in a submissive manner, where teachers become highly dependent on institutions such as the government or teacher unions in their understanding of being a teacher. Secondly, where teachers are pro-active in the way in which they develop an understanding of who they are and their role as teachers (Sachs, 2001). Mockler (2011) argues that when teachers actively develop an understanding of who they are, there is a "complex interplay of personal, professional and political dimension of teachers' lives" (p. 518). This study is particularly interested in finding out whether South African black female teachers actively engage in this complex interplay that leads to the development of an understanding of who they are. Teacher identity construction and negotiation is a "career-long project", as changes occur in the lives of teachers whether it be in their personal communities of practice or their professional communities of practices they continue to negotiate their teacher identity (Mockler, 2011, p. 518). The teachers filter from their various identities and experiences those aspects they feel fit into the way in which they see themselves as teachers. Although this seems to be the case in most instances, Jansen (2001) shows that within the South African context teachers are highly dependent on trade unions in their understanding of their political role in bringing about social change. Jansen (2001) further shows that teachers are also reliant on the government in understanding their role in the classroom. Jansen's (2001) findings seem to contradict the notion that teachers' understanding of their professional role comes from their "moral purpose". Mockler (2011) explains that there is one major assumption that is made in regards to moral purpose:

> moral purpose is a positive driving force for the profession, and that as a teacher, holding a sense of moral purpose, a desire to 'do good' or 'make a difference' will necessarily be automatically acted upon within the field of teachers' professional practice (p. 523).

If teachers' understandings of their teacher identities stem from a moral purpose this leads to some questions around what would be considered as making a difference or doing good in the context of black female teachers in South Africa. This study how black female teachers come to understand their professional role, as teacher identity can be institutionally prescribed and actively constructed.

The literature thus far has looked at identity and teacher identity in a more general sense, and not in particularly women's identity construction. Dixson and Dingus (2008), drawing on the work of black feminists, explore the identity of black female teachers in the United States of America (USA). They illustrate that black female teachers understand themselves as teachers in three ways: by highlighting the intergenerational encouragement of black women as

influential in their choice to become teachers, that teaching allowed for them to stay in touch with and play a role in improving black communities and that teaching was a spiritual or moral enterprise. This shows that black women outside South Africa develop their understanding of their teacher identity outside of identities that are assigned to them by organisations. Black female teachers in the USA expressed some agency and tended to teach from their moral purpose. This study explores the extent to which South African teachers' identity resonates with these findings.

The participants of this study are all mothers and it is thus of interest to interrogate whether motherhood plays a key role in the way in which teachers understand themselves in their profession. Knowles, Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2009) contend that educators who are also mothers face a particular dilemma of having to combine employment with motherhood. They found that mother-educators tend to place the needs of others over their own, and understand their role as having to protect and care for their own children and the learners they teach (Knowles *et al,* 2009). This often leads to mother-educators leaving little to no room to care for themselves and neglecting their own identity which sometimes results in adverse reactions such as depression (Knowles *et al*, 2009).

Throughout the literature the importance of teachers having a good understanding of who they are and their roles as teachers has arisen. This research explores ways in which black female unionised teachers develop their understanding of who they are as teachers within the various roles they play in their lives

2.3) Studies on teacher activity in trade unions in South Africa and internationally

It is evident that there can be tensions between the demands placed on teachers by their union identity and their professional identity. Ferreira (2006) explains that teachers are in a constant battle to be recognised as professionals and not as workers or labourers. She explores the journey that the teaching profession has undergone to get to this point in the 21st century and the struggles that have occurred in order for teaching to be seen as a profession. One question that the work of Ferreira (2006) brings to the fore within this research is whether teacher unionism is beneficial or detrimental to the teacher's cause of being recognised as professionals. Unionisation is normally associated with the working-class jobs and not with professionals. Teachers wanting to be recognised as professionals therefore stand in direct contradiction with them belonging to unions which are considered proletarian organisations.

Ferreira (2006) contends that "the reasons for joining a union do not necessarily follow from self-identification as a worker, but may be… to obtain more immediate individual advantages" (p. 4). Activism of teachers in trade unions in South Africa is often linked to action against the teaching profession being perceived as one of the more poorly paid professions in the country; teachers are seen as being active in trade unions with the main objective of fighting bread and butter issues (Lekgoathi, 2007, in Fleisch, 2010). Teacher unions are often accused of hindering positive educational change because they focus on a more technical understanding of teaching, with their main aim being the protection rather than the development of teachers (Bascia, 2001). This is often the image of unions and teacher activity in unions that society at large holds because of media reports. If strike action and personal gain are the key reasons for joining unions one can start to see that there may be some pull between the moral purpose of teacher identity and the union identity of teachers. However, Govender (2004) explains that teacher unions in South Africa no longer see their role as merely fighting for the needs of their members but that teacher unions see that they have a role to play in the development of education policies in the country. As this study explores how teachers understand their role as teachers, it will be interesting to see how teachers at the grass root level understand their role as union members, and whether they feel that they have an impact on the quality of education and not just an impact on their immediate interests. When teacher unions afford their members opportunities for informal and formal professional development it may contribute towards cultivating their teacher identity. In this instance teacher unionism works hand-in-hand with the development of teachers' professional identity (Bascia, 2001). Do South African unions offer such opportunities to all their members? This study engages with the extent to which teachers are afforded such opportunities and whether teachers actually take up such opportunities?

In Australia teacher unions play an integral role in education-policy making but the membership takes on a "polyarchical pattern" with teachers (at school level), where teachers who are members of the trade unions are ranked as either active, passive or merely as file members (Spaull and Mann, 1985). These ranks are in place in schools to ensure that there is more localised power for teachers, with active members taking part in an annual decision-making meeting (Spaull and Mann, 1985). This could point to differences in how teachers see their role in the bigger scheme of things depending on the role they play within the union, Australia is not the only country to have teacher unions actively involved in educational reform, the USA and Canada are examples of other countries that have had

similar involvement (Bascia, 2001). South African teachers were represented by the different teacher unions and subject specialists when the curriculum change process from Curriculum 2005 (C2005) to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) occurred (Chisholm, 2005). The use of the word "represented" is a deliberate one, showing that the average South African teacher does not play much of a role in the larger issues in education and this makes many teachers feel less in tune with the decisions that impact their careers. Does this activity or lack of activity in the union also impact on whether the teacher takes on the union identity? Although an inactive unionized teacher does not have day-to-day experiences of unionism it is important to remember that identity is not only that which is local but also global. And even though people may have to actively take on the identities prescribed to them by others, there is still power in D-Identities. Ozga (1987) explains that in Britain a similar polyarchical pattern in membership is found where the majority of members are file members mainly because their commitment to professionalism far outweighs their commitment to union activity. In Brazilian unions Ferreira (2006) illustrates that although women make up the majority of teachers and union members, gender differences are evident in that leadership roles within unions are normally held by men. It is proposed that this is also the case in South Africa and the question is what influence this has on how black female teachers form their teacher identity and the impact this has its impact on the adoption or rejection of their union identity.

The literature on teacher unions affords a two pronged approach to the analysis of teacher unionism and teacher identity which is investigated within this study. Firstly, are active members grappling with the same issues in terms of commitment and secondly, how do they work through these issues.

2.4) Conclusion

In this chapter, the factors that shape the formation of teacher identity were explored. The personal and professional communities of practice to which teachers belong, the context in which they operate and the way they understand self were all identified as elements that contribute to the creation of one's teacher identity. In addition, the conflicts that arise between the demands placed on teachers by unionism and their profession were highlighted, showing the importance of teachers actively engaging in identity work. As teachers with a reconciled identity have a better sense of agency which leads to them being better positioned to navigate the various demands placed on them by both the teacher and union communities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological issues such as approach, participant selection, data generation, and research instruments that were used to answer the research questions. The ethical considerations and the limitations that apply to this research are also discussed in this chapter.

3.1) Research design

Research design provides any researcher embarking on the task of research with "the plan or blue print" of how this task will take place (Babbie & Mouton, 2007, p. 74). This research study seeks to get an in-depth understanding of the way teachers negotiate their teacher identities in the context of being both union members and practicing teachers. The qualitative instrumental case study approach is seen as the most appropriate approach due to its ability to gain an in-depth understanding of complexities and people's experiences.

Qualitative research is often embarked upon to discover what can be learned about a particular social phenomenon in which people are the participants (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Additionally, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that this allows for the researcher to gain information straight from the source. They further explain that qualitative research is as systematic as quantitative research. Having established an understanding of qualitative research, a case study approach to qualitative research was chosen in this particular study. Case studies allow researchers to blend descriptions of events with the analysis of them; to focus on individual actors and their perceptions of events (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). This enables the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon being investigated. McMillan and Schumacher (2010), through the work of Stake, distinguish between intrinsic and instrumental cases. Intrinsic case studies typically investigate exceptional individuals, events or groups; while instrumental case studies seek to gain an in-depth understanding of particular issues or themes (McMillan

& Schumacher, 2010). Within this study, the participants are viewed as four individual case studies with similarities and differences as identity construction is a complex process with nuances for each individual.

3.2) Participant selection

This research employed purposive participant selection, because the participants had specific qualities which illustrate the purpose of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It was important that the participants of the research be knowledgeable with regards to the focus of the study (Cohen et al., 2001). It is clear that there are number of advantages to this approach to participant selection, but such participant selections can often create bias (Cohen et al., 2001). The participants of this study were selected on the basis that they are black female practicing teachers and active member of trade unions; this participants were selected in this manner to ensure that they have experience of being both an active union member and a practising teacher. The participant selection assumed that teachers who are active union members will be able to reflect on how they have negotiated their identity as union members and practicing teachers. Four Mpumalanga teachers from two different trade unions were interviewed, within each trade union the study looked at a representative and a regular member of the trade union. The decision to use two different unions was because these unions are notably different in their philosophies and in the way that the public perceives them. The first, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), is perceived to be more overtly political while the second the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), is seen to be more concerned with teacher professionalism. This study explored whether the nature of the union a teacher belongs to influences how they understood themselves within their profession. Furthermore, how the unions view their members on their websites[4] was explored, particularly focussing on the language used by both SADTU and NAPTOSA when talking about the teachers who are members of their union.

The schools selected in the study were a township school and a previously advantaged school. The majority of teachers at the township school are members of SADTU while the majority of teachers at the previously advantaged school are members of NAPTOSA. The reasons behind this are largely historical, township schools in South Africa mainly employed black teachers in poorer working conditions. SADTU is a teacher union that was seen as

[4] http://www.sadtu.org.za/show.php?id=2448
http://www.naptosa.org.za/index.php/about-naptosa/naptosa-principles

fighting for all teachers to be treated fairly. Teachers in previously advantaged schools did not have the same needs as those in township schools, therefore a union like NAPTOSA which focused on professional development was seen as more suitable. Figure 2 below summarizes the participant selection for the study:

Teacher	School		Teacher Union		Membership	
	Township School	Previously Advantaged School	SADTU	NAPTOSA	Site Secretary	Normal Member
Teacher A	✓		✓		✓	
Teacher B	✓		✓			✓
Teacher C		✓		✓	✓	
Teacher D		✓		✓		✓

Figure 2 Summary of participant selection

3.3) Research site

Site selection is a "negotiation process to obtain freedom of access to a site that is suitable for the research problem"; the site not only has to be suitable for the problems but also for the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 351). Cohen et al. (2001) suggest that it is up to the interviewer to consider the dynamics of the situation. For this study the site chosen was the classrooms' of the teachers in the respective schools where they work. This was seen as an ideal site because to minimise the inconvenience placed on the participants and to build rapport during the interviews. The schools were easily accessible with both the principals of the school being very welcoming and open to me approaching the teachers at the school to inform them about my research and ask them to participate in it.

3.4) Data generation

The study utilises two types of data generation methods, namely: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The use of both semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to ensure that claims could be made with the support of a variety of collected data, in qualitative research this is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation is described as "collecting data from a variety of perspectives, using a variety of methods, and

drawing upon a variety of sources so that an inquirer's predilections are tested as strenuously as possible" (Guba, 1981, p. 87). Semi-structured interviews were used because there needed to be some form consistency between the different interviews conducted with the four participants. Semi-structured interviews also allowed me to probe when necessary.

A pilot interview was conducted with a teacher who is also a union member before the interviews with the participants to refine the interview technique, and questions asked. The feedback from the pilot interview gave insight into the structure of the interview schedule; which in turn allowed for the re-structuring of the order in which the questions were asked to a more logical and cohesive manner. The feedback received from the teacher who participated in the pilot interview created awareness of the fact that the interviewer had to allow the interviewees more time to express their experiences in order to get an authentic understanding of their experiences as both teacher and union members.

Document analysis of public documents from both teacher unions was conducted, to explore how the unions envisage their teachers.

3.4.1) Semi-structured interviews

Opie (2004) explains that semi-structured interviews are a "more flexible version of the structured interview which will allow for a depth of feeling to be ascertained by providing opportunities to probe and expand the interviewee's response" (p. 118). The participants were interviewed in their respective schools and each interview was conducted separately to try and ensure that the participants were comfortable enough to answer all the questions asked in the interview. Open-ended interview questions that focused on the negotiation of their identity were used to allow the participants a chance to reflect and elaborate on their experiences during the interview. An interview schedule was used to ensure that the participants were asked the same questions, in the same order (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This helped me focus on the same particular ideas in all the interviews conducted. The responses of the participants were audio recorded, with their permission, in order to able to refer back to the data at later stages to ensure that the essence of the participants' experiences is correctly captured. The questions in the interview schedule focussed on the teachers understanding of their role as teachers and their role as union members and the connections and boundaries that teachers saw within these two roles (see Appendix 1). The interviews ranged between 30 minutes and 60 minutes, the length of the interviews was influenced by the responses of the teachers. The teachers who are representatives of their

unions found it easier to expound on their views of unionism, while the teachers who are ordinary members were less able to do so. This may be because they have not yet begun to wrestle with the reconciliation of their union and teacher identity. Transcriptions of the interviews with the participants are attached to the research report (see Appendix 2)

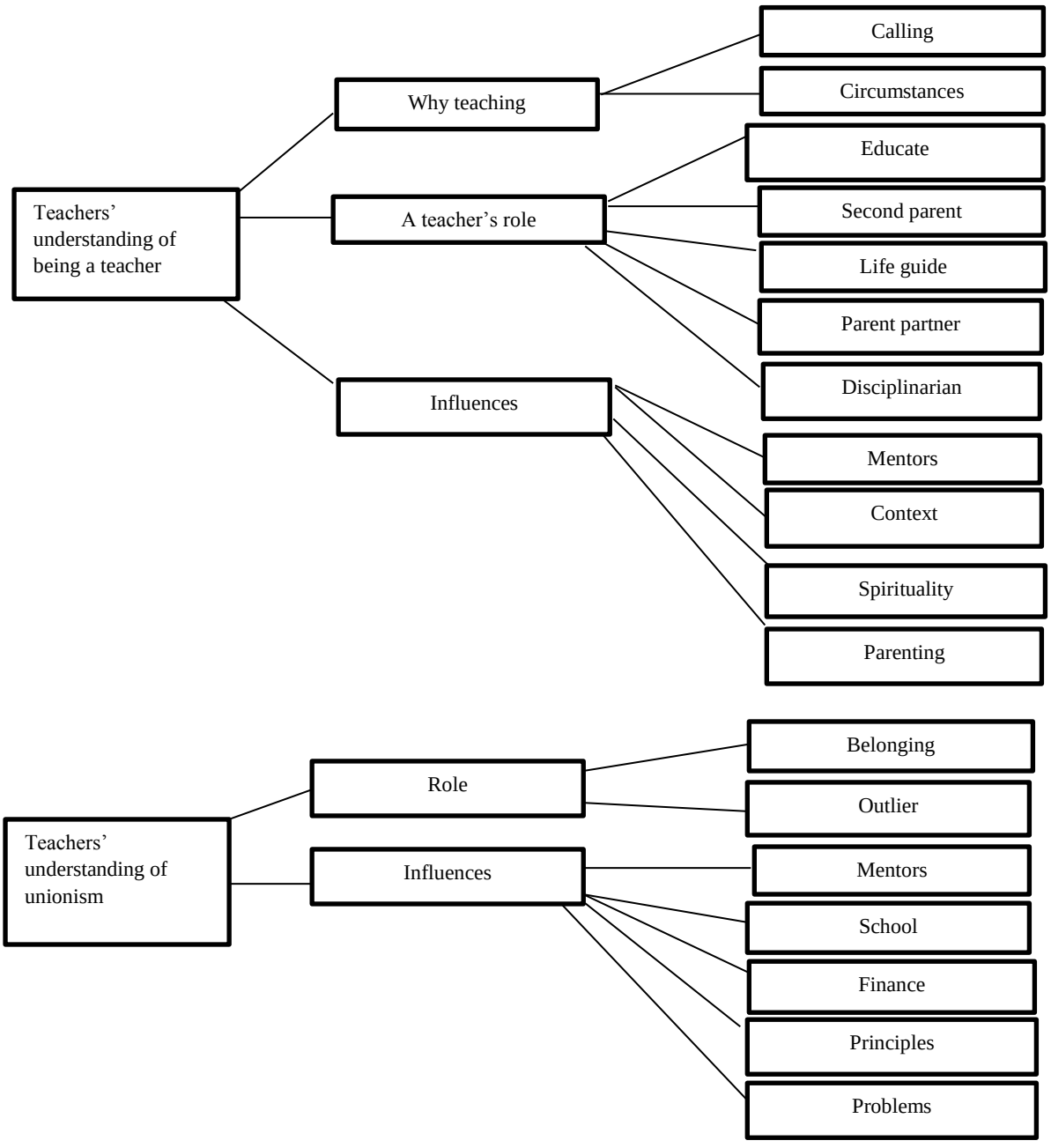
3.4.2) Document analysis

According to Bowen (2009) document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation because researchers are expected to draw upon multiple sources for evidence. There are two types of sources that a researcher can use for document analysis, deliberate sources and inadvertent sources (Duffy, 2005). Deliberate sources are sources which are produced for the future researchers, while inadvertent sources are sources which a researcher uses for purpose other than what they were initially intended; this study will use the latter (Duffy, 2005). When analysing documents, evidence comes in two forms namely: witting and unwitting evidence. Witting evidence refers to the information that the original author intended to impart whereas unwitting evidence refers to underlying assumptions unintentionally revealed by the source through the language that he or she uses (Duffy, 2005). It is up to me to assess the significance of both the unwitting and witting evidence (Duffy, 2005). According to Creswell (2008), it is imperative for researchers to identify the types of documents that are needed in order to answer the research questions. As stated earlier in this chapter the choice to analyse the public documents of SADTU and NAPTOSA was made, namely, SADTU's code of conduct and NAPTOSA's principles (see Appendix 3). The document analysis provided a background and context for the interviews that were conducted with the participants. As the interviews with the participants were conducted it was easier to engage the participants and probe them further using the understanding of the unions that was gained from the document analysis.

3.5) Data Analysis

The documents from the teacher unions websites were read and re-read, in order to familiarise myself with the information written on the websites about teachers. Once the interviews were completed the transcription commenced the same day. It was useful to transcribe on the same day to reflect on the interview process and make necessary adaptions for the next interview. Transcribing the data gave me a better understanding of it, and also allowed me to begin to reflect on similarities and differences between the responses of the various participants.

Once the transcription of the interviews was complete I commenced to systematically colour code the documents from the teacher unions and open-ended response to come up with various codes. The identified codes were then grouped into various themes and categories, by looking for commonalities and differences between the various codes. Once the themes and categories were decided on, I named them in relation to the study. Thereafter I analysed and examined the themes in relation to the literature review. Below in Figure 3 are the themes that arose from the data analysis process.



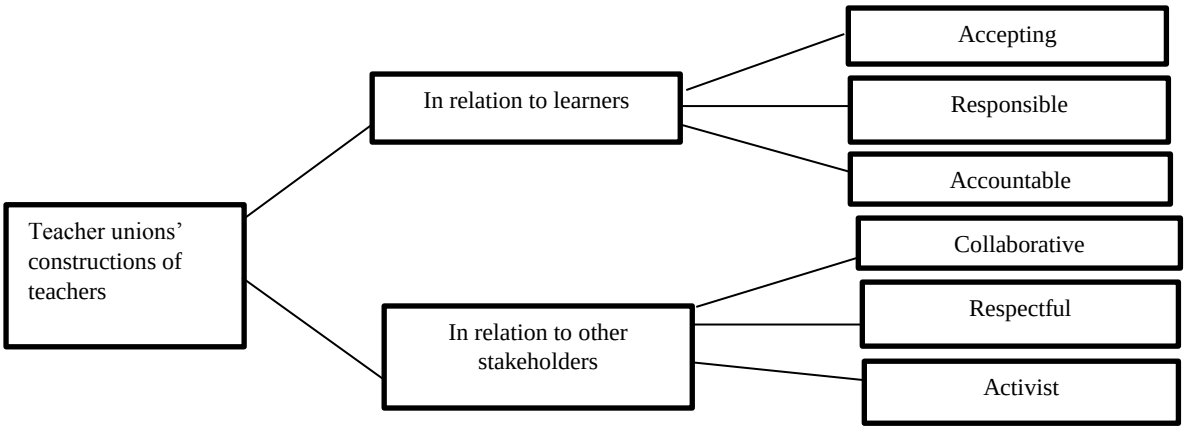


Figure 3 Themes from data analysis

The findings are discussed in the chapter that follows.

3.6) Ethical considerations

The ethical concerns encountered in educational research are often more complex and subtle than those encountered by other fields of research. As a researcher I had to strike a balance between the demands of being a researcher in the pursuit of knowledge and the potential of the participants' rights and values being threatened by the research (Cohen et al., 2005).

An application for permission to interview teachers who work in the province of Mpumalanga was submitted to the Mpumalanga Department of Education. An application to both teacher unions for permission to interview members of their unions was also submitted (see Appendix 4). It was a struggle to get permission from the teacher unions as it was not evident who the relevant persons within the unions were. This delayed the data generation process as interviews could not be conducted until permission from the two bodies was obtained.

Ethics clearance was also received from the Ethics committee of Wits School of Education (Protocol number: 2014ECE029M, see Appendix 5). The names of the teachers, their schools or the school districts they are in were not included in report. The findings were reported in a way that guarantees the anonymity of the participants. The identities of the participants were protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Participation in this research was voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, participants also signed a consent forms (see Appendix 6) allowing for the interview and recording. A letter seeking permission to approach teachers at the schools

was also sent to the principals of the schools (see Appendix 7). Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants after I transcribed them to ensure transparency.

The ethical considerations were particularly important in this study as the researcher was delving into the personal lives of the teachers involved. As the study aimed to gain an understanding of the nuances of identity negotiation in what can be seen as conflicting communities of practice. It was important to ensure that the teachers felt comfortable enough to share the processes they undergo when negotiating their identity and know that this information would not be misused.

3.7) Research rigour

Research should meet certain criteria in order to be considered trustworthy: credibility and transferability are some of the criteria. Credibility speaks to the objectivity of the researcher, i.e. whether s/he has represented the participants in as true a light as possible (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Within this research credibility was assured by allowing the participants the opportunity to check the transcripts once they were transcribed.

Krefting (1991) explains that transferability occurs when one is able to use the findings of a study in a different context, the fact that this is an instrumental case study allows for transferability because it explores particular phenomena which can be transferred to various contexts. This was addressed in the study as the researcher ensured detailed description that will allow for similarities and differences to be seen between this particular context and others.

3.8) Conclusion

This chapter described the research design and methodology that was used in this study. It has explained where the research took place and given a background on the participants of this study. Secondly, it has provided a description of the data generation tools and the procedures that were undertaken in collecting and analysing the data. Lastly, it has outlined the ethical considerations of this study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter analyses and interprets the research data that was collected, four teachers were selected and interviewed. These teachers came from two schools in Mpumalanga, school A and school B. Two of the teachers are members of NAPTOSA, while the other teachers are members of SADTU, within each union that was selected one teacher was a representative member of the union at their school while the second is a normal member of the union at their school. All the names used for the teachers were pseudonyms. In addition to the interviews administered with teachers an analysis of documents from NAPTOSA and SADTU that speak about their members was conducted.

4.1) Data Analysis

This report's overall purpose is to understand teachers' conceptions of themselves, their identities as teachers and ways in which they negotiate this when one takes into account that they are members of trade unions. Beyond teachers own conceptions of themselves the report also deals with how unions construct members through the language that they use to describe teachers who belong to their unions. Through a synthesis of the various codes and categories that resulted from the coding process two overriding patterns emerged: teachers' understanding and teacher unions' construction. The results of the study are thus presented in

relation to these themes. The discussion begins with teachers' understandings, that is, teachers' understandings of teaching and teachers' understanding of unionism.

As part of the interview, questions were asked to better understand the way in which teachers understand themselves within the practice of being teachers. Three general categories emerged across all the teacher interviews, namely why teaching, teacher's role and influences. In attempting to understand how their unionism interacts with the way in which they understand their practice two general categories emerged across the teacher interviews, namely union role and influences.

I explored these patterns and categories in relation to each teacher separately. Firstly looking at teachers who are members of NAPTOSA, thereafter, in relation to teachers who are members of SADTU. I have decided to look at each teacher separately to show the differences and similarities between each teacher's negotiations of their teacher identity. This also allows me to see any distinctions between the negotiations of teachers who are representatives of their unions and those who are regular members.

After discussing teachers' understandings, a discussion of the teacher unions' construction of teachers will follow. This is done in a similar manner as teachers' understandings, looking at each teacher union separately. Three general categories emerged in relation to questions asked about teachers' understanding of being a teacher, namely why teaching, teacher's role and influences. Throughout the discussion there are figures that give a summary of the codes in relation to each teacher and the unions. These codes are elaborated on in the discussion.

4.1.1) Mrs H

Mrs H is a school representative for NAPTOSA at school A, which is a former model C school.

		NAPTOSA (School A)
		Mrs. H
Teachers' understanding of being a teacher.	Why teaching	Calling
	A teacher's role	Educate. Second Parent. Role model. Parent partner. Disciplinarian. Consistent
	Influences	Mentor. Leadership. Spirituality
Teachers' understanding of unionism.	Why	Principles
	Role	Belonging
	Influences	Mentor

Figure 4 a Summary of findings for Mrs H

a) Mrs H's understanding of being a teacher

When asked why she chose to become a teacher, Mrs H described her reason for becoming a teacher as a calling,

> *It's the love of children and wanting to impart what I had learnt from school. That's the main reason. My father was a teacher, my mother was a teacher; that's the background that I'm coming from.*

Much like African American female teachers who Dixson and Dingus (1998) worked with taught from a moral purpose and saw teaching as a way to have intergenerational influence in their communities, in seeing herself as imparting knowledge that she gained from school and having the influence of her parents Mrs H sees herself as uplifting her community and impacting on future generations in a positive way. Mrs H's reason for becoming a teacher came mainly from her heart and a passion for helping others learn (Palmer, 1998). The reason she became a teacher has had a great impact on what she understands to be the role of a teacher in the classroom. It is already clear from Mrs H saying *to impart what I had learnt from school* that the key role of a teacher is to give learners epistemological access to school knowledge (Morrow, 2007).

Mrs H further explained that beyond giving learners access to knowledge, she sees herself as a second parent and role model to her learners.

> *Firstly you are the mother of the children that you are teaching; you are the leader; you are exemplary; whatever you do, the children admire most of the time. So, that's my role being a teacher. I'm a mother to them, I'm their leader, I'm a role model to them, and ja that's it…*
>
> *I like things to be done in the proper way. And when I look at the kids, I have this thing that they should not look at themselves for now, they should look at themselves for the future. They must have a vision, to tell the honest fact, about themselves when they finish high school. What do they want to be? Where they are heading to… So basically, I am a person who wants this to be done in the correct way and having the picture of the child somewhere there. Not in the gutters, but somewhere there, you know, because I always say to them the sky is the limit. That's what I say to them*

This further emphasises the notion that Mrs H sees herself and her teaching as a way of uplifting the community in which she finds herself (Dixson & Dingus, 1998). Like the mother-educators in Knowles, Nieuwenhuis and Smit's paper: a narrative analysis of educators' lived experiences of motherhood and teaching (2009), Mrs H sees herself as a protector of the learners she teaches because through her teaching she wants her learners to envisage brighter futures for themselves She is not only focussed on the delivery of the curriculum but wants to assist learners in finding and building a future for themselves. Without much probing Mrs H, who is a representative of NAPTOSA, explained that her role goes beyond the four walls of her classroom. To better play her part as a teacher she needs to be a parent-partner, working with the parents of her learners to ensure that she can get the best of her learners in the classroom.

> *When we have the parent's meetings I try by all means to make them* [the parents]*... since I'm talking about the kids that are around the age of 15, 16, the parents must know that they are not living underground… So I talk to the parents and say to them, "Please accommodate them, listen to them, because they are human beings and think of yourselves when you were their age."*
>
> *... Their mothers want to know me better, and once they know me better I start opening up concerning what they say. What they say to me, they say in confidence but when I get to the parents I don't just like say this is what the kid had said. I come in a way so that the parent must understand the child more than she does at the moment, and another thing the parent must know that the road that the child is walking she had walked also.*

Mrs H has taken it upon herself in this context to assist her learners and their parents to find common ground. This understanding of her role is very particular to her context and the needs of the school/ and community. Mrs H teaches in a former model C school with a majority of black learners who come from middle-class homes, the learners she teaches have parents who come from very different background more conservative background than the world that they find themselves in now. While having a positive relationship with her learners and their parents is important for Mrs H and her understanding of being a teacher, her being a role model is key to discipline

> *Firstly I am a disciplinarian… I don't like them to do wrong things. I always reprimand them in the correct way. I try to be humble to them so that they return*

the humbleness to me. But there are times when I become so hard to them because one has got to be firm at some point in time, and then you have to be firm with love.

Mrs H is the only teacher amongst the teachers who spoke of the importance of being consistent in all aspects of her life, having a common thread in ones identity whether she is inside or outside the classroom, this is important in relation to the concept of a reconciled identity (Wenger, 1999).

Being a teacher you carry on being who you are because it doesn't go with being artificial to tell the honest fact. Because if it is about being artificial it means that somewhere somehow there will be a relapse, somewhere somehow you will do wrong things even at school. So what you are at school, it must be what you are on the outside.

Mrs H shows that her professional teacher identity is not only influenced by what goes on in the school where she works but there are array of experiences from outside the boundaries of the classroom that influence how she understands herself in within her profession. For her it is important to negotiate her identity, it is important to have a core identity that flows through the many complex communities of practice in which we find ourselves, "identity is a moving intersection of the inner and outer forces that make" us who we are (Palmer, 1998, p.14).

When asked questions about what influenced her understanding of being a teacher, Mrs H immediately spoke of her parents who were both teachers when she was growing up, she spoke about what influenced them and how that has led to how she understood herself as a teacher.

I mean as I had said at first my parents, both my mom and my father. The way they had been when they had been teaching. And each one had his or her impact in her own way, in his own way. My father had his own way of looking at things and my mom had her own way of looking at things. And both those, they are in me to tell the honest fact, my mother is an authoritarian and my father is a democratic person

… for instance my daddy grew up as an orphan … I think with him when he saw kids who are struggling financially who do not have parents in the community, Tata would try by all means to help those kids move on and be something in

their lives…. So that is what I picked up from my daddy and my mommy.

Palmer (1998) showed that we often have a particular mentor who plays a role in us becoming a teacher. From Mrs H's response it is evident that for her, her mentors did not only lead to her becoming a teacher but these mentors have led to her understanding of being teacher as more than just providing learners epistemological access to education. In addition to her parents being influential to her understanding of being a teacher, former leadership in the schools that she thought have also had an influence in how she understands her role as a teacher;

> *Starting from where I was teaching first – I was in a black community and my head - That is my principal, he was a black man and he was such a conscious teacher concerning what is happening in the school. And that moulded me… Then I taught in this school and the principal was always there… Not sitting in his office all the time, checking on what is happening. That helped me to wake up, and when you do things you are busy, you want to finish the thing. And the kids, when they look at you as this busy and with an aim of getting somewhere…*

The mentors that Mrs H had throughout her life both within her teaching career and before it have led to what she believes is a good work ethic and to having a good relationship with her learners. Furthermore her spirituality has given her a new of understanding who her learners are and therefore a new way of engaging with her learners.

Mrs H *[Church] has helped me to show the kids the right things. To talk to the kids and look at the kids as human beings…*

b) Mrs H's understanding of unionism

After getting an idea of Mrs H's understanding of being a teacher it was important to explore her understanding of unionism as this study attempts to understand how the teachers in it negotiate their teacher identity in the context of being active union members. When asked why she chose to be a member of NAPTOSA rather than other unions Mrs H explained that it is the principles of NAPTOSA that led to her choosing this particular union.

> *…the reason why I chose NAPTOSA is because NAPTOSA doesn't have meetings during school time, that's point number one. NAPTOSA is a mild*

> *organisation. Number three, being a teacher you have to belong to an organisation. If you do not belong to an organisation the government takes more money than it takes when you belong to an organisation…*

For Mrs H, NAPTOSA does not infringe on her understanding of being a teacher and the role she believes a teacher is supposed to play.

> [NAPTOSA] *doesn't take your teaching time. You are always there for the kids, to teach the kids. If there are meetings, the meetings are after school. NAPTOSA generally, if they are told that you must stop here, we* [the Department of Basic Education] *are going to try and things like this. They will wait… that is why I'm saying it is a mild one.*

Mrs H's understanding of her role as union member is therefore aligned to her role as a teacher.

> *My union expects me to teach the kids and do the right thing with the kid. …most of the time we get these magazines that say 'The Teacher'. And these magazines always talk about how we should come about to make things come right because at the end education is the best way of living because without education the nation is nothing, so impart your knowledge to the kids and do your best for the children so that the children at the end get to somewhere.*

The same mentor who influenced her understanding of being a teacher has had an influence on her understanding of unionism.

> *My father was the president of the teachers union during the Apartheid times. He was the president of the African Teachers Association of South Africa that was the mother body of all these provinces. So the way they tackled the profession really really influenced me. I mean ATASA was there to promote the teaching profession…*

From the data that is presented it is already starting to be evident that Mrs H has an aligned understanding of being a teacher and unionism. She has a very clear understanding of her identity as both a union member and as a teacher.

4.1.2) Mrs N

Mrs N is a normal member of NAPTOSA at school A, which is a former model C school.

		School A (NAPTOSA)
		Mrs. N
Teachers' understanding of being a teacher.	Why teaching	Circumstances (financial)
	A teacher's role	Educate. Life guide. Disciplinarian
	Influences	Spirituality. Parenting.
Teachers' understanding of unionism.	Why	Context
	Role	Outlier
	Influences	School. Finance.

Figure 4 b Summary of findings for Mrs N

a) Mrs N's understanding of being a teacher

When exploring Mrs N's understanding of being a teacher the interview began in a similar way as Mrs H's with the reason why she became a teacher. Mrs N however became a teacher for socio-economic reasons,

> *To be honest, to become a teacher is just… by that time we were challenged because* [you could] *only become a teacher, a nurse,* [or] *a police* [officer]. *So there was a bursary and our parents didn't afford for us to go to university. Like, I like office work so that's how I ended up at* Teacher College E *doing teaching. I didn't like teaching but, at least now* [that] *I'm here in the field, now I'm starting to have interest to work with the kids. But at first, it wasn't.*

Although she did not become a teacher because of a calling of some sort Mrs N also sees the central role of a teacher in the classroom as being teaching learners the content.

> *…you're teaching the learners the syllabus, the content because they will be assessed according to the content.*

Mrs N went on to say that she sees the role of a teacher not only as helping learners with their academics but with the challenges they face on a daily basis.

> *…it's not only that, because you also… especially when you do a literature part. So, when you do a story that is related to something that is happening around the world and especially the youth. You relate some of the things and they can realise that it's not because this book is old; you can see some of the things even*

> *now and some of the things are even worse. Then we try to fix some of the things, but while we are busy with the literature.*

Unlike Mrs H, who is the school representative for NAPTOSA, Mrs N is an ordinary member of the union and did not mention the partnering with parents to ensure the learners success. However, she too saw the importance of being a disciplinarian both inside and outside of the classroom to ensure that her learners knew the difference between right and wrong.

> *Like if you see a learner doing something wrong outside, you don't teach that kid, you must discipline the child. It's not, "Ah, that's not my child." You must discipline the child. Like even outside the school, if you see the child is wearing the uniform and is drunk- doing something that is not good. There and then you must call the child to say that this is wrong, go and take off the uniform.*

Here, in her explanation of what discipline is, you see that Mrs N sees her role much like the African American teachers Dixson and Dingus (1998) speak of, in that her role goes beyond the walls of her classroom and into the community in which she lives. Mrs N unlike Mrs H did not have a mentor that provoked her love for teaching and perhaps explains why she did not always want to become a teacher. Her teaching and the way she understood her role as a teacher is influenced by two things.

> *Especially in church, the bible tells us you must understand each other…When you come here in class you can see the child is so depressed, you can intervene. That's why breaks, I'm here in class. I'm not alone, I'm with the kids…*

Mrs N's understanding of her spirituality allows for her to be in tune with her learners in a deeper sense, to see beyond the behaviour of her learners and to try and get to issues that manifest themselves as these behaviours. Her spirituality is possibly also the way she has managed to move from not wanting to be a teacher to taking on the identity of being a teacher, she has always felt fulfilled by assisting others, and teaching to her is a good way to do so. She further mentioned that being a step-parent has led to her being more patient with the learners she teaches.

> *And something that also teach me something is that I stay with my stepchild, he is naughty. But I was able to stay with him till matric, but it was difficult… He is fine, but he likes alcohol, cigarettes and that is something I don't like at all… So he has helped me calm down.*

Mrs N, much like Mrs H can see that there are various aspects of her life from which she draws her identity as teacher, she did not explicitly speak about being consistent in terms of who she is but from her answers one can already see a similar understanding of her identity.

b) Mrs N's understanding of unionism

When asked why she chose to become a member of NAPTOSA as compared to other unions, Mrs N explained that it was because of the context in which she finds herself, that wherever she teaches she joins whichever union the majority of teachers are part of.

> *I just wanted something that will accommodate my needs, because usually when I was at* X-Township School*, I was a SADTU member because all of the teachers that side are SADTU… So when I came here there were no SADTU members and if there is a strike for SADTU then I will be the only one striking. So I said, let me change…*

As one can already deduce Mrs N does not really feel part of the union community of practice and is part of the union because it seems to be something that is required of teachers. When asked about her role as a union member she explained that she did not see a need for a role as ordinary members are not taken seriously by their unions.

> *I can't really say, because you can discuss as a teacher that you don't want this but when the people when they go to the bargaining table they change things. At the end you see that they have already signed about this but you're not happy about it. I don't see a need, unless maybe there is something that helps us.*
>
> *I think unions must come with a strategy to make teachers to love them or maybe listen to them. We are not listening to them because they are not doing justice to us. If they capacitate us and do the right things*

Furthermore Mrs N explained that if it were not for the fact that teachers would lose more money if they were not members of unions, she is certain that most teachers would not be union members.

> *It doesn't affect me in my teaching career, it's just money. So sometimes there is even letter saying NAPTOSA what what, I don't read it, I don't see a need. Yes, I am a member but then what? I think, even if you have a union or you don't have a union and the money is the same, I think most of the teachers*

would not be members.

Within the members of NAPTOSA, there was a clear distinction between the school representative and the ordinary member's ownership of their union identity. One can see that Mrs N completely disregards her union identity. Is it easy for her not to have to consider her union identity because of the union that she belongs to, as Mrs H states *NAPTOSA is a mild organisation*.

4.1.3) Mrs U

A representative of SADTU Mrs U, she is non-South African and came into teaching because of the move she made to be with her husband who had relocated to South Africa.

		SADTU (School B)
		Mrs. U
Teachers' understanding of being a teacher.	Why teaching	Circumstances (relocation)
	A teacher's role	Educate. Second Parent. Role model. Parent partner. Disciplinarian
	Influences	Mentor. Context. Parenting. Spirituality.
Teachers' understanding of unionism.	Why	Context
	Role	Belonging
	Influences	Mentor

Figure 4 c Summary of findings for Mrs U

a) Mrs U's understanding of being a teacher

When asked why she became a teacher this was her response in her own words.

> *On my own I never wanted to become a teacher. I want to tell you the truth, where I was working I was not a teacher. When my husband came to South Africa, I had to join him. When I came here I wanted to work, I didn't want to just stay as a housewife, so I applied to a lot of places but a* Private School Y *gave me a chance. So I went there, so actually when I went there I was just taking it as a temporary thing, I would later on leave and go and do other things. Somehow I realised that other things couldn't really come; so I stayed there, after a while I said let me go and study and become a professional teacher. My work as a teacher was just a constant so that's how I became a teacher.*

Mrs U worked as a lab technician in her home country, she has a Bachelor of Science degree, and so when she made the move to the classroom she became a science teacher. Mrs U also

indicated that the role of a teacher in the classroom is to educate the learners whom s/he teaches.

> *…I do not ignore content, the actual classroom subject itself, that has to be in place. That for me is number one, they must know what they must know, the syllabus.*

Although for her this was not the main purpose of being a teacher, like Mrs H, Mrs U sees herself as a second parent of the learners whom she teaches. For her the key role of a teacher is to give is to ensure that she is a good role model for her learners as they come from a community with very few positive people to look up to.

> *Okay number one, on my own I say as a teacher, I am a parent in the classroom. That's why my learners are very close to me, they can tell me anything, I try to make them feel very free. I don't just see myself as a teacher who go there and teach and get out. A guardian, a parent…*
>
> *I am a role model; sometimes I even shift away from the topic of the day and teach them about the ways of life. Because I am Christian, sometimes I bring in my Christian principles. I see them as my children; they must have a high moral standard.*
>
> *Even to take care of them…. It's if they tell me this is the problem, I guide them in finding a solution and how they can solve the problem.*

Mrs U explains that she often calls in the parents of her learners to ensure that her learner benefit fully from her teaching. For her, is important not to assume that the parents know what is expected of them so she sees herself as being the person who can help advise parents in this regard.

> *What I personally do is, concerning the community is we sometimes call in the parents and talk to them not only reporting the child but concerning what we expect them to do at home so that the child can be what we want them to be. So we have a role to play, sometimes it's so difficult for the teacher to go in there but we can call in the parents, talk to the parents [and] give them your own advice*

Mrs U believes that a teacher is a disciplinarian in all interactions s/he has with learners.

> *You have to assist with what is happening outside the school. Maintaining discipline as much as you can, even though now discipline is a big challenge. You know like help, help where ever you feel it is necessary and where you can because you cannot do what you cannot do. So, it's not just to say that I'm a teacher and that is it.*

Like Mrs H and Mrs N, she feels that it is important to be consistent in who you are when interacting with your learners inside and outside your classroom. It is important for a teacher to understand who s/he is, know their limits and what they can do, what is true to their identity. This is very similar to the other school representative's notion that a teacher should not be *artificial*.

When engaged on what influenced her understanding of the role of a teacher, Mrs U spoke of a lady teacher whom she taught with when she started her teaching career, she saw this lady teacher as someone to look up to. Mrs U had not had any formal teacher training at that time and for her this teacher epitomised what she believed to be good teaching (Palmer, 1998).

> *...When I started teaching there was a lady, she was a geography teacher. She was an elderly teacher, she was the eldest in the school… She was somebody that actually made me realise who a teacher is supposed to be, she was so sympathetic. She was always very close to the learners, she even used to bring food and the learners there were not even very poor. If she noticed that there was a problem there she would help…*

Mrs U coming to know her mentor and seeing how her mentor interacted with her learners led to a shift in Mrs U's understanding of being a teacher and perhaps coming to a different understanding of teaching led to her taking on and negotiating her own teacher identity. Mrs U further explained that the context in which she finds herself teaching has also influenced the way she understands being a teacher. This is different to both NAPTOSA teachers and this may be because they teach learners who come from middle class homes while Mrs U teaches in one of the poorest communities in the town which she resides.

> *…Generally as a teacher you need to be aware of your environment, and ask where can I contribute…*
>
> *…if you look at this community where we are, apart from poverty there is even a lot of things. So, you have to play a role even concerning the community…*

> *sometimes we don't have the financial aid to say, okay we can do this and we can do this. Sometimes for families that are really, really struggling at school sometimes the teachers, especially the female teachers, we do contribute when we see that this is really what needs to happen.*

When probed further about why Mrs U specifically mentioned that the female teachers are the ones who contribute to assist learners it became evident that Mrs U explicitly sees her being a mother as influential to her understanding of being a teacher.

> *… The females are mothers, the way a mother sees things is different to the way a father sees things… a mother easily feels pity for a child, a mother easily tries to see herself and her children in that situation… A female easily wears the shoes of someone else, especially where it touches children. Then you now have to think, how about if I were to be the one, how about if that were my child.*

Mrs U pulls from various communities of practice that she finds herself operating within to create her understanding of being a teacher. She like the other two teachers seems to have a core identity which manifests itself in all aspects of her life (Palmer, 1998).

b) Mrs U's understanding of unionism

Mrs U, has a unique experience of unionism from the other teachers in the study for two reasons. Firstly, Mrs U has not been a teacher all her working life and secondly, because Mrs U is not South African, her home country of Nigeria has one major union. When asked why she chose to become a member of SADTU as opposed to other unions in the country, Mrs U explained that it was because of encounters she had at workshops with a particular teacher who was a SADTU member.

> *…When I left* Private School Y*, I didn't start here, I started at another school. The site secretary* [school representative] *of that school was SADTU. We used to attend workshops together when I was still at the* Private School Y. *So when I went there he was so excited, he was so happy. So because he was SADTU, automatically I joined SADTU because I was already close to him during workshops. It was more of an influence of somebody who was already a member of SADTU.*

When asked about her understanding of the role of a union member in the school, Mrs U focussed on what is expected of her as a school representative by her union.

> *…there's a lot of expectation because if you look at the union, the responsibility of the site committee. You need to make sure that the members, they render what they are expected to do. Which is sometimes a big challenge… you also have to keep the peace, it is very important.*

Getting a better understanding of the role of a union member in the school required further probing. When probed further about her understanding of the role of the union member in a school beyond her duties as a school representative Mrs U explained that for her what is expected from her as teacher by her union is aligned to what her understanding of being a teacher. She further explained that this however often not what the members of the union actually do. Mrs U expressed a sense of belonging, even though it is not belonging to all that SADTU do.

> *I do not actually think that what is actually implemented is actually policy. I don't really blame* [anyone] *because to me, I see SADTU, SADTU is actually like a little baby of ANC and everybody needs positions. So sometimes it doesn't really go according to policy. The policy of SADTU assists you to be a good teacher, but are we really doing that... You see a teacher who is absent from school, but you can't do anything because they are a member of SADTU, or you see a teacher who is accused of being with little girls they will tell* [you] *that they even do it outside of school. But in terms of policy, if we could follow it, we would be very good teachers*

After engaging Mrs U on her understanding of unionism, it was important to find out what had influenced her understanding of unionism. To this she referred back to the teacher who influenced her joining SADTU in the first place.

> *I should still refer to that first site steward I was talking about. He was, I don't know how to put it. He was so dedicated, diligent and never used to complain. He was always in class, always at school. He was in charge of the timetable, when we go complain, he would listen to your complaint and try and solve it… So when I became a, I was chosen, I was voted to be the site secretary, I thought that is how I should be…*

Mrs U, seemed to have taken ownership of her union identity and from the data presented one can already deduce that she is able to already see which parts of prescribed identity of unionism she chooses not to ascribe to as they clash with her teacher identity.

4.1.4) Mrs M

Mrs M is an ordinary member of SADTU and is a teacher at School B, a township school.

		SADTU (School B)
		Mrs. M
Teachers' understanding of being a teacher.	Why teaching	Circumstances (financial)
	A teacher's role	Educate. Second Parent. Role model
	Influences	Mentor. Context. Spirituality. Parenting
Teachers' understanding of unionism.	Why	Principles
	Role	Disengaged
	Influences	Current state

Figure 4 d Summary of findings for Mrs M

a) Mrs M's understanding of being a teacher

Like Mrs N the ordinary member of NAPTOSA she is became a teacher because of her parents' financial circumstance, teaching was well funded by the government.

> *My parents did not have money, and it was difficult those days the only free tertiary education was teaching, so I decided to take it because we had a bursary by then.*

Mrs M's response differed from the other teacher who initially did not want to become teachers because she did not explicitly say she is now happy as a teacher. Like all of the teachers in the study she explained that one of the key roles of a teacher in the classroom is to ensure that teaching and learning takes place.

> *You have to teach the learners, you to control their work, you have to assist them.*

From the use of the words *you control their work* it is already evident that Mrs M like the other teachers is somewhat of a disciplinarian. She went on to explain that a teacher's role is to stand in as a parent to the leaners s/he teaches. Her understanding of being a teacher is more than just assisting learners with their school work but with all aspects of their lives.

> *You stand in for their parents while they are at school, so you assist them as a*

parent in everything pertaining [to] *their lives.*

She believed that being a teacher, particularly in School B, required her to play many roles that go beyond being a second parent.

> *Here you are a social worker, you are a pastor, you are a teacher, you are a mom, you are everything. This community really, it is an eye opener for most of us, cause we knew the other side of life but since I came here to this community I can see that there is a big role that I have to play in educating and assisting these learners to be better citizens of South Africa.*

What was interesting about the way Mrs M explained the multifaceted nature of the role she plays as a teacher, is that it seemed to be what has led her to negotiate her teacher identity and begin to take ownership of her understanding of being a teacher. There were few contradictory responses from Mrs M as she initially explained that she did not want to be a teacher but forced to become one because of her parents' financial situation. When she was asked whether there was someone who helped influence her understanding of being a teacher she spoke of an educator she had as a child who influenced her to become a teacher.

> *Ja, I had a role model while I was still very young. There was one teacher while I was still very young which I used to like her; the way she talks, the way she dresses, everything that she does. Then it made me to be very interested in teaching, I decided that one day I want to be like that woman.*

Perhaps it was not about the woman being a teacher, but about the status that the woman held in the community and in the school that made her *want to be like that woman*. Like Mrs U, the other teacher at her school, Mrs M mentioned the context where she works as being influential in the negotiation of her teacher identity. In her own words, Mrs M said,

> *From my, the other communities that I have worked with there was no problem like the one we have here in M-block, here in M-block when I came here* [and] *found that it's a farm school where parents are illegal immigrants, they don't care about their kids because of the hardships they are enduring in South Africa. So it made them to abandon their kids, their kids are all by themselves, they are mothers at an early age and at times these parents when they come here they get married to the South Africans leaving the kids by*

themselves, so they are all alone. You have to mother them and show love so that the learner can have an interest in learning and sees that there is someone who loves me and is going to be accommodated back to the community, otherwise it's very very tough and hard

The hardships that her learners face have led to Mrs M's complex identity of being a teacher in her context; Mrs M draws from the nexus of various identities to create her teacher identity. Furthermore like Mrs H and Mrs N, her spirituality and connection to high power has helped her to understand her learners in a different way. Mrs M finds that she is more empathetic when engaging her learners.

…You are more sensitive, and when you see these kids you know that there is someone somewhere watching them, taking care of them in everything. So, I think it [being a Christian] has changed me a lot. Even if I talk to them I am so sensitive, enough to see what is good for them.

Mrs M is the only teacher in the study who is a grandmother; she expressed that raising her grandson has led to her making better decisions when engaging with her learners.

Ja, a lot. A lot because from him I'm learning a lot. From my grandson I'm learning, when I come I'm now understanding that "oh, that's why these people are behaving like this". So I handle it better than the time I was raising my kids.

What is consistently shown in the responses given by Mrs M is that the learners she teaches have played a key role in her understanding of her teacher identity.

b) Mrs M's understanding of unionism

Mrs M has been a member of SADTU since it was launched in 1990, when asked why she chose to be a member of SADTU rather than any other union she explained that it was because of what SADTU stood for in an ever changing post-apartheid South Africa.

When I think after 1994 there was these new unions that were emerging. So SADTU was 'the' union by then. I decided to one of them because there was a lot that was happening in the system and that SADTU had to change and they were better [than other unions]. *But of late I don't see what they are doing so I have lost interest. I don't even care what they do, I'm just a member.*

In stating that she no longer cares what her union does Mrs M had already answered the question regarding what her role is as a union member. After further probing, Mrs M

explained that she no longer sees a point in being active as the views and opinions of normal members in SADTU are disregarded.

> *... there is nothing, because you can talk and talk at the grassroots level but up there, it reaches there on deaf ears and they do what they think is right for them not considering the teachers at the lower levels. So, it's for them in fact, so that's why we don't care. I don't care in fact.*

Mrs M, much like Mrs N, uses language that separates her from the union. There seems to be a strong sense of "them versus us" for the ordinary members of both the unions. When asked about what has influenced the way she understands unionism and why she feels so detached from SADTU Mrs M expressed that she is no longer inspired by the union.

> *Before they were fine, but since the Zuma era things have changed. I don't know what is happening; in fact I am still asking myself where are we heading to.*

A common thread seems to lie in the fact that both Mrs H and Mrs U, the school representatives of the unions, have managed to negotiate which aspects of unionism as understood by world they draw on to form their union identity. The aspects are aligned to their teacher identity. While Mrs N and Mrs M, the ordinary members of the unions completely disregard their union identities and do not seem to see how they can play a role in their teaching.

4.1.5) Teacher unions' construction of teachers.

Two general categories emerged from the documents taken from the websites of the teacher unions, namely teacher unions' constructions in relation to learners and teacher unions' constructions in relation to other stakeholders.

		NAPTOSA	**SADTU**
Teacher unions' construction of teachers	In relation to learners.	Accepting. Welfare. Teaching. Accountable.	Accepting. Welfare. Teaching. Accountable.
	In relation to stakeholders.	Collaborative Parent-partner	Respectful Activist

Figure 4 e Summary of finding for the teacher unions

The teacher unions construct teachers as having to be accepting, responsible and accountable in relation to the children they teach. In a similar fashion to how the data regarding teacher interviews was presented, this data will presented separately for each union.

a) NAPTOSA

The NAPTOSA documents are referred to as the *NAPTOSA principles and charter of professionalism*. From the word principles one can see that this is a document that this document serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour for the members of the union. With regards to learners the NAPTOSA document states that teachers have to be accepting of learners as they are, displaying non-discriminatory behaviour towards their learners.

> *We serve and educate all learners with equal dedication, irrespective of gender, race, culture, religion, political affiliation, intellectual capacity and sexual orientation…*

Furthermore, accepting learners as they are was explained as a way of ensuring that the needs of learners are met both within and beyond the boundaries of the curriculum.

> *At all times the needs and welfare of the individual learner must be of central importance. When we exercise professional judgement both duty and compassion inform our decisions. We bear in mind that we do not teach lesson plans or intellectual challenges – we teach human beings.*

This stance of doing more than delivering the curriculum to learners is one that is taken by all the teachers in the study. This however does not release the teachers of the responsibility to teach, the teacher is therefore responsible for ensuring that teaching and learning takes place.

> [We] *deliver(ing) the curriculum so as to enable all learners to develop their skills, knowledge, values and attitudes in a changing environment.*

The union sees itself and its members as being accountable when it comes to any relations with learners, explaining that as a union it is important to keep all relations with learners appropriate and act as role models for the learners.

> *We refrain from improper or inappropriate relations with learners, be these physical, sexual, political or emotional. Rather, in all our actions and words, in and out of our educational institutions, we will promote by example the integrity of our profession by modelling respect for diversity, compassion*

and commitment.

With regard to other stakeholders, NAPTOSA explicitly expressed the importance of collaboration with the various stakeholders in the school, stating that parents are partners in their children's education

> *We foster an environment of collegiality, collaboration, co-operation and sharing of resources between educators and educational institutions…*
> *We support the rights of parents, engaging them as partners in our efforts and promoting harmonious relations wherever possible.*

What is quite interesting about NAPTOSA and the way they present their principles is the contest use of the word "we". This, signifies that the union sees itself and its members as one. These principles are not merely rules that apply to members of the union but they are a way of being for all those who are part of NAPTOSA, whether they operate in the classroom or not.

b) SADTU

SADTU's document on the other hand is referred to as the *SADTU code of conduct*. The use of the word code of conduct signals a difference in the two documents, a constitution in most instances represents a set of rules which outline the social norms of those who are members of that particular body and has more authoritative undertones. In relation to learners, SADTU expressed very similar views to NAPTOSA. Firstly that the teacher's approach to teaching is one that is respectful, and accepting, of all learners regardless of their backgrounds and beliefs.

> *The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age[, and] ancestry of place of origin.*

Furthermore, teachers have to understand the needs of their learners and adapt their practice to deliver the curriculum so that their learners receive quality education which speaks to not only the welfare of their learners but teaching their learners too.

> *The teacher is responsible for diagnosing educational needs, prescribing and implementing instructional programmes, and evaluating progress of pupils.*

SADTU further expresses that teachers operate in a place of authority over learners and therefore need to ensure that they do not abuse this power.

The teacher may not divulge information about a pupil received in confidence or in the course of professional duties, except as requires by law…

It is, however, an abuse of this professional relationship for the teacher to:

7.1. Enter into improper association with a pupil

7.2. Show undue personal favour or disfavour towards a pupil

7.3. Commit such acts against a child which are illegal…

SADTU is more explicit about what they believe to be an abuse of power and what behaviour is inappropriate for their teachers.

The major difference between the trade unions however is evident in the way they construct teachers in relation to other stakeholders. SADTU does not speak of collaboration with stakeholders but states that the teachers who are members of the union need to be respectful when interacting with colleagues

The teacher does not undermine the confidence of other teachers.

The teacher should not denigrate their colleagues in the presence of other parties nor should a teacher adversely criticize a colleagues in the presence others…

A second point of difference in the way in which teachers are constructed is that SADTU speaks explicitly about the teacher's duty to protest.

The teacher recognizes the duty to protest, where possible through proper channels, administrative policies and practices, which the teacher cannot accept.

Here one can see that teachers are not given the option to protest or not protest it is their responsibility to protest. Looking at the phrasing of the principles in the SADTU constitution it is evident that here there is a divide between the union as an entity and the teachers who are members of the union. Each principle is written with the term "the teacher" at the beginning in contrast to the use of "We" in NAPTOSA's principles signifies a separation between the union and the teacher.

4.2) Data Interpretation

As discussed in the Literature Review, Wenger (1999) proposes that various aspects of identity are formed within the various communities of practice that a person is a member of through a process of negotiation. This project particularly explores the nature of the interplay, if at all any, during the creation of teachers' identities between teacher communities and

communities that teachers belong to. The two major themes under the overriding pattern of teacher's understandings, speak to Wenger's model of identity in practice. The codes and categories that fall under teachers' understanding of being a teacher and the teachers' understanding of unionism show how interactions within each community of practice contribute to the ongoing development of their identity.

4.2.1) Identity as negotiated experience

Although all the teachers in this study are members of unions, it is the two representatives of the unions who actively take on the identity of union members. Both Mrs H and Mrs U have found ways to align their unionism to their teacher identity; they both see their roles as educator, second parent, role model, parent partner and disciplinarian:

Mrs H *My union expects me to teach the kids and do the right thing with the kid.*

… impart your knowledge to the kids and do your best for the children so that the children at the end get to somewhere.

Mrs U *You need to make sure that the members, they render what they are expected to do.*

He was so dedicated, diligent and never used to complain. He was always in class, always at school… So when I became a, I was chosen, I was voted to be the site secretary, I thought that is how I should be…

Mrs H and Mrs U have managed to select what they deem as suitable not only from their understanding of their union identity but from their lived experiences of belonging to a union community of practice. There are elements of what the world or others may view as unionism they do not take on as part of their identity.

Mrs U *You see a teacher who is absent from school, but you can't do anything because they are a member of SADTU, or you see a teacher who is accused of being with little girls they will tell* [you] *that they even do it outside of school.*

While Mrs N and Mrs M, the ordinary members of the unions are both dismissive of their union identities, because of their lived experiences of being part of the unions they have both decided not to take ownership of any of the elements of unionism. Furthermore, the ordinary members seem unaware of the power they have to negotiate which aspects of the prescribed union identity they choose to take on (Gee, 2001).

Mrs N *I can't really say, because you can discuss as a teacher that you don't want this but when the people when they go to the bargaining table they change things.*

I think unions must come with a strategy to make teachers to love them or maybe listen to them…

Mrs M *…you can talk and talk at the grassroots level but up there, it reaches there on deaf ears and they do what they think is right for them not considering the teachers at the lower levels.*

One sees that the representatives of the unions partake in the intentional and unintentional continuous reflective processes of negotiating their identity in the context of union members and teachers (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Both the ordinary members see themselves as separate from the union and therefore have created boundaries between their teacher identities and their union identities.

4.2.2) Identity as community membership

As individuals, the two union representatives, Mrs U and Mrs H expressed that the competences required in the union community of practice are the same as those required in the teacher community of practice. They believe that what is usable and productive in the union community of practice is equally as useful in the teacher community of practice.

Mrs U *The policy of SADTU assists you to be a good teacher… in terms of policy, if we could follow it, we would be very good teachers*

Mrs H *My union expects me to teach the kids and do the right thing with the kid.*

Although she sees the competences as being the same within the two communities of practice Mrs U explicitly spoke of conflict in that arises from being a member of both communities of practice.

Mrs U *… there's a lot of expectation because if you look at the union, the responsibility of the site committee. You need to make sure that the members, they render what they are expected to do. Which is sometimes a big challenge… you also have to keep the peace, it is very important.*

You see a teacher who is absent from school, but you can't do anything because they are a member of SADTU, or you see a teacher who is accused of

being with little girls they will tell [you] *that they even do it outside of school.*

The conflict that Mrs U experiences is due to the challenge of having to hold other teachers in her union accountable to competences of both communities of practice (Brodie & Shalem, 2011). Due to the lack of accountability we see teachers like those described by Mrs U, who do not feel the need to negotiate what is appropriate and productive in these communities of practice.

As Mrs N and Mrs M are disengaged from their unions there is very little active negotiation of the competencies that are required in the union community of membership by the two ordinary members. Mrs N and Mrs M have a good understanding of the competencies required in their teacher community of practice, but due to the disengagement with their union community when demands are placed on them they have less agency and therefore sometimes partake in action that may not be aligned with the competencies of the teacher community of practice.

Mrs N *So when I came here there were no SADTU members and if there is a strike for SADTU then I will be the only one striking…*

4.2.3) Identity as nexus of membership

The teachers in this study all had similar understandings of their professional identity, they all explained that drew on various communities of practice outside of teaching when 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. What stands out is that none of the teachers spoke of unionism as being influential in developing their teacher identity. All four teachers explained that their spiritual communities of practice assisted them in some way or another to understand their role in the classroom and how to interact with the learners they teach.

Mrs H *[Church] has helped me to show the kids the right things. To talk to the kids and look at the kids as human beings…*

Mrs N *Especially in church, the bible tells us you must understand each other…When you come here in class you can see the child is so depressed, you can intervene…*

Mrs U *Because I am Christian, sometimes I bring in my Christian principles. I see them as my children, they must have a high moral standard.*

Mrs M *I think it [being a Christian] has changed me a lot. Even if I talk to them I am so*

sensitive, enough to see what is good for them.

Beyond their spiritual communities of practice Mrs N, Mrs U and Mrs M explained how being part of the parent community of practice has led to a shift in the way they relate to their learners, particularly making them more patient. For Mrs N it is being a parent to her stepson and the trying relationship with him. Mrs U explained that all female teachers who are mothers approach teaching with a level of empathy, while Mrs M felt that raising her grandchild has helped her look beyond the actions of her learners.

Mrs H comes from a family of educators and her identity as a daughter of former educators has played a large role in the way she understands her teaching, there key aspects of this identity that have informed who she is an educator.

She spoke of how she is a fair teacher who is a disciplinarian and was influenced by her relationship with her parents. All four teachers have managed to build social bridges between their teaching community of practice and various communities of practice that that they feel aligned to and that can improve their ability as teachers in the classroom (Wenger, 1999). Although the teachers did not speak of unionism as being influential in the teaching, when probed about the role unionism plays in their teaching Mrs H and Mrs U where able to show that they have a union identity that is aligned to their teacher identity. Both Mrs U and Mrs H have managed to create a filtered understanding of their union identity which is aligned to their teacher identity (Samuel & Stephens, 2000).

4.2.4) Identity as relation between local and global

The teachers in this study all expressed an understanding of the fact that there were things that occurred globally that affected their day-to-day teaching experiences, particularly in relation to unionism. Mrs N and Mrs M expressed a level of frustration over the impact of the global on everyday lives as teachers.

Mrs N *I can't really say, because you can discuss as a teacher that you don't want this but when the people when they go to the bargaining table they change things. At the end you see that they have already signed about this but you're not happy about it…*

As a teacher on the ground Mrs M felt that her opinions are not taken into consideration, which led to her having little interest in the unions.

The ordinary members feel that they have little control over what occurs to them as teachers at the grassroots level. For them, decisions are made at a higher level which they then have to accommodate into their understanding of being a teacher. This, coupled with their lack of agency results in them not fully understanding how they fit into the bigger scheme of things as teachers and union members.

While the school representatives also have little control over the decisions made at a higher level, they seem to have clearer understanding of how they fit into the bigger scheme of things as both union members and teachers. Both Mrs H and Mrs U were able to express which aspects of the global prescribed union identity they ascribed to and which aspects they felt were inappropriate for them as teachers.

4.3) Conclusion

The responses of the teachers and the data analysis process suggests that teachers' willingness to take on a union identity seems to be relative to the level at which the teacher is involved in union activity. Furthermore, that teachers negotiate their teacher identity in relation to the communities of practice that they see as aligned to what they believe a good teacher is. The most significant effect of this is that teachers tend to show less agency when conflicting demands are placed on them by their union community of practice and their teacher community of practice when they are do not take ownership of their union identity.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study set out to gain insight into how female black teacher negotiate their teacher identity as both active union members and practicing teachers; specifically exploring the understanding black female teachers have of their teacher identity, the multiple identities and communities practice that contribute to the construction of this identity and the extent to which they engage in processes to reconcile their various identities to form their teacher identity. Drawing on Wenger's (1999) model of identity in practice, which shows that various aspects of identity are formed within the various communities of practice, that a person is a member of through a process of negotiation, which is identity is constructed through a process of interaction between the individual and the communities of practice they belong to. Furthermore, that the communities of practice to which one belongs are not isolated but overlap and therefore all play all role to a certain extent in the construction of one's identity

(Wenger, 1999). Within this study focus was initially placed on the teacher and union communities that teachers belong to as they both deal with the profession of teaching.

The study highlighted the fact that teacher identity plays an integral role in the profession as it provides teachers with a framework for understanding "how to be", "how to act" and "how to understand" their work (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). Additionally, the literature showed that teachers gain a form of agency through the development of the understanding of self as they become empowered to "move ideas forward, to reach goals or even to transform the context" they find themselves in (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 183).

Through the literature reviewed the study also highlighted the conflicting demands that are often placed on teachers who belong to both the teacher and union communities of practice (Govender, 2004). As teachers mostly teach from their moral purpose, which is assumed to be a "positive driving force… to make a difference" when teachers are called upon by their unions to partake in actions that do not align themselves to, tensions are created which require teachers to reflect and negotiate the understanding of their teacher identity (Mockler, 2011, p. 523). 523). It is for this reason that this study seeks to understand the processes teachers undergo in negotiating and constructing a reconciled teacher identity.

Wenger's (1999) model of identity in practice provided an entry point for the exploration of the central question of this study: How do black female teachers negotiate their teacher identity as both active union members and practicing teachers?

5.1) Summary of findings

The findings are threefold. The first of which is in regard to how black female teachers understand their teacher identity. The second relates to the multiple identities which influence the way in which black female teachers construct their teacher identity. The third pertains to the manner and extent to which black female teachers reconcile their various identities.

5.1.1) How black female teachers understand their teacher identity

A major finding in the study is that the teachers all tend to teach from their moral purpose, with the intention to impact the lives of their learners in positive ways both inside and outside the classroom and beyond it. The teachers all have an understanding of teacher identity that encompasses more than being mediators of learning. The study suggests that black female teachers' understand their identity as multifaceted. The teachers see themselves as community leaders and role models who play a vital role in the improvement of their communities by ensuring that they guide the learners that they teach to become upstanding

citizens. This is of particular significance because it illustrates that black female teachers in South Africa who are union members are able to develop an understanding of themselves within their practice beyond the discourse that attempts to project a specific identity of unionist teachers.

5.1.2) The multiple identities and communities which influence the way in which black female teachers construct their teacher identity

It has been revealed that when constructing their teacher identity, all four of the teachers in the study seem to only draw from the communities of practice which they deemed to be aligned to their ideal perception of what a teacher should be. The teachers all spoke of the communities of practice that did not take away from them achieving their moral purpose. This speaks to the fact that teacher identity is a filtered understanding of the various identities that a teacher holds (Samuel & Stephens, 2000, p. 476). This suggests that at the nexus of multi-membership are those aspects of black female teachers' identities that are aligned to their moral purpose.

5.1.3) The manner and extent to which black female teachers reconcile their various identities

The study has shown that all four of the teachers partake in the reconciliation of their various identities, by filtering out what they deemed as inappropriate and remaining with those identities which they felt were in alignment with their teacher identity. The study further revealed that ordinary members of unions tend to disregard their union identity, while the union representatives are able to filter out what they feel is useful and appropriate from their union identity and undergo the process of reconciliation. This could be a result of a better understanding of unionism as union representatives.

5.2) Significance and implications

In general, therefore, the findings suggest that the process of negotiation between teachers' union and teacher identities is linked to the level at which teachers operate in the unions. Furthermore, teachers tend to undertake the reconciliation process with regards to identities which they feel are aligned to their moral purpose. The findings support the idea the unions place demands on teachers which make it difficult for teachers to reconcile their union identity and teacher identity.

The findings of this study have a couple of important implications, the first implication is that because teachers do not undergo the necessary identity work required to reconcile their teacher and union identity they have little agency to decide which aspects of unionism they

are willing to take. The second implication is that because of a lack of agency teachers will continue to partake in activities that compound the issues faced by the South African education system even though this may not be aligned to their moral purpose.

5.3) Limitations

A number of caveats need to be noted regarding the present study. For instance, the fact that only four teachers were interviewed, thus the results cannot be assumed to reflect those of other teacher populations. Secondly, members from only two trade unions were interviewed, it perhaps provided a narrower view of unionism in South Africa. The final limitation, the project used a convenience and purposive participant selection. The participants in the study were all teachers over the age of 40, this could have influenced their perceptions of unions and activity within the unions.

5.4) Recommendations

Having found that there is little reconciliation done by teachers with regards to their teacher and union identities more research is needed to understand what leads to teachers taking ownership of their union identities, this of significance as the study has shown that once teachers take ownership of their union identities they have more agency.

5.5) Reflection and personal learnings

The reason for embarking on this research study was quite a personal one, particularly fuelled by feelings of shame. Having this opportunity to work with the teachers who were part of this has left me with a sense of pride at how much of themselves the black female teachers involved in this study are investing in their communities. Furthermore it has opened up my eyes to the complexities of identity and the importance of teachers being capacitated to navigate the many demands placed on them from the communities of practice to which they belong.

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Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

This interview will be part of my Masters Research Report, I'd like to remind you that whatever you say will be confidential. If I do quote you in the research I will not use your name, the name of your school or even the district in the report. You will have access to the complete report if you would like it. If you would like to withdraw at any point you may do so, and you may choose not to answer any of the questions I ask. I am recording the interview so that I can get an accurate as possible record of what you are saying. The tape will only be available to me, I will keep it for five years in case anyone wants to check if I have quoted you correctly and then it will be destroyed. I am interested in your experiences as an active union member and as a practicing teacher. I'd like you to feel free to express yourself whatever your experiences may be.

1. What are/were the main reasons that led to become a teacher?

2. As a teacher what you think is the role that a teacher plays:

    a. In the classroom?
    b. In the school as whole?
    c. In the greater community?

3. Are the any people/ groups that have influenced your understanding of the role of a teacher:
    a. In the classroom?
        i. Who are/were they?
        ii. What would you say their influence has been?
    b. In the school as whole?
        i. Who are/were they?
        ii. What would you say their influence has been?
    c. In the greater community?
        i. Who are/were they?
        ii. What would you say their influence has been?

4. What are the other roles you play in life that may have some sort of influence on the way you understand your practice as a teacher?

    a. In what ways (both positive and negative) do you think these roles influence your practice?

5. Please tell me the reasons you chose to become a member of the teacher union you belong to?

6. What do think your role is as a member of your teacher union?

7. In what ways would you say this has affected your role as a teacher:

    a. In the classroom?
    b. In the school as a whole?
    c. In the greater community?

8. Are there other people who have influenced the way you understand the role of a unionist?
    a. Who are/were they?
    b. What would you say their influence has been?

9. How do you think your trade union understands the role of the teacher:
    a. In the classroom?
    b. In the school as a whole?
    c. In the greater community?

10. Is there anything I have left out that you would like to highlight as having influenced your understanding of your role as a teacher?

Appendix 2: Interview Transcripts

Mrs H, NAPTOSA school representative (School A)

Interviewer: This interview will be part of my Masters Research Report, I'd like to remind you that whatever you say will be confidential. If I do quote you in the research I will not use your name, the name of your school or even the district in the report. You will have access to the complete report if you would like it. If you would like to withdraw at any point you may do so, and you may choose not to answer any of the questions I ask. I am recording the interview so that I can get an accurate as possible record of what you are saying. The tape will only be available to me, I will keep it for five years in case anyone wants to check if I have quoted you correctly and then it will be destroyed. I am interested in your experiences as an active union member and as a practicing teacher. I'd like you to feel free to express yourself whatever your experiences may be.

The first question I would like to ask you to get started is what are or were the main reasons you became a teacher?

Mrs H : It was the love of children and wanting to part what I had learnt from school. That's the main reason. My father was a teacher, my mother was a teacher; that's the background I'm coming from.

Interviewer: So from what I'm understanding, teaching for you has always been something that you wanted to do. Building on that, what would you say the role of a teacher is?

Mrs H : Firstly you are the mother of the children that you are teaching; you are the leader; you are exemplary; whatever you do, the children admire most of the time. So, that's my role being a teacher. I'm a mother to them, I'm their leader, I'm a role model to them, and ja that's it.

Interviewer: The role of a teacher in a classroom, if I'm understanding you properly, is to be a role model to an example to the learners that he or she is teaching. To be

there for the learners, like a second parent. As a teacher you are responsible for the children you teach.

Mrs H : Yes, I like things to be done in the proper way. And when I look at the kids, I have this thing that they should not look at themselves for now, they should look at themselves for the future. They must have a vision to tell the honest fact about themselves when they finish high school. What do they want to be? Where they are heading to. So basically, I am a person who wants this to be done in the correct way and having the picture of the child somewhere there. Not in the gutters, but somewhere there, you know, because I always say to them the sky is the limit. That's what I say to them

Interviewer: Okay, that is very interesting. So how would you explain your role as a teacher in the whole school?

Mrs H : Firstly I am a disciplinarian, I like things to be done the proper way. I don't like them to do wrong things. I always reprimand them in the correct way. I try to be humble to them so that they return the humbleness to me. But there are times when I become so hard to them because one has got to be firm at some point in time, and then you have to be firm with love.

Interviewer: And in the community? Do you think a teacher has a role to play in the community where their school is found?

Mrs H : Depending on the community you're in. Because there are communities which are so conservative, which are so much resistant to change. There are communities like that, but being a teacher, you make means. How do you make means of getting through to these communities? You start with the child. And from the child it goes to the parent. And then look at those parents now, the children with those parents who you are now connecting with. Once you connect you form a triangle. Once this triangle is finished, then you have penetrated through the community. Because you have formed the triangle. You've shown the parents that you have got an interest in their child. Once you have an interest in the child it's not all about academics. You teach the child how to put on clothes, you teach the child how to walk. You teach the child morale. You teach the child so many things. And once you teach the child positively, when the child gets home, the child repeats [what] you [have

said]. And the mother becomes interested, wanting to know this teacher. Once this triangle is formed you have won. Then you are penetrating the community. And being part of the community activities, like church helps. You go to church, you meet these parents in another environment, rather than the environment which is at school. I'm making an example there.

Interviewer: Okay, from what you are saying it sounds as though you feel that it is very important to partner with the parents of your learners. What exactly do you with the parents when you have 'won' them over?

Mrs H : When we have the parent's meetings I try by all means to make them [the parents]… since I'm talking about the kids that are around the age of 15, 16, the parents must know that they are not living underground… So I talk to the parents and say to them, "Please accommodate them, listen to them, because they are human beings and think of yourselves when you were their age. Accept the clean relationships because if you do not accept clean relationships. What's going to happen is the kids are going to hide and they start doing funny things". That's being a mother. Their mothers want to know me better, and once they know me better I start opening up concerning what they say. What they say to me, they say in confidence but when I get to the parents I don't just like say this is what the kid had said. I come in a way so that the parent must understand the child more than she does at the moment, and another thing the parent must know that the child is doing what she had done. You see now one has got to be a strict person but at the same time I try to be flexible because I want my kids to feel free when they are with me. I mean my kids at home and my school kids in the community. They must be able to relate to me, they must be able to communicate with me, I must be able to talk to their parents and make the parent see this is a child. That this is how a child is at school and a child is at home. I hope this is answering your question.

Interviewer: Yes, there is no specific answer that I am looking for…

Mrs H : Another thing. Being a teacher you carry on being who you are because it doesn't go with being artificial to tell the honest fact. Because if it is about being artificial it mean that somewhere somehow there will be a relapse,

somewhere somehow you will do wrong things even at school. So what you are at school, it must be what you are on the outside.

Interviewer: So a teacher must be consistent. Tell me, is there a specific person who influenced the way you understand the role of a teacher in the classroom and the school?

Mrs H : I mean as I had said at first my parents, both my mom and my father. The way they had been when they had been teaching. And each one had his or her impact in her own way, in his own way. My father had his own way of looking at things and my mom had her own way of looking at things. And both those, they are in me to tell the honest fact, my mother is an authoritarian and my father is a democratic person. So with my dad, he listened to what kids are saying, coming up from the kids, and with his authority coming down but at the same time he would meet kids half way. That I have in me, at the same time I do have that authoritarian that my mother us. But now with me it is not as strong as hers. So basically it's coming from my parents. The way they had done things, the way they had been to me, the way they brought me up, the way they made me see things. That's my environment. The environment I grew up in and the schools that I went to. But basically it's my parents more than anyone else.

Interview: And would you say that the same people influenced the way you see your role in the community?

Mrs H : Well, my daddy grew up as an orphan and he was picked up by the principal of the school because of his intelligence and then because of that I think with him when he saw kids who are struggling financially who do not have parents in the community, tata would try by all means to help those kids move on and be something in their lives. And not just be left having passed grade 12 or form 5 in those days and that was it. Tata would see to it. I remember one of the students that he was teaching and he had no means and he ended up being a reverend because of the bursary that was there was coming from the church but because of his intelligence he ended up being a minister. He became a lecturer and from being a lecture he became a minister, coming from a background that was very poor. But that's the community way. So that is what

I picked up from my daddy and mommy. Even my mother is doing the same thing, if she sees somebody who is suffering in the community, mama would put a hand on that and try and help out. Whether helping out to help with school things, like teaching the child to move them forward or help financially and whatever in the community.

Interviewer: Okay are there any other roles that have had an impact on the way you understand your role as teacher, you mentioned going to church.

Mrs H : It has helped me to show the kids the right things. To talk to the kids and look at the kids as human beings rather that looking at the kids as they are there. Listen to them when they say anything, try and understand the way they do things. For instance if I am angry and the child answers me, I sit down with the chid and I say to the child: "please don't answer me now, wait for me until my anger us not there because if you talk to me as I'm angry I'm going to be more angry, and because you are an adolescent you are going to be angry also. Wait for me, and then after some time you come to me and then you say to you know what ma'am, at that time this was like this and that. Then I will understand, but if you answer me." You know sometimes I even say "bite the tongue, you wont answer me". So I'm that type of person, I don't know whether I'm answering correctly.

Interviewer: Okay, so if I am hearing you properly church has given you a different way to deal with the emotions that come with teaching. You are a site representative of NAPTOSA, can you tell me why you chose NAPTOSA?

Mrs H : First of all, the reason why I chose NAPTOSA is because NAPTOSA doesn't have meetings during school time, that's point number one. NAPTOSA is a mild organisation. Number three, being a teacher you have to belong to an organisation. If you do not belong to an organisation the government takes more money than it takes when you belong to an organisation. Those are the three things that made me choose NAPTOSA, to be part of NAPTOSA. You have to be part of an organisation. Number 2, doesn't take your school time- you are always there for the kids, to teach the kids. If there are meetings, the meetings are after school. Number 3, it's a mild organisation.

Interviewer: If you don't mind, can you explain what you mean by mild organisation?

Mrs H : Old people, they don't like toy-toying. Yes, they don't like strikes. They do make a move, but if somebody is trying to stop the move and comes with the ideas of why they are stopping the move, NAPTOSA listens. NAPTOSA doesn't go beyond, like if they say we must stop here and then NAPTOSA jumps to the other side, no ways. NAPTOSA generally, if they are told that they must stop here, we are going to try and do things like this. They will wait and then if things are not done like that then they will take a motion again. That's why I'm saying it's a mild one.

Interviewer: And what do think your role is as a union member?

Mrs H : My union expects me to teach the kids and do the right thing with the kids.

Interviewer: So you believe that your union expects you to have a similar role in the classroom as you understand your role to be?

Mrs H : Yes, because most of the time we get these magazines that say "The teacher". And these magazines always talk about how you should come about to make things come right because at the end education is the best of living because without education the nation is nothing. So, impart your knowledge to the kids and do your best for the children so the children at the end, they get somewhere.

Interviewer: Who would you say influenced you understanding of unionism?

Mrs H : My father was the president of the teacher union during Apartheid times. He was the president of African Teachers Association of South Africa that was the mother body of all these provinces. So the way he tackled the profession really really influenced me. I mean ATASA was there to promote the teaching profession. And it was during those heavy times in the 80s, when South Africa was in that mode of we don't want this Bantu Education. So that was the time that ATASA was very much active. Trying by all means to push the black child. Trying by all means to make the black child go to school in order for the black child to manage to proceed and be educated, for the country to move forward.

Interviewer: That's very interesting, besides that things we have spoken about are there any other things that have influenced the way you understand you role as a teacher?

Mrs H : Starting from where I was teaching first. I was teaching in a black community and my head, that is my principal, he was a black man and he was such a conscious teacher concerning what is happening in the school and the principal was always there. And you would wonder when this principal was eating his food, because he would always be around us. Not sitting in his office all the time, checking on what is happening. That helped me to wake up and to when you do things you are busy, you want to finish the thing. And the kids, when they look at you as this busy and with an aim of getting somewhere. Not a sloppy, sloppy person; and then you expect that the kids will be active and will want to move on with their lives.

Interviewer: Thank you for taking the time to do this interview with me.

Mrs N, NAPTOSA ordinary member (School A)

Interviewer: Okay, so this interview will be part of my Masters Research Report, I'd like to remind you that whatever you say will be confidential. If I do quote you in the research I will not use your name, the name of your school or even the district in the report. You will have access to the complete report if you would like it. If you would like to withdraw at any point you may do so, and you may choose not to answer any of the questions I ask. I am recording the interview so that I can get an accurate as possible record of what you are saying. The tape will only be available to me, I will keep it for five years in case anyone wants to check if I have quoted you correctly and then it will be destroyed. I am interested in your experiences as an active union member and as a practicing teacher. I'd like you to feel free to express yourself whatever your experiences may be.

So the first question I would like to ask you to get started is what are or were the main reasons you became a teacher?

Mrs N : To be honest, to become a teacher is just… by that time we were challenged because only become a teacher, a nurse, a police. So there was a bursary and our parents didn't afford for us to go to university. Like, I like office work so that's how I ended up at Teacher College E doing teaching. I didn't like teaching but, at least now I'm here in the field, now I'm starting to have interest to work with the kids. But at first, it wasn't."

Interviewer: So if I'm hearing you properly it was because at the time in South Africa, because of the type of government we had and the situation we were under the only things that were available to you were teaching, being a police officer or being a nurse?

Mrs N : Yes, and yes I want to go to university to do office work but I don't have money so I have to something that is available.

Interviewer: Okay, that makes a lot of sense. And as a teacher, throughout your experience in the classroom, what do you think the role that teacher plays is inside their classroom?

Mrs N : Okay the role, you're doing in two-fold or else in totally because you are teaching the learners the syllabus, the content, because they will be assessed

according to the content. But it's not only that, because you also… especially when you do a literature part. So, when you do a story that is related to something that is happening around the world and especially the youth. You relate some of the things with them and they can realise that it's not because this book is old. You can see some of the things are happening even now and some of the things is even worse. Then we try and fix some of the things but while you are busy with the literature. That's why I say in totality, like for example we were talking about a man who is taking two wives. Oh, it was a hot debate because the boys were say "ja, it's okay, because if you don't feel to go to the first one then you go to the second one" and the girls were say "oh, because you want to play with us". It was hot, a teacher must create a good environment even for those who are out order, and I call them to order there and then. But if the child is continuing I call them one on one, and most of the time the child who is rebellious in class behind that there is a problem. Maybe there is a problem in their peers or something like that, then you are addressing another issue because of the behaviour. So I think it's nice here, because when I start teaching I was primary for two year, grade 1 and grade 2. It was hard for me because remember I wanted to do the office work. Then I start with the Sub-A, I was miserable because I thought I will be doing this thing for the rest of my life. Then after that they advertised the post to redeploy the teachers who did the secondary teaching diploma, then I moved there and then to High School C, then I was happy, that's why I started developing an interest.

Interviewer: So I'm just going to try and see if I understood you properly. So the role of a teacher is not only give the content, but to sort of be a guide to the learners working with beyond just the school content but in other aspects of their lives, touching on every other part of the learners lives.

Mrs N : To add that I experienced that we were talking about parents who deceive the learners. One of the parents died, and the one who died was a bread winner. Then the aunt said there and then I will be responsible for you guys, after that she claimed all the money from the deceased parent, after that she misused the money after when she sees that money is finished she chased the kids away. And after that when the kid is here at school she doesn't understand,

sometimes I ask what's wrong and she just cried. After that I gave the child money and told her to go to Kabokweni to report this thing, and the case is solved. So, if you are not just a teacher to teach content you can even help the kids who are suffering.

Interviewer: Now I've got an understanding of what you see the role of a teacher as in the classroom, what do you see the role of a teacher as in the broader school, outside of your own classroom?

Mrs N : Like if you see a learner doing something wrong outside, you don't teach that kid, you must discipline the child. It's not, "Ah, that's not my child." You must discipline the child. Like even outside the school, if you see the child is wearing the uniform and is drunk- doing something that is not good. There and then you must call the child to say that this is wrong, go and take off the uniform..

Interviewer: That makes a lot of sense, and you have already pre-empted my next question which was about the community and that's perfect. In terms of your role in the community as teacher, do you see it in relation to your own learners or is it a wider thing?

Mrs N : It's a wider thing because especially for family gatherings, they say now you will see what is the topic today? Even at church and I was worried before but now it's not a problem anymore because even a person who doesn't know me asks can I make an appointment to see you. About what? You know personal things. So that thing developed, and now I don't have a problem. Usually people approach me to help them, I don't know why I think it's from God.

Interviewer: So your understanding of being a teacher within the classroom, within the school and the greater community sounds like it's a lot to do with helping other people and sort of influencing people in a positive way. Are there any people or groups that have influenced your understanding of what a teacher is?

Mrs N : No, it's just that I developed interest. I think it's a gift or something like that because even in church I'm in the worship team but what I like most is to be I social ministry. Social ministry where we give people food parcels and go and visit them.

Interviewer: What are the different roles that you play in your life?

Mrs N : What I know is I'm a perseverance person, and I am patient. I am an organised person and I become frustrated and even at home, like now we are not okay financially I like to plan things.

Interviewer: Okay, so has being part of social ministry and being a mother brought anything to your understanding of being a teacher? Has your understanding of being a teacher changed in anyway?

Mrs N : Ja, it changed a lot. Especially in church, the bible tells us you must understand each other. So when you take this and you're helping people, when you come here in class you can see the child is so depressed, you can intervene. Then that's why breaks, I'm here in class. I'm not alone, I'm with the kids. Some they make appointments they want to talk to me about work, about anything that is outsides work. So I think that it has influenced and me understand that people we are not the same, we are individuals. And something that also teach me something is that I stay with my stepchild, he is naughty. But I was able to stay with him till matric, but it was difficult. Even now I am asking myself, really I was staying with that child. He is fine, but he likes alcohol, cigarettes and that is something I don't like at all. Even his father is not smoking, is not drinking but he want to come home at 12 o'clock drunk. So he has helped me calm down .

Interviewer: I wanted to find out why you chose to be a member of NAPTOSA over the other unions?

Mrs N : I just wanted something that will accommodate my needs, because usually when I was at X-Township School, I was a SADTU member because all of the teachers that side are SADTU member, if you are a NAPTOSA or PEU, they will discriminate you. So when I came here there were no SADTU members and if there is a strike for SADTU then I will be the only one striking. So I said, let me change. I checked, oh they are NAPTOSA. Then I take NAPTOSA, but it's still frustrating me SADTU people they don't want to stop their deductions, they deduct SADTU and NAPTOSA.

Interviewer: From your salary?

Mrs N : From my salary, I'm trying to stop SADTU. This month they stop, next month the start again. It's frustrating, and if you don't have a union, it's a lot the money they deduct. Three times. So that's why you must choose one.

Interviewer: So you just chose one that will work in the school you are in?

Mrs N : Ja, and worse when you are a SADTU member because of a strike but we went to school. But at the end they deduct the money that makes things worse. Because most of the teachers they don't like unions, but it's just because of the deductions.

Interviewer: And what do you think your role is as a member of your teacher union? So what do you think the role of a unionist is?

Mrs N : I don't see anything?

Interviewer: So you don't see anything as a grassroots level teacher?

Mrs N : I can't really say, because you can discuss as a teacher that you don't want this but when the people when they go to the bargaining table they change things. At the end you see that they have already signed about this but you're not happy about it. I don't see a need, unless maybe there is something that helps us because they say they will give use computers. They make promises but at the end there is nothing.

Interviewer: From what you are saying, it seems being a union member is about paperwork, just joining one. Would you say it has affected you in your teaching?

Mrs N : It doesn't affect me in my teaching career, it's just money. So sometimes there is even letter saying NAPTOSA what what, I don't read it, I don't see a need. Yes, I am a member but then what? I think, even if you have a union or you don't have a union and the money is the same, I think most of the teachers would not be members.

Interviewer: Are there any people who have influenced your understanding of being a unionist?

Mrs N : No, I think unions must come with a strategy to make teachers to love them or maybe listen to them. We are not listening to them because they are not doing justice to us. If they can capacitate us and do the right things.

Interviewer: Is there anything as a black female teacher that you would say has influenced you and the teacher that you have become outside of the things we spoke about?

Mrs N : Ja, most of the time when you are a woman teacher they will say a female will not do anything. Most of them involve men instead of women, and I don't like that. I want them to give us a challenge and then see if we can actually do it or not because there are men that cannot do things.

Interviewer : Thank you very much, it really has been very informative.

Mrs U, SADTU school representative (School B)

Interviewer: So this interview will be part of my Masters Research Report, I'd like to remind you that whatever you say will be confidential. If I do quote you in the research I will not use your name, the name of your school or even the district in the report. You will have access to the complete report if you would like it. If you would like to withdraw at any point you may do so, and you may choose not to answer any of the questions I ask. I am recording the interview so that I can get an accurate as possible record of what you are saying. The tape will only be available to me, I will keep it for five years in case anyone wants to check if I have quoted you correctly and then it will be destroyed. I am interested in your experiences as an active union member and as a practicing teacher. I'd like you to feel free to express yourself whatever your experiences may be.

So the first question I would like to ask you to get started is what are or were the main reasons you became a teacher?

Mrs U : Mine is a bit complicated, on my own I never wanted to be a teacher. I want to tell you the truth, where I was working I was not a teacher. When my husband came to South Africa, I had to join him. When I came here I wanted to work, I didn't want to just stay as a housewife. So I applied to a lot of place, Nelspruit Private College gave me a chance. So I went there, actually when I went there I was just taking it as a temporary thing. I will later on leave, and go and do one or two things, but later on I realised that those things couldn't come. So I stayed there, after a while I just said no, let me go and study and become a professional teacher. So my work as a teacher is a constant and then that's how I became a teacher.

Interviewer: So I understand that you are say that becoming a teacher if I'm getting you correctly, was not something that you had intended, it sort of fell into place, it came into place because of certain circumstances. And what do you think the role of a teacher is, what do you think, what role does a teacher play in a classroom?

Mrs U : In the classroom for you to really you know, for one… Okay, on my own as a teacher, I play the role of a parent in the classroom. That is why my learners

are very close to me, they can tell me anything. I try to make them feel very free, I don't just see myself as a teacher, go there, teach and get out. I am a guardian, a parent, even my behaviour – a role model. I'm even a preacher, sometimes I even shift away from the topic of the day and teach them about certain ways of life and because I am a Christian sometimes I bring in my Christian principles. So I am more of a, I see them as my children who I need to bring up. They must have high moral standard, but then I do not ignore content. The classroom subject itself because that to me is number one. They must know what they must know according to the syllabus.

Interviewer: So the role of a teacher if I'm understanding you correctly in the classroom is to make sure learners are given the correct content, not only that though but also for you to guide them throughout their lives beyond what they are supposed to learn from the syllabus.

Mrs U : Even to take care of their, even to assist, to assist them with their problems. Not that I give them money. Maybe if they tell me that this is their problem, I guide them in finding solutions and how they can solve them. Where I am working, the learners have a lot of problems.

Interviewer: And according to the role of the teacher in the classroom, what would you say the role of the teacher in the wider school not just in the classroom, when you step out of the classroom? What do you think the role of the teacher is?

Mrs U : There is nothing much, in the classroom the content comes in a lot. Outside the classroom, you still have to be there as a role model, you have to be a manager because you have to assist with what is happening outside (in) the school. Like discipline, maintaining discipline as much as you can even though now discipline is a big challenge. You know help, I don't know how to put it, help wherever you feel it is necessary, wherever you can because you cannot do what you cannot do. So it's not just for you to say I am teacher and that's it, you have to assist. Even sometimes we even go and assist in the admin if the supporting staff are not doing well, we even go to the computer and take it over. Even extra mural is there which you have to be there. For me I am always there with projects, I love science projects. My learners we took part in every challenge, first level league, even the world robotics they hold

annually. Only this year we are actually waiting for sponsors, they are also going to take part in first level league. So you know, I love projects like that for me, but generally as a teacher you must always be aware of the environment and ask yourself where can I contribute for the progress of the school.

Interviewer: And you mentioned earlier, I understand being involved in your school, you mentioned earlier that your school is in an impoverished environment, do you feel that a teacher has a role in the greater community, and what is that role? It might be a bit repetitive, sorry but just to understand.

Mr U : Ja, I know you have a role because if you look at this community where we are, apart from poverty there's even a lot of things. So you have to play a role even concerning the community. For me what we do is, what I personally do is concerning the community, we sometimes call the parents in and talk to them concerning, I don't know how to put it. Apart from, not just reporting the child, concerning what we expect them to do at home so that the child can be what we want the child to be. So we have a role to play and sometimes it's so difficult for the teacher to go in there but you try to call parents and talk to the parents, give them your own advice which we always do, which should somehow help the community. Because we don't really have the financial edge where we can say okay we can do this, we can do this. Sometimes for families that are really, really struggling sometimes the school, sometimes the teachers, especially the female teachers we do contribute sometimes where we see that this is what needs to happen. Normally it's not compulsory it's optional and the female teachers are normally very co-operative.

Interviewer: That's very interesting, and would you say that there is a reason why it is normally the female teachers and not the male teachers, I'm just picking up on what you had said.

Mrs U : Ja, you know. The females are mothers, the way a mother sees things is different to the way a father sees things. So, somehow a mother easily feels pity for a child, a mother easily tries to see herself and her children in that situation. A father, I don't know. A father is a father, they don't easily wear the shoes of someone else. The female easily wears the shoes of someone else,

especially where it touches children. Then you now have to think, how about if I were to be the one, how about if that were to be my child. So somehow I think the motherhood, there's much more closeness. I don't know the right words to use, easily feeling pity…

Interviewer: Okay, you're more empathetic than the male counterpart?

Mrs U : The males they just feel like is going to be over, it's not the only one, other people are also going through that.

Interviewer: Okay, that makes a lot of sense, and then in terms of knowing your role in the classroom you spoke of how you should know your content knowledge, how you should be a role model and all those other things. Are there any people who have influenced your understanding of that role as a teacher? Is there anyone in your past whom you can pinpoint and ok this person has influenced me to see a teacher in this way, and who is that person?

Mrs U : You know to tell you the truth when I started teaching there was a lady, she was a geography teacher. She was an elderly teacher, she was the eldest in the school, I think she is through teaching. I think somehow that was the first person that I, because she was actually retired but didn't want to just stay home. She was somebody that actually made me realise who a teacher is supposed to be, she was so sympathetic. She was always very close to the learners, she even used to bring food and the learners there were not even very poor. If she noticed that there was a problem there, she would help. Apart from that when I came to this school of mine, there's another here who is a mother. When I came here I didn't know anyone, somehow I was able to pick something from her. That she is not just a teacher, she is a mother to the kids. So also maybe there are others but those are the two that have really influenced me.

Interviewer : In terms of your role in the school and the great community would you say that it is the same people who have influenced your role as a teacher?

Mrs U : I wouldn't say the same people. Somehow it can also be because of who I am, I like to help. Ja, I like to help a lot, I like to see a problem being solved. I like to share, I was brought up in a family where in our house there was nothing as

a servant or a housemaid. We were all like, everybody was equal. So who I am may also be part of it. But apart from that, even the school where I am a lot of teachers, not only the ones I mentioned, they help a lot. I remember even when I came newly, there was a group of teacher who went and looked for sponsors. There was no feeding scheme from the government, so they went from one shop to the other and I was so interested, so touched. And then they were able to start a feeding scheme for those learners who used to come to school without food. Apart from that, we used to go and look for sponsors for school uniform, for school shoes, for that and that. If I remember correctly there was a learner who had a problem of not having a house, the teachers went and looked for sponsors to come a build a little thing for them. So there is a lot of things happening around the school that really makes me feel like a teacher is not just to go to the classroom. You really really need to be part of the learners and the community.

Interviewer: And you mentioned your upbringing, would you say that therefore your parents also had an influence on the way that you see yourself?

Mrs U : My parents are both teachers, that's why I never wanted to be a teacher. My father was a principal of a school; my mom was a very high ranking teacher, she was a head of department. For my father you couldn't say this is my room, he would tell you this is my house so this house belongs to everyone. So we were brought up like that, even food, there was nothing to say this is your food, you're a child. Everybody would eat, everybody has to eat. So they definitely influenced me, a lot.

Interviewer: So I wanted to ask about the other roles that you play in your life, you mentioned that you are a Christian, you are a mother. Are there any other roles that you play in your life besides being a teacher?

Mrs U : There's a lot, I'm a mother, and I'm a teacher, even in my church. I wouldn't say I'm a very active member but… Okay, for this church that I am, I'm not a very active member but the church where I was, I was a very active member. I was a Sunday school teacher, I was more like a worker in the church. Always there to help, always there to assist. Another thing, I've been a SADTU member for quite a while, presently I'm the site secretary. Apart from that I

am also on the quiet side so this is more of a foreign place you can't just go out, unlike at home.

Interviewer: You mention home, is in?

Mrs U : Nigeria

Interviewer: And when did you move to South Africa?

Mrs U : I'm very old here, I came here in '96.

Interviewer: '96, so it been a while.

Mrs U : Yes, I'm also getting 18 years now.

Interviewer: So you mentioned being a mother, being a Christian and I think you have mentioned how these have influenced your teaching and in quite an extensive way so we won't really go into that. You also mentioned that you are a SADTU member and that you are also site manager, I mean site secretary for your school. Can you tell me the reasons why you chose SADTU over the other teacher unions?

Mrs U : You know what really happened? When I left the private school, I didn't start here, I started at another school, and the site secretary of that school was SADTU. We used to attend workshops together when I was still at the private school. So when I went there he was so excited, he was so happy. So because he was SADTU, automatically I joined SADTU because I was already close to him during workshops. It was more of an influence of somebody who was already a member of SADTU.

Interviewer: And what do you think the role of union member, as a member of SADTU what do you think is expected of you as a member of a teacher union?

Mrs U : You know it's, there's a lot of expectation because if you look at union, the responsibility of the site committee. You need to make sure that the members, they render what they are expected to do. Which sometimes is a big challenge, because they always complain that this is not working, this is not working. So you also have to keep peace, it is very important. You know when I came here, there was something that happened to with posts. You know posts are a big problem, and according the SADTU members SADTU had let them down.

The post was manipulated and the school was very uncomfortable. I can't tell you how many places I had to sit in the principal's office to calm down members. So your role, you must be able to keep members together, you must be able to solve frictions or problems amongst members. You must informative, you must let them know what is happening.

Interviewer: In what ways has your role as a member of SADTU, especially being a site secretary, affected your role as teacher in the classroom?

Mrs U : It has really made me to watch my back, because I do not want a situation where they say that is the site secretary doing that. I really watch every step I take, I try to make sure I am doing the right thing. I want them to also do the right thing, because if I don't do the right thing they will say that is the site secretary, she doesn't even come to school and then what is she going to tell us. It actually influences me to do better, so I am able to tell them that what you are doing is wrong.

Interviewer: So you have sort of had to take on not only a role model role for your learners but also for other teachers, so that they know how they are actually supposed to conduct themselves?

Mrs U : Yes, cause if you don't do that then you can't even tell them. You know the principal put a lot of pressure on us, if there is a problem she calls the union and says look what you member is doing? So it's like she is trying to wash her hands and then you have to take the responsibility.

Interviewer: So, as I understand it like you said, you have to make sure you conduct yourself well. Is there anyone who has influenced the way you understand your role as a union member?

Mrs U : Ja, I should refer to that first site steward I was talking about. He was, I don't know how to put it. He was so dedicated, diligent and never used to complain. He was always in class, always at school. He was always very friendly, he will show you around, he will advise you about the school. He was in charge of the timetable, when we go and complain, he would listen to your complaint and try solve. Then you know, somehow I noticed him, he was very friendly and always on the right path. So when I became a, I was chosen, I was voted to be

a site secretary, I thought that is how I should be. In me I also feel that if I do not do the right thing, how will be able to tell the members. Also I am very outspoken, if something is wrong I will say it is wrong.

Interviewer: And then the last few questions I would like to ask you is how do you think your trade union understands the role of a teacher, how do you think SADTU understands the role of a teacher in a classroom?

Mrs U : The constitution of SADTU is very beautiful. In terms of the constitution it actually makes the teacher to be who a teacher should be, a role model, a preacher, a this and that. The thing is that, the actual practice, what is being actually practiced. I do not actually think that what is actually implemented is actually policy. I don't really blame SADTU because to me I see SADTU, SADTU is actually like a little baby of ANC and everybody needs positions. So sometimes it does t really go according to the policy. The policy of SADTU assists you to be a really good teacher, but are we really doing that? Are you with me, do you understand what I'm trying to say? You see a teacher who is absent from school, but you can't do anything because they are a member of SADTU, or you see a teacher who is accused of being with little girls and they will tell that they even do it outside of school. But in terms of policy, if we could follow it, we would be very good teachers.

Interviewer: The last thing I would like to ask you is, I have delved into things that I thought would influence you, is there anything as a black female teacher that you would say has influenced you and the teacher that you have become?

Mrs U : Well, I should say developing myself academically. I tried to develop myself, since I wasn't a teacher originally, do a lot of studies. And as a black female teacher, when I attend workshops I realised that the blacks don't have anything, only the whites. The whites will ask questions, the whites will take part. That was initially, then I thought no, I want to develop myself, so when I go to workshops I also raise my hand and when there is a presentation I also want to present. When I go to a school, I look at the context of the school. I need to change the way I do things in the classroom.

Interviewer: What sort of things have you done, if you don't mind me asking, to develop yourself?

Mrs U : I've been to a lot of workshops, even when the workshop doesn't concern me. I have started studying with UNISA, I got an honours in Education. Then I went to MANCOSA, I wanted to have a managerial thing so I did my Masters in Business Administration. I went back to UNISA to do my Masters in Science, but I'm a bit lazy so I'm still doing my literature. I feel I am taking my time, but this one helps with content. In terms of other things I gain a lot from workshops.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, it's been very informative actually and I really appreciate it.

Mrs M, SADTU ordinary member (School B)

Interviewer: So this interview will be part of my Masters Research Report, I'd like to remind you that whatever you say will be confidential. If I do quote you in the research I will not use your name, the name of your school or even the district in the report. You will have access to the complete report if you would like it. If you would like to withdraw at any point you may do so, and you may choose not to answer any of the questions I ask. I am recording the interview so that I can get an accurate as possible record of what you are saying. The tape will only be available to me, I will keep it for five years in case anyone wants to check if I have quoted you correctly and then it will be destroyed. I am interested in your experiences as an active union member and as a practicing teacher. I'd like you to feel free to express yourself whatever your experiences may be.

So the first question I would like to ask you to get started is what are or were the main reasons you became a teacher?

Mrs M : I've seen that there is a need for assisting in educating the young South Africans. Number two because my parents did not have money, and it was difficult those days the only free tertiary education was teaching, so I decided to take it because we had a bursary by then.

Interviewer: I understand that you became a teacher because of circumstances and to help educate the youth, what role do you think a teacher plays in a classroom? \

Mrs M : You have to teach the learners, you have to control their work, you have to assist them. You stand in for their parents while they are at school, so you assist them as a parent in everything pertaining [to] their lives.

Interviewer: So if I'm understanding you correctly as a teacher you do not only to assist the learners with their school work but with everything they go through

Mrs M : Yes, it is to assist these learners to be better citizens by showing them the way and them anther thing is to assist them to see that they can be teachers also, to assist the generation that is coming after.

Interviewer: Okay, so looking at the role a teacher plays in the classroom what do you think the role of a teacher is in the school as a whole?

Mrs M : Before, I put a hand in everything but since I'm more experienced and about to pension next year I don't think I'm interested in such activities anymore. But, I encourage them in class.

Interviewer: So you used to play a bigger role in the school, but feel that as you are nearing retirement you feel like you have played your part?

Mrs M : Yes

Interviewer: And what role do you think a teacher has to play in the community which they teach in?

Mrs M : Here, you are a social worker, you are a pastor, you are a teacher, you are a mom, [and] you are everything. This community it is an eye opener for most of us, cause we knew the other side of life but since I came here to this community I can see that there is a big role that I have to play in educating and assisting these learners to be better citizens of South Africa.

Interviewer: Okay, that's very interesting. Would you say that because that the fact that this community is an impoverished community, it has influenced your teaching and the way you understand your role as a teacher?

Mrs M : From my, the other communities that I have worked with there was no problem like the one we have here in M-block, here in M-block when I came here I found that it's a farm school where the parents are illegal immigrants, they don't care about their kids because of hardships they are enduring in South Africa. So it made them to abandon their kids, they are all by themselves, they are mothers at an early age and at times these parents when they come here they get married to the South Africans leaving the kids by themselves, so they are all alone. You have to mother them and show them love so that the learner can have an interest in learning and sees that there is

someone who loves me and is going to be accommodated back to the community, otherwise it's very very tough and hard.

Interviewer : Wow, that sounds like quite a difficult space to try and navigate. In terms of your role as a teacher, be it in the classroom, school or community is there anyone who has influenced the way you understand you role?

Mrs M : Ja, I had a role model while I was still very young. There was one teacher while I still very young which I used to like her. The way she talks, the way she dresses, everything the she does. Then it made me to be very interested in teaching, I decided that one day I want to be like that woman.

Interviewer: Okay, besides this teacher influencing you are there any other roles that you play in your life that have influenced the way you see yourself as a teacher?

Mrs M : Yes, being a Christian. You are a more sensitive, and when you see these kids you know that there is someone somewhere watching them, taking care of them in everything. So, I think it has changed me a lot. Even if I talk to them I am so sensitive enough to see what is good to them.

Interviewer: That's very interesting, I am also aware that you have a grandchild. Do you think that has an impact on the way you understand your role?

Mrs M : Ja, a lot. A lot because from him I'm learning a lot. From my grandson I'm learning, when I come I'm now understanding that "oh, that's why these people are behaving like this". So I handle it better than the time I was raising my kids.

Interviewer: Okay, so if im understanding you properly raising your grandson has helped to understand your learners in a better way and to also become more patient with them?

Mrs M : Yes, the way they think.

Interviewer: I understand that you are a member of SADTU, can I ask what the reason is that you chose to be a member of SADTU and not any other union?

Mrs M : When I, I think after 1994 there was these new unions that were emerging. So SADTU was 'the' union by then, I decided to be one of them because there was a lot that was happening in the system and SADTU has to change that and

they were better. But, of late I don't see what SADTU is doing so I have lost interest. I don't even care what they do, I'm just a member.

Interviewer: Considering that you say you are just a member now, what do you consider your role as union member to be?

Mrs M : Hayi, for me now, hayi there's nothing. Cause you can talk and talk at the grassroots level but up there, it reaches there on deaf ears and they do what they think is right for them not considering the teachers at the lower levels. So, it's for them in fact, so that's why we don't care. I don't care in fact.

Interviewer: So, as a union member you don't see a specific role that you play? Can I ask what has influenced this understanding of unionism?

Mrs M : Before they were fine, but since the Zuma era things have changed. I don't know what is happening; in fact I am still asking myself where we are heading to?

Interviewer: It sounds as though as a member of SADTU you do not feel very supported by the union, how would you say SADTU understands the role of a teacher? You explained it to be delivery of content, a pastor, a social worker amongst other things, but how would you say SADTU understands the role of a teacher?

Mrs M : For SADTU they were fine, then, by understanding the role of a teacher. There were lots of things that they changed and they were implementing the good ones. But for now, I don't know what they are doing. They don't even understand, they don't even care what is happening in the classroom. We just see them there, they are the ones getting the benefits.

Interviewer: The last thing I would like to ask you is, is there anything as a black female teacher that you would say has influenced you and the teacher that you have become outside of the things we spoke about?

Mrs M : Another thing is since I left my home far away I found that I am all by myself. So, to have a fulfilled life you have to lend a hand so that you can assist and then things will be fine for you. Otherwise if you are standing aloof there will be no one who is coming close to you. So I think that one has also played a role, that I am all alone let me befriend there people.

Interview: It has been really interesting speaking to you. I would like to thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

Appendix 3: SADTU Code of Conduct and NAPTOSA Principles

SADTU Code of conduct[5]

The Code of Professional Conduct stipulates minimum standards of professional conduct of teachers and is not an exhaustive list of such standards. Any member of SADTU, who is alleged to have violated the standards of the profession and the provisions of the Code, may be subject to disciplinary action by the Union.

In relation to pupils:

1. The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age ancestry of place of origin.
2. The teacher is responsible for diagnosing educational needs, prescribing and Implementing instructional programmes, and evaluating progress of pupils.
3. The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.
4. The teacher may not divulge information about a pupil received in confidence or in the course of professional duties, except as required by law or where, in the judgement of the teacher, to do so is in the best interest of the pupil.
5. The teacher may not take advantage of his/her professional position to profit from the sale of goods or services to, or for, pupils in the teachers charge.
6. The teacher may not accept pay for tutoring a pupil in any subjects in which a teacher is responsible for giving classroom instruction to that pupil.
7. The growth of a friendly relationship between teacher and pupil which is based on mutual respect and recognition of the role that each plays in the learning situation, is desirable.

It is, however, an abuse of this professional relationship for the teacher to:

7.1 Enter into improper association with a pupil
7.2 Show undue personal favour or disfavor towards a pupil
7.3 Commit such acts against a child which are illegal; and
7.4 Endeavour to exert an undue influence with regard to personal attitudes, opinion and behavior, which are in no way connected with the work of the school.

[5] Retrieved from: http://www.sadtu.org.za/show.php?id=2450

8. The teacher shall to the best of their abilities work to promote the qualities of initiative, self-reliance and independence in their pupils. In so doing they shall recognize the human right to self-determination and strive to endow pupils with the confidence necessary to become agents of their own learning and discovery.
9. The teacher, in discharging his/her duties in relation to the pupils, shall be punctual, prompt and prepared, and shall recognize his/her responsibility with regard to the academic and personal development of the pupil.

In relation to school authorities/administration:

10. The teacher protests the assignment of duties for which the teacher is not qualified, or conditions which make it difficult to render professional service.
11. The teacher fulfils contractual obligations to the employer until released by mutual consent pr according to law.
12. The teacher provides as much notice as possible of a decision to terminate employment.
13. The teacher adheres to agreements negotiated on his/her behalf by the Union.
14. The teacher shall act responsibly in the discharge of professional, organizational and administrative duties.

In relation to colleagues:

15. The teacher does not undermine the confidence of other teachers.
16. The teacher criticizes the professional competence or professional reputation of another teacher only in confidence to proper officials and after the other teacher has been informed of the criticism.
17. The teacher, when making a report on the professional performance of another teacher, does so in good faith and, prior to submitting the report, provides the teacher with a copy of the report.
18. The teacher does not take, because of animosity or personal advantage, any steps to secure dismissal of another teacher.
19. If a teacher experiences any concern or dissatisfaction in relation to a colleagues conduct or standard of work, the teacher should discuss the issue informally and in confidence with the colleague concerned. Where the issue is not resolved informally, the teacher should take no further action without informing the colleague. Should the teacher have reason to believe that a colleague is acting in a way which might be harmful to the school or to individual pupils, then there is a clear duty to make a report to the head teacher.
20. The teacher recognizes the duty to protest, where possible through proper channels, administrative policies and practices, which the teacher cannot accept.
21. The teacher, as an administrator, provides opportunities for staff members to express their opinions and to initiate and develop democratic processes in the administration of the school.

In relation to the profession:

22. The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.

23. The teacher should not denigrate their colleagues in the presence of other parties nor should a teacher adversely criticize a colleague in the presence of others, save in the context of appropriate procedure.
24. The teacher does not engage in activities which adversely affect the quality of the teachers professional service.
25. The teacher submits to the disputes arising from professional relationships with other teachers which cannot be resolved by personal discussion.
26. The teacher makes representation on behalf of the Union or members thereof only when authorized to do so.
27. The teacher accepts that service to the Union is a professional responsibility.

NAPTOSA Principles [6]

NAPTOSA is committed to the following principles:

- The inalienable right of every child and student to quality education within an equitable and non-discriminatory system of education;
- A high level of professionalism from all education sector employees; and
- The enhancement of all aspects of the working life of education sector employees

In order to achieve the above this national union shall be

- non-discriminatory on the basis of colour, language, gender, religion, ethnic origin, social class, birth, political or other convictions, or disabilities or other natural or cultural characteristics;
- independent, autonomous and party politically non-aligned;
- guided by the respect for fundamental human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa including the Bill of Rights; and
- inclusive of all like-minded education sector employees

Created: 20 April 2014

NAPTOSA Charter of Professionalism[7]

We, as members of NAPTOSA, are aware that the development of our country is fundamentally dependent upon the quality of education provided to its citizens. In humble acknowledgement of the honour and responsibility entrusted to us, we will uphold the dignity of our chosen profession, engaging in the holistic education of each child in our care and the continuing development of our peers, our communities and ourselves.

Our professional conduct will encompass, but not be limited to, the following standards:

[6] http://naptosa.org.za/index.php/about-naptosa/naptosa-principles
[7] http://naptosa.org.za/index.php/about-naptosa/charter

- At all times the needs and welfare of the individual learner must be of central importance. When we exercise professional judgement both duty and compassion shall inform our decisions. We bear in mind that we do not teach lesson plans or intellectual challenges – we teach human beings.
- We respect and protect the rights of every individual in our communities as laid out in the Constitution of South Africa.
- We will serve and educate all learners with equal dedication, irrespective of gender, race, culture, religion, political affiliation, intellectual capacity and sexual orientation, delivering the curriculum so as to enable all learners to develop their skills, knowledge, values and attitudes in a changing environment.
- We refrain from improper or inappropriate relations with learners, be these physical, sexual, political or emotional. Rather, in all our actions and words, in and out of our educational institutions, we will promote by example the integrity of our profession by modelling respect for diversity, compassion and commitment.
- We accept that we are leaders in our communities and acknowledge that this may require us to speak out when others remain silent; to be innovative in solving problems when others wait for instruction; to obey the dictates of our own conscience, even when this is inconvenient.
- We foster an environment of collegiality, collaboration, co-operation and sharing of resources between educators and educational institutions for the betterment of teaching and of learning.
- We support the rights of parents, engaging them as partners in our efforts and promoting harmonious relations wherever possible.
- We shall exercise discretion and respect the confidentiality of the information to which our profession gives us access concerning learners, parents and the community.
- We take responsibility for the renewal and protection of our profession, advancing the image of teaching through professional language, learning, conduct and reflection.

In humility, and remaining aware of our own frailty, we undertake to live up to the ideals of teaching, working always to enhance our profession and doing nothing to diminish it.

Appendix 4: Permission letters from Mpumalanga Department of Education, SADTU and NAPTOSA.

Appendix 5: Ethics Clearance Letter.

Appendix 6: Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Informed Consent Form & Information Letter

Wits School of Education

University of the Witwatersrand

Dear _____,

My name is Andisiwe Hlungwane, I am currently working towards a MEd at the University of the Witwatersrand.

As part of my study programme I have to undertake a research report. As you might be aware most teachers in South Africa belong to unions and often the media and greater public tend to juxtapose the relationship between unionization and teacher professionalism. In my study I would like to explore the relationship between unionization and teacher identity. I therefore invite you to participate in my study.

The study will require you to be interviewed. This will probably take approximately 60 minutes of your time after school at a place of your choice and will be arranged so as not to interfere adversely with your schedule. This interview will be audio recorded. The recording will not be available to anyone apart from me and it will be stored in a password protected file.

Participation in the study is voluntary. If at any point in the interview you do not wish to participate, you may choose to not answer particular questions or withdraw. Your identity and names of your schools and districts will not be included in the report. The findings will be used for academic purposes only.

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

Yours sincerely,

Andisiwe Hlungwane

(c) 082 093 9995

Teacher's Consent Form: audio taped interview

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be interviewed for my research project: How female black teachers negotiate their identities as both union members and practicing teachers: A case study.

I, _____

Give/ do not give (please delete as appropriate) my consent to be interviewed.

[ ] I know that I don't have to answer all the questions

[ ] I may withdraw from the study at any time and that I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

[ ] I am aware that the researcher will keep all information confidential.

[ ] I am aware that my interview transcript will be destroyed after use.

[ ] I agree to be audiotaped during the interview.

[ ] I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.

Signature: _____Date: _____

Phone number: _____

Contact person:
Name: Andisiwe Hlungwane
Address: 54 Saturn Street Nelspruit 1200
Tel number: 082 093 9995

Appendix 7: Permission Letter to Principals of School Involved.

P.O.Box 12874
Steiltes
Nelspruit
1213

Dear Mr. /Mrs. _____

Female black teachers' negotiation of identity as both union members and practicing teachers: A case study.

Project Information Statement/Letter of Invitation to School Principals

My name is Andisiwe Hlungwane, and I am a M.Ed student at the University of the Witwatersrand, I am conducting research on the way in which teacher activity in unions interacts with the way teachers understand their role identity as teachers. The Mpumalanga Department of Education has given approval to approach schools for my research. A copy of their approval attached to this letter. I invite you to consider taking part in this research. This study will meet the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand.

As you may be aware most teachers in South Africa are unionized teachers, and often the media and greater public tends to juxtapose the relationship between unionization and teacher professionalism. Within my study I would like to explore the relationship between unionization and teacher identity. The objective of this research study is to understand how, if at all, female black teachers negotiate their teacher identity in the context of being unionized practicing teachers.

Should I have received your permission, I will approach two teachers (a trade union representative and a member) to participate in the research, I will arrange for informed consent to be obtained from the teachers and arrange a time with the teachers and school for data generation to take place. Only those who consent will participate. I will conduct interviews with the participants, they will be interviewed once each for about 60 minutes. All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence. The school and teachers will not be identifiable in any reports or presentations related to

the research. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The role of the school is voluntary.

If you give permission for your school to participate in this research, please complete and return the attached form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Kind regards,

Andisiwe Hlungwane

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