

Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Corporal Punishment: Cultural-historical  
and socio-cultural practices of teachers in  
a South African primary school**



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**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: CULTURAL-HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-  
CULTURAL PRACTICES OF TEACHERS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**Simangele Gladys Mayisela**

A thesis submitted to the  
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Faculty of Humanities  
University of Cape Town  
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## ABSTRACT

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### **Corporal punishment: Cultural-historical and socio-cultural practices of teachers in a South African primary school.**

In this study, corporal punishment refers to the administration of physical pain to children by teachers with the purpose of disciplining them. It is a phenomenon that occurs in South African primary schooling despite its legal abolition two decades ago. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers, particularly those who have been culturally exposed to corporal punishment and other forms of violence, believe that corporal punishment is still an effective mode of disciplining children. Drawing on Vygotsky's cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), this study seeks to investigate how the notion of historical and cultural genesis of higher psychological functions can explain the continuing use of corporal punishment in schools. A qualitative methodology, employing observations and interviews as data collection methods in a case of a rural public school in Mpumalanga was adopted, where teachers, parents and children were participants in the study. Data was analysed thematically within the CHAT framework to address the main research question: What cultural-historical and socio-cultural processes account for the teachers' continuing use of corporal punishment in a South African rural primary school? Findings suggest that corporal punishment manifests as a socially mediated tool used within an object-oriented cultural activity and a historically-bound activity systems. Through the analysis of the contradictions embedded within and between the activity system(s), possibilities for transformation were revealed. The intrapsychological processes and nuances of the internalisation of corporal punishment by individuals and the collective show that corporal punishment is likely to compromise the development some higher psychological functions related to discipline like problem-solving, self-regulation, sequencing and agency.

**Keywords:** Corporal punishment, Vygotsky, cultural-historical activity theory, tools, contradictions, transformation, double stimulation, activity system, internalisation, intrapsychological development, trauma

## DECLARATION

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I declare that this thesis, *Corporal punishment: Cultural-historical and socio-cultural practices of teachers in a South African primary school*, is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town. To the best of my knowledge it has not been submitted before for the award of any other degree, diploma or for examination at any other university. And, this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgements have been made.

Simangele Gladys Mayisela

Signed by candidate

March 2017

Signature removed

## DEDICATION

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To Langaletu Mayisela and Nkayezi Mayisela, may you experience love, discipline and respect to nurture your young minds for you to truly understand and be able to discern good from evil.

To my brother, Vusumuzi Mbokane, and many of my generation whom the oppressive and brutal Bantu Education system failed, thus could not develop to their full potential.

To my COSAS comrades of the 1980s, in appreciation of your agency in breaking the chains of corporal punishment to liberate children from legitimised “torture” that existed in South African “day barracks” for children called schools, where beatings were the order of the day. The struggle continues.

To my fellow teachers, your love for children and dedication to teaching and learning is acknowledged; it can be done without the infliction of physical pain.

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---

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Opinions expressed in this thesis and conclusion(s) arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to those who supported me during my research study.

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## DATA REFERENCES

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In-text referencing of data will reflect the participants' code, followed by page number and line number in the transcripts document. Here are the participants' codes:

- Foundation phase teachers – FPT
- Grade R Teachers – GRT
- Inter-Sen Teachers – IST
- Informal teachers' interview – IT
- Parents' interview – PI
- Informal Parent's Interview – IP
- Individual Teacher Interview – IT (Zw, G, P and DP)
- Individual interview, Principal – P
- Individual interview, Deputy Principal – DP
- Retired Teacher's Interview – RT
- Grade 4 Learner's interview – G4L
- Grade 6 Learner Interview – G6L
- Grade 1 Class – G1C

For example: an excerpt from the Foundation Phase teacher's interview will end with: (FP.15, 12-18), which stands for Foundation Phase teachers' interview, page 15, lines 12-18.

If the excerpt runs on to the next page, for example from page 22 to page 23, the referencing will include the page numbers, as well as the first line of the first page and the last line of the last page. For example, (FPI. 22, 2-23, 4), which stands for Foundation Phase teachers' interview, from page 22 line 2 to page 23 line 4.

Observations will be referenced according to dates as in month and year, while drawings, documents and photos will be referenced according to appendices.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
ATCP	Alternatives to corporal punishment
ANA	Annual National Assessments
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CESA	Christian Education South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HoD	Head of Department
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
MDE	Mpumalanga Department of Education
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*“I remember when we were doing Standard<sup>1</sup> 4, there came a teacher in our class. He said ‘you and you and you come to the front’, then the rest of us were beaten because, it was around August when this incident happened; he said ‘I’m beating you because you have never given me an answer in class since January’. But then we asked ‘What is the question now, so what should we answer?’” (The Principal, April 2014)*

### 1.1 Introduction

South Africa has adopted a Human Rights constitution, ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1995, and legally abolished corporal punishment in schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996, A-47; South African Schools Act, 1996). However, it is still a challenge for some South African teachers to abandon corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice. This study purports to investigate why the use of corporal punishment persists despite its abolition two decades ago.

This introductory chapter provides the background to the study by outlining the research problem, the aims, the research questions and the rationale for this study. The chapter concludes with a chapter synopsis of the whole thesis.

### 1.2 The research problem

Corporal punishment as a practice of behaviour correction of a child<sup>2</sup> was legally abolished in South African schools in 1996. In line with the human rights culture prevailing locally and globally, South Africa adopted a constitution that establishes and protects a range of human rights. In relation to corporal punishment, Section 12 of the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, states that “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way.” Through the National

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to the democracy in SA, school grades were referred to as standards; where the current Grade 10 was Standard 8, a Junior Certificate or JC.

<sup>2</sup> In this study, child and learner are used interchangeably, but, as evident, ‘child’ is the preferred concept as it depicts and differentiates the developmental needs of the subjects.

Education Policy Act of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, A-47), the Department of Education (DoE) legislated that “no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution.”

At school governance level, the use of corporal punishment is outlawed through the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 which states that:

- (1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a child;
- and (2) Any person who contravenes sub-section (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence that can be imposed for assault.

Apart from legal considerations, there are circumstantial grounds and related moral arguments for regarding corporal punishment of children as a form of child abuse. The majority of South African children learn under circumstances characterised by: poverty and overcrowding (Burnett, 1998); a lack of learning resources (Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson and Pillay, 2000); “poor and disrupted communities spawned by apartheid, and disrupted authority relations between principals, teachers and students” (Harber, 2001, pp.262-263); non-stimulating learning environments; and a generally violent atmosphere based on a patriarchal value system. Historically, punishable behaviour among children and young people included acts of disrespect to adults, disregard of a teacher’s authority, lying, stealing, gambling, using drugs, smoking, drinking alcohol, fighting, not completing school work, absenteeism, late-coming and even poor academic performance (Killingray, 1994). Harber (1996) argues that, on closer analysis, most of these punishable offences were a direct result of children’s economic and social milieu.

In a later publication, Harber (2001) argues that:

Many South African children were born, reared, matured, married and died in violent situations to an extent that some have become immune to violent actions, that they see it as an acceptable form of expression and a way of channelling their emotions (p.262).

South African teachers themselves were reared under these conditions, and hence have come to believe that violence in the form of corporal punishment is an effective way to obtain control over the behaviour of children (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010).

Changing these underpinning beliefs and cultural practices may take more than laws and policies forbidding teachers to use corporal punishment.

Along with the abolition of corporal punishment, the DoE has, through its manual *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* (2000), put in place positive discipline strategies that are embedded in the whole school development approach. The manual espouses discipline strategies that fit within the vision and the mission, the school policy and the codes of conduct of all stakeholders of the school, articulating the desired conduct of children (and of teachers). The DoE has specified discipline strategies depending on the seriousness of the offense, including verbal warning, demerits, instruction to do small menial tasks, additional constructive jobs that possibly relate to the misconduct, community service, detention, verbal warning in the presence of parents, and daily reports by all educators involved with the child (DoE, 2000).

The inception of the post-apartheid, democratic state came along with more challenges for teachers who were still dealing with ramifications of the politically violent pre-democratic era of the 1980s. The transformative demands embedded in the introduction of new education policies like Outcomes Based Education (OBE), inclusive education, racial integration in schools, and the Norms and Standards for Educators were not in sync with qualifications of the majority of teachers from the inferior Bantu Education system (Harley et al., 2000). Without training teachers in discipline management strategies, the banning of corporal punishment introduced a sense of frustration and helplessness among teachers. Several studies provide evidence that this is one of the reasons why some teachers still prefer corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure in the classroom (Harber, 2001; Morrell, 2001; Noang, 2007; Wa Kivilu and Wandai, 2009; Ntuli, 2012). According to the South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2011), teachers are aware of the legislation regarding the abolition of corporal punishment in schools. However, awareness of the law has been insufficient to change teachers' attitudes and practices (Payet and Franchi, 2008). Veriava (October 2013) questions the effectiveness of the *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* (2000) manual, she asserts that "in its current form..., as a sole mechanism of shifting attitudes, [it] is insufficient to transform deeply held views" on the effectiveness of corporal punishment. It is a general belief among researchers that schools are under-reporting incidences of corporal

punishment (Payet and Franchi, 2008). SACE reports that the practice is rife in schools even though SACE conducts workshops on alternatives to corporal punishment (ATCP) for teachers throughout the country.

Against this background, this study purports to understand the apparent tension between the legislation abolishing corporal punishment and the meaning teachers attach to the practice of child discipline and corporal punishment. For this reason, in this study I use Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to explore the cultural and historical intricacies contributing to the psychological functions related to the use of corporal punishment by teachers in South Africa. Drawing from Vygotsky's sociogenetic law of development, and related concepts like *cultural tool*, *historicity*, *activity*, *activity systems*, *internalisation*, *contradictions*, *transformation* and *double stimulation*, I attempt to formulate an in-depth understanding about the phenomenon of corporal punishment as it manifests in South Africa.

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

The main aim of this study is to employ Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to deepen understanding of why the practice of corporal punishment persists in South African schools, two decades after its legal abolition. In so doing, the study aims to advance a cultural-historical<sup>3</sup> and socio-cultural<sup>2</sup> understanding of teachers' continuing belief in the use of corporal punishment in a South African primary school.

A secondary aim is to investigate how teachers' childhood and cultural exposure to corporal punishment has informed their development in the use of corporal punishment and, concomitantly, consider how current children's exposure to corporal punishment could have an effect on their development.

### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

The initial rationale for this research study emanates from my experience of working with teachers and children in my capacity as a teacher educator and educational psychologist. At the institution where I was working, one of my roles was to debrief student teachers during and after their practicum. During this process, many

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<sup>3</sup> 'Cultural-historical' and 'socio-cultural' are used interchangeably in this thesis,

students reported that they observed corporal punishment in the schools where they were placed. In September 2012, I visited schools to evaluate our students and at one school I observed corporal punishment being meted out to children who arrived late at school. Some anecdotal evidence also emerged when I was a facilitator in the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), an in-service training programme in which I was involved between 2007 and 2011. During class discussions on behaviour management, in-service teachers revealed that corporal punishment is still prevalent in their schools; some argued in its favour as an efficient method for behaviour management.

Beyond my personal experiences, academic colleagues have had open discourses of their own experiences of the phenomenon and some have publications on the topic. For example, Maree and Cherian (2004) reported corporal punishment observations by a University of Pretoria student teacher during teaching practice at a school in November 2003. The student teacher wrote:

In the school where I did my school practice a few weeks ago, both boys and girls regularly receive corporal punishment, in a variety of forms, including caning, slapping, and hitting with a fist. The headmaster is aware of the situation, but does nothing to stop it. This malpractice starts as early as Grade three. Sometimes children are spanked in front of the entire class. In a number of cases, seemingly, children are hit for no reason other than to show that the teacher has lots of power. Sadly, it seems as if corporal punishment is rife in the community as well. Some parents encourage teachers to cane their children. This practice sickens me, as children are abused physically and emotionally. Yet, they are too afraid to stand up for their rights (p.72).

In light of the legal abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools, these various observations ignited my interest in investigating why corporal punishment is still happening and preferred by many teachers.

Numerous studies explain corporal punishment as a phenomenon emerging in family contexts (Donnelly and Straus, 2005; Douglas and Straus, 2006; Steely and Rohner, 2006; Tajima and Harachi, 2010). Studies on parents' attitudes on the use of

corporal punishment have been replicated in different scenarios, but as observed by Harber (2001), studies focusing on corporal punishment from the school and education settings appear to be limited. Furthermore, from an educational perspective and as observed by Tajima and Harachi (2010), “the intergenerational cycle of physical discipline practices have been less studied” (p.216), especially in relation to school context. A review of the research literature suggests that there has been little research attention to the ways in which practices of corporal punishment in schools may be culturally transmitted. The major rationale for this study, therefore, is to address the gap in research on cultural-historical understanding on how corporal punishment has been culturally relayed from the previous generation to the current generation of teachers, and to examine the implications of the current generation of teachers’ practices for the next generation.

Having been exposed to Vygotsky’s theory and its expansion into CHAT, I found myself reflecting on these experiences from this theoretical perspective, wondering how concepts such as *internalisation, cultural tools, activity, activity system, labour, interpsychological, intrapsychological, contradictions* and *community rules* might explain observations and encounters of corporal punishment.

More precisely, the motivation for this study is to create a theoretical, in-depth understanding of the cultural regularities contributing to teachers’ use of corporal punishment in South African primary schools. This study is also motivated by the assumption that, through CHAT, the theoretical framework for this study, the findings may reveal internal contradictions and the possibility for a socio-culturally informed transformation towards more effective discipline methods.

## **1.5 Research questions**

This study seeks to generate a CHAT-informed explanation of the persistence of corporal punishment in South African schools beyond its legislative abolition. The study thus addresses the question: What cultural-historical and socio-cultural processes account for the teachers’ continuing use of and belief in corporal punishment in South African schooling? Answers to this enquiry are obtained by finding answers to the following subsidiary questions:

- What are teachers' childhood experiences of corporal punishment and their present understanding of the practice?
- What do teachers make of corporal punishment and their current disciplinary strategies?
- What reasons, if any, do teachers give for believing in, or resorting to, corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice?
- How do children and parents respond to the practice of corporal punishment?

## **1.6 The outline of this thesis**

Following this introductory chapter are nine chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on corporal punishment, focusing on the discourses surrounding the abolition and the prevalence of corporal punishment in South African schools. In this chapter, I highlight the legal framework for the abolition of corporal punishment and I also visit the responses of education stakeholders, including the religious fraternity, to the abolition of corporal punishment. Finally, I conclude this chapter by looking into the scholarly arguments around detriments of corporal punishment.

Chapter 3 presents CHAT as the theoretical framework underpinning this research study. The chapter explicates the development of this theory and its key concepts, from the propositions of the first Vygotskian generation, to Leont'ev's activity theory, through to the current and third CHAT generation. In this chapter, I further explain theoretical concepts such as cultural tools, activity system, contradictions and transformation in a way that creates deeper understanding of the practice of corporal punishment.

Chapter 4 provides a synopsis of the principles of qualitative methodology as used in this study. I broadly discuss the theoretical and technical relevance of observations and interviews, and how I recruited double stimulation, clinical interviews and the vignette as techniques to collect data. As this study is a case study, I describe the case of a rural school, where teachers, parents and children were participants in the study. This section also discusses ethical considerations for this particular study.

Chapters 5 to 8 present data analysis. In keeping with the intergenerational and cultural processes embedded in the notion of historicity as one of the CHAT

principles, Chapter 5 describes the historical landscape from which schooling and corporal punishment in South Africa emerged.

Chapter 6 focuses on the retired and current teachers' childhood experiences of corporal punishment, and their current views and use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool against the context of its illegal status.

Chapter 7 presents the current children's experiences and the intricacies involved in the internalisation of corporal punishment through its cultural normalisation. This chapter also highlights how the teachers continue to use some disciplinary strategies on children that they reported were used on them by their own teachers. An attempt to understand the collective nature of corporal punishment, thus this chapter further advances children's views on what their parents make of corporal punishment as it is directly applied to their children in schools. Here, contradictions in relation to parents' notion of a child and the culture of modern schooling are illuminated, while on another level the traditional disciplinary methods of corporal punishment were found to be in sync with methods used by parents.

Chapter 8 presents the teachers' understanding of, and beliefs about, alternative measures for disciplining children. Against the backdrop of the DoE's teacher guidelines for alternatives to corporal punishment (ATCP), I present alternative discipline practices used by teachers, their beliefs about the effectiveness of these discipline methods, their success in using these alternatives, and eminent transformation observed among some teachers.

In Chapter 9 I analyse and explicate the participants' experiences, belief in corporal, the ATCP they use, the apparent shifts in activity systems, using contradictions as an effective analytical tool to illuminate the current manifestation of corporal punishment and the possibilities for transformation.

Chapter 10 constitutes the discussion of the findings of this study. It draws together answers to the four subsidiary questions in an effort to show cultural-historical and socio-cultural intricacies of teachers' development of higher psychological functions associated with the internalisation of corporal punishment

Chapter 11 concludes the thesis by advancing the summary of claims that provides answers to the principal question of this study. In this chapter I also consider the limitations, the significance of the study and I outline recommendations and areas for further research emanating from this study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*“Corporal punishment is an extremely intrusive act, it invades the child’s personal space beyond nature’s provision of the epidermis (Holdstock, 1990).*

### 2.1 Introduction

Two major categories of literature are relevant to this study: literature related to the research topic and literature related to the theoretical framework. Focusing on the former, this chapter situates the study in relation to existing research and policy literature pertinent to corporal punishment as a phenomenon that prevails in South African schools. Literature relating to the theoretical framework will be discussed in Chapter 3.

In addition to research literature, this chapter reviews position statements, policy and legal analyses, where these help to situate the social, legislative and professional context in which school-based corporal punishment persists. On this basis, the review aims to demonstrate how the proposed study will contribute to understanding the reasons why teachers continue to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary strategy despite its legal abolition.

This review has four main, connected strands. First is a brief legislative and definitional overview of corporal punishment, which raises questions about how corporal punishment is conceptualised. A contribution of this study will be a contribution towards the development of a socio-culturally grounded and contextual definition of corporal punishment, broadening and deepening the legal and functional definitions found in much of the literature. The second strand draws on published research papers, policy documents and Web materials to show that corporal punishment is part of the school culture that emanates from a particular socio-political and evolving historical macrocosm.

On theoretical grounds, the study presupposes that the relationship between the historical culture and teachers’ personal beliefs and practices is crucial for explaining teachers’ persistent use of corporal punishment. It is against this backdrop that the third and major strand of the review engages with literature on different stakeholders’

responses to the democratic policy and legislative changes on corporal punishment. It begins with a review of teachers' responses to the legislation and considers these responses in relation to the research on teachers' professional identity and preparedness for change. It then briefly considers studies and position papers on responses of children, parents and religious groups to the abolition of corporal punishment. The fourth strand is a review of selected literature on the general effects of corporal punishment and, specifically, its claimed negative effects, and the arguments supporting the use of non-abusive physical punishment.

## **2.2 Legislative and significant definitions of corporal punishment**

In the literature, "corporal punishment" and "physical punishment" are used interchangeably, as "corporal" means "on the body", and 'physical' in this context also refers to the human body. However, for purposes of consistency, in this study the term "corporal punishment" will be adopted, with specific reference to its use on children.

The abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools rests on a legal definition, which has its roots in human rights discourse and, more specifically, in the notion of children's rights. In 1995, South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This implies that South Africa subscribes to the idea that "Human Rights are Children's Rights too" (UNCRC, 1989), and has committed itself to implementing the obligations as set out in the articles of the UNCRC. While the UNCRC does not explicitly forbid corporal punishment, several articles of the Convention provide the grounds for the legal prohibition of corporal punishment.

The South African office of Save the Children Sweden distinguishes between two forms of punishment that violates children's rights, namely corporal or physical punishment, and humiliating or degrading punishment (Soneson, 2005). However, in 1995, the South African constitutional court judge Pius Langa, in his judgement against corporal punishment, described corporal punishment as both humiliating and degrading in nature (Skelton, 2015).

Several definitions of corporal punishment focus on its physical aspects with little or no attention to what makes it a form of punishment. For example, Soneson (2005) defines corporal punishment of children as:

...hitting the child with a hand or an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, shoe, etc.); kicking, shaking, or throwing the child; pinching or pulling their hair; forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions, or to take excessive physical exercise; and burning or scarring the child (p.6).

This definition sounds inadequate as it does not qualify the punishment aspect of the concept. By contrast, in its document, *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment*, the DoE (2000) adopted the Child Advocate's definition which is:

...any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort *to punish or contain him/her*. This includes, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, paddling or hitting a child with a hand or with an object; denying or restricting a child's use of the toilet; denying meals, drink, heat, and shelter; pushing or pulling a child with force; forcing the child to do exercise ([www.childadvocate.org.htm](http://www.childadvocate.org.htm), cited in DoE, 2000, p.6) [Added emphasis].

Borrowing from the United Nations' definition, the DoE further extended its definition to include administration of corporal punishment "for educational purposes" and "as a disciplinary measure".

In its circular 65 of 1999, *The Prohibition of Corporal Punishment* (see Appendix Y), the DoE reiterated its position in relation to the South African Schools Act (SASA). This circular makes it clear that caning is only one of many forms of corporal punishment abolished by SASA:

Corporal punishment in this context is therefore not just about caning but also refers to an assault on a person in any manner whatsoever. It also refers to violent shaking, torture, kicking, pinching, pulling of ears, poking with a finger, using a stick / cane / belt or any object designed to threaten children, or any other physical act which may cause discomfort to the child (p.1).

A fuller purposive conceptualisation is given by Smith, Lindsey and Hansen (2006), who quote Rohner's definition of corporal punishment as:

...a direct or indirect infliction of physical discomfort or pain on a child by a parent or other person in position of authority usually for the purpose of stopping the child's unwanted behaviour, for the purpose of preventing the reoccurrence of an unwanted behaviour, or because the child failed to do something she was supposed to do (p.288).

There is a widely held view that corporal punishment is meant to induce pain in order to instil fear of misbehaving in the child. Donnelly and Straus (2005) stress that the intention of corporal punishment is not to cause injury. They define corporal punishment as:

...the use of physical force with an intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correcting or controlling the child's behaviour (p.3).

The emphasis of this definition is on the fact that the infliction of pain is not accidental but intended. However, as the intention is not to cause injury, should it happen that a child gets injured in the process of punishment, the injury is not only an unintended consequence but also one for which the punisher must be held morally accountable.

To all intents and purpose, these purposive definitions carry an implicit assumption that adults administering corporal punishment focus more on deterring the child from misbehaving, and pay little attention to the effects of the physical pain inflicted upon the child. This brings about the rationalisation of the practice of getting rid of the misbehaviour, and bringing up a well-behaved child, a practice imbued with what Hargreaves (1998, 2001) refers to as "emotional geographies" which are characterised by physical, moral, professional, social and political distances between teachers, children and parents. Hargreaves' geographies are observed when children's behaviour are viewed in isolation from their developmental needs and social contexts.

Added to these purposive definitions is the consideration for both direct and indirect forms of corporal punishment, some of which are outlined by The Centre

for Effective Discipline in Ohio State, USA as punishing with the hand, hitting with objects (e.g. sticks or belts), pinching, shaking, and forcing a child to stand for extended periods of time (Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather and Ritcher, 2004). The Society for Adolescent Medicine (Noang, 2007) adds to the list of physical forms that corporal punishment may take for the purposes of causing pain or fear: “spanking, shoving, choking, use of various objects (wooden paddles, pins and others), use of electric shock, use of excessive exercise drills, or prevention of urine or stool elimination” (p.285).

These purposive definitions emphasise the functional aspects of corporal punishment and pay no heed to the meanings of socio-culturally grounded practices. When considering the cultural-historical and socio-cultural influence on corporal punishment, it becomes pertinent to examine the phenomenon empirically and beyond functional definition. It will therefore be a worthwhile contribution if this study brings forth a broader and in-depth understanding of corporal punishment that integrates socio-culturally grounded definitions of the practice within the prevailing South African school context.

### **2.3 Corporal punishment in South Africa: yesterday and today**

This second strand of the literature review shows that corporal punishment is part of a school culture emanating from a particular socio-political and historical macrocosm.

South African education policies have undergone a substantial metamorphosis since the inception of constitutional democracy in 1994. Historically, the administration of corporal punishment in general was first legislated in the pre-apartheid era in South Africa in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, under the Dutch East India Company governance of the Cape Colony (Farrel, 2005).

Killingray (1994) points out that the legislative and judicial use of corporal punishment in Africa, as well as its use as a form of behaviour corrective measure in schools, dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He argues that its use has been a dominant characteristic of schooling that has been socially accepted since the establishment of formal education. The use of corporal punishment was an extension of the colonial system which perpetuated the idea that in order for the colonial government to make

an “impression of a modern capitalist world,” “raw African labour needed to be trained and disciplined, and the most effective and economic way was physical persuasion” (Killingray, 1994, p.202). Corporal punishment was also accompanied by the notion that

...Africans, coming from societies that inflicted brutal punishments on offenders, Africans clearly recognised, and indeed expected, physical abuse as a reward for misdemeanours. And in any case, it was argued, they had an ability to bear pain, which the primitive African does not feel ...Africans preferred flogging as a punishment (p.202).

This is in line with Harber’s (2001) observation of the phenomenon as prevalent in most ex-British colonies, citing Bates commentary on India where research indicates that “the most ubiquitous teaching aid is the stick...much teaching is done by rote...in an abusive and callous manner” (p.11). Harber’s comment, in view of the teacher’s view of teaching and learning here, as well as the South African historical background, allows us to join the dots and make historical sense in understanding the entrenched nature of corporal punishment as part of the cultural system of schooling.

When formal education was introduced, this practice was extended to schools coming from the British judicial systems it was then exported through missionaries and government to schools in Africa (Killingray, 1994). Historically at schools, children were physically punished for a myriad of misdemeanours which included being late for school, talking in class, not having an appropriate book or learning resource, not doing homework, failing a test, giving a wrong answer in class, absence from school, not wearing appropriate school uniform, and losing concentration in class (Harber, 1996). The practice involved beating with a stick on the palm of a hand, whipping with a “sjambok<sup>4</sup>” or hosepipe on the buttocks, beating with a wooden ruler on the fingers, beating with a duster on the head or finger tips, standing on hands with legs suspended from the board in front of the class, and other even more torturous forms of punishment.

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<sup>4</sup> A South African term for a whip, most probably derived from Afrikaans

Muthivhi (2008) argues that the authoritarian school and classroom culture of dominance – with features of teacher-centred pedagogy, rote learning without critical thinking, and limited freedom of expression – seems to be an African culture in the schooling system which has evolved from the colonial system. Killingray (1994) alludes to this in his assertion that the colonial office in West Africa at some point used the educated African elite to act as watchdogs, and “rapidly regulated corporal punishment, steadily removing it from the work place and confining its use to the native authority judicial codes, to schools, prisons and the barracks” (p.205).

Later, from 1806 under the British Empire, several Acts on the use of corporal punishment in South Africa were promulgated along with pass laws with the purpose of controlling the mobility of natives and the labour force. Penalties for the breach thereof included flogging. These Acts ratified corporal punishment, along with number strokes or prison sentence specified in racial and gender terms. For example, Article 149 of The Basic Law of the South African Republic forbade the whipping of White people. Later on, Act No 5 of 1888 and Act No 21 of 1892 allowed courts to impose corporal punishment on White men for a wide variety of crimes, while the whipping of women remained unconstitutional (World Corporal Punishment Research, 2011).

After the Afrikaner Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, it made legislative amendments on judicial corporal punishment through its Criminal Sentence Amendment Act No 33, which led to the increased use of penal corporal punishment. The legal system also took account of the use of corporal punishment on children. This is evident in Section 32 of The Children’s Act No 33 of 1960 which stated that:

a person who failed to comply with certain requirements under the Act was guilty of an offence and, if a child, was liable to a moderate whipping as provided in section 345 of the Criminal Procedure Act (Farrel, 2005, p.8).

Although the law did not clearly specify how discipline had to be managed in schools, one of the acceptable ways of disciplining children was through application of corporal punishment. In terms of common law, teachers are expected to act in ‘loco parentis’, a position that gives them power to discipline and keep order in their classrooms (Burnet, 1998). Permeating from the criminal justice and penal systems on juveniles, as well as from parents’ culturally and religiously sanctioned uses of

physical violence in child-rearing and behaviour management, and because school is an extension and microcosm of the community, teachers too resorted to corporal punishment as a disciplinary method.

As a way of establishing a non-violent and democratic society that embraces human rights values and particularly children's rights, the democratic government established a constitution based on human rights. The South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 articulates that:

everyone has a right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way (p.1247)

As already mentioned, South Africa ratified the UNCRC in 1995. Article 19 states that:

(1) States parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse while in care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child (UNCRC, article 19).

Article (28) refers specifically to schools:

States parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

Article 37(a) states that:

States shall ensure that ...no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In line with the Constitution and UNCRC, the DoE abolished the use of corporal punishment as a discipline management approach in South African schools. The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 is the legislative articulation of this policy decision. The crucial clause on corporal punishment is the following:

(1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a child and (2) Any person who contravenes sub-section (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence that can be imposed for assault.

Although the articles of the UNCRC can be contested as not explicitly forbidding corporal punishment (Shmueli, 2008), the Children's Rights Committee, the highest authority and an international collaborative body which monitors the UNCRC, gives the interpretation that "all forms of corporal punishment are a contravention to the CRC" (Soneson, 2005, p.16), regardless of any reasons or intentions behind the punishment.

Despite the prohibition on the use of corporal punishment in schools, the practice persists. The General Household Survey of 2011 on schooling by Statistics South Africa indicates that 92% of children have experienced school violence in the form of corporal punishment by the teachers, while the remaining percentage is distributed verbal and physical violence by peers, and verbal and physical violence by teachers (Department of Basic Education, 2013).

## **2.4 Responses to the abolition of corporal punishment**

Corporal punishment is a social problem that not only prevails in schools but is also deeply entrenched in the culture of the society in which it occurs (Dawes et al., 2004). Anecdotal evidence points to the fact that key stakeholders in education lamented the abolition of corporal punishment. Some teachers, parents, children, and even education officials, regarded corporal punishment as a necessity in child-rearing, and others responded with ambivalence to its abolition.

### **2.4.1 Teachers' responses**

The current South African teachers are of the generation from an education system that heavily relied on corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure; even those who qualified after 1996 are very likely to have been trained by teacher educators who regarded corporal punishment as an appropriate disciplinary measure. They have also had to endure the effects of a systemic transformation process which rendered many teachers confused, over-worked, frustrated and under-qualified to deliver the expected democratic changes (Morrell, 2001). As teachers were feeling

their work lives were in disarray, they were not likely to comply with the policy and give up corporal punishment (Noang, 2007), which is the only way many of them knew how to discipline. From teachers' perspective, abandoning corporal punishment would have meant plunging themselves into loss of power in the classroom, especially when they had not been trained in the use of alternatives to corporal punishment (ATCP) measures. With the abolition of corporal punishment, teachers feared that children would become unruly and unmanageable, and they associated the escalating lack of discipline with the abolition of corporal punishment (Noang, 2007; Maphosa and Shumba, 2010).

At teacher organisation level, SASA was accepted by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA). The prohibition on the use of corporal punishment was captured in the South African Council of Educators' (SACE) code of conduct. However, SACE gave preferential attention to cases of sexual abuse over those of corporal punishment of children by their teachers (Veriava, 2014). Christian Education South Africa (CESA), with a membership of 209 private schools, vehemently opposed the Act banning corporal punishment. It challenged the state through the Constitutional Court, stating that the Act was in contravention of the religious and cultural rights of some South Africans and that teachers "should be allowed to beat children if granted permission by parents" (DoE, 2000, p.6). In April 2000, the Constitutional Court upheld the judgement against the use of corporal punishment in all schools, by reiterating Judge Pius Langa's 1995 ruling against juvenile judicial corporal punishment in which he said:

[Corporal punishment] is a practice that debases everyone involved in it...so close to the twenty first century, juvenile whipping is cruel, it is inhuman and it is degrading. No compelling interest has been proved which can justify the practice. Nor has it been shown to be a significantly effective deterrent ...its effect is likely to be coarsened and degrading rather than rehabilitative (DoE, 2000, p.6).

Despite the conviction with which this statement has been expressed by a respected judge, such court judgments are not sufficient to deter teachers from using corporal punishment, as is evident from the persistence of the practice and teachers' requests

for corporal punishment to be reinstated. For example, in 2009, 13 years after the abolition of corporal punishment, at a conference aimed at giving principals an opportunity to express their needs to the President and the Ministers of Education, Eastern Cape teachers advocated for corporal punishment to be reinstated. Like the teachers in Morrell's (2001) study, these teachers testified that they believed that corporal punishment meted "with love" and in collaboration with parents is justifiable. Although teachers supported corporal punishment, many of them in Morrell's study condemned "uncontrolled, malicious and cruel beatings" (p.293). This concurred with an early study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (1997), which reported that teachers do not condone certain types of physical punishment such as throwing books or chalk at children, pulling hair or ears, and pinching.

According to Noang (2007), aggravating factors in teachers' adherence to corporal punishment include: the prevalence of stress; declining morale, resulting in some teachers leaving the profession; trying working conditions with large classes and the expectation that teachers will be sensitive to each child's background, needs, abilities and interests; heavy workloads; pressure from reform movements; lack of support and resources to facilitate innovation; and poor pay and status.

#### **2.4.2 Teachers' preparedness for policy change**

The abolition of corporal punishment is one among many policy changes that teachers have had to cope with since the inception of South Africa's democratic government. An analysis of the literature on policy change in South Africa suggests that the lack of preparedness for change is an underlying factor in teachers' continued use of corporal punishment. The 1994 democratic government faced a number of challenges in every sphere of governance in overhauling the apartheid system, with the challenge of having to integrate the nineteen racially segregated education systems and nine education examining bodies with unequal financial support to some education systems. In an attempt to redress these inequities and the anti-human rights system, it had to introduce some essential and necessary transformative policies. The Outcomes Based Education, known as Curriculum 2005, and the National Qualifications Framework were introduced. Alongside these policies, in 1996 through SASA (1996), the use of corporal punishment in schools was abolished and, in 2001, the Education White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive

Education and Training System was issued. Success in the implementation of these policies rested on teacher competences and professionalism.

For most teachers, an unintended consequence was “deskilling” them of the competences they possessed and practiced at the time (Harley et al., 2000), leaving them with a tarnished identity professionally, emotionally and politically (Jansen, 2001). They were under-qualified to meet the demands of the implementation of these policies. Coupled with this were the swelling numbers of children, which increased from 3.5 million in 1976 to 12 million in 1996 (Harley et al., 2000). For these policies to be implemented successfully, a number of hurdles still need to be overcome. These hurdles include inadequate or unavailable and yet essential teaching and learning resources (like textbooks, libraries and electricity), inadequately trained teachers, socio-economic deprivation, socio-cultural differences, and lack of parental involvement (Harley, et al., 2000; Engelbrecht, Oswald and Forlin, 2006), and these all put a strain on teachers.

When new policy is introduced, it is imperative that the end-user be prepared for its implementation through a change management process, more so for policy that changes cultural norms. Here the process of implementation should allow a period of grace for change to be internalised in the minds of people. Human rights values do not always translate to cultural and personal values. A case in point emerges from research on resilient schools by Christie et al. (1997). They found that the use of corporal punishment in the schools they visited was still a norm, and some principals, parents and the community openly approved it. In one community, which was traditional and conservative, the School Governing Body (SGB) resorted to voting for the use of corporal punishment in the school, thus disregarding human rights values as enshrined in the South African Constitution and SASA (Christie et al., 1997).

Robinson (2003) reminds us that change occurs most rapidly when people want to change, and when they see some benefit in doing so. One reason why teachers resist some seemingly innovative policy changes is that the “innovations may run counter” to their beliefs about what “constitutes effective teaching” (Robinson, 2003, p.86). Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is the case for those teachers and

communities that do not value the rationale behind the abolition of corporal punishment.

In short, researchers concur that changes in policy with little consideration of the local traditions and classroom realities of teachers as agents of implementation are not only unlikely to translate into the envisaged changes in practice, but are likely to result in low morale and decreased effectiveness (Broadfoot, Osborn and Pillate, 1988; Enslin and Pendlebury, 1998). In the case of policy concerning corporal punishment, several local studies (for example, Maphosa and Shumba, 2010; Motsweni, 2008) have observed that with the banning of corporal punishment most teachers were overwhelmed with feelings of incapacitation and helplessness in dealing with children's indiscipline.

Furthermore teachers have used corporal punishment as a tool to encourage learning. Supporting this notion, in Steinberg's (2013) study on teachers' emotions towards assessment, one of the interview respondents (a teacher) expressed his thoughts on children's ill-discipline and lack of motivation to learn:

When comparing his childhood experience with his current experience as a teacher, he thinks it is 'unfortunate' that 'that kind of discipline, which is called corporal punishment' is no longer available, because that demoralises the standard of learning of our kids. Because our kids now, they are no longer punished in the way we have been punished. They've decided not to do their schoolwork because they know no one is going to discipline them. So it affects the results of the matric at the end of the time. They need something a little bit extra to energise them, to make them work hard. Can you see that? Because I've seen myself, it worked for me, and definitely it will also work for other children (p.252).

Important to note in the above excerpt, this teacher seems to associate corporal punishment with children's motivation to learn, and further equates the abolition of corporal punishment to no discipline. Therefore, one of the objectives of the teacher training and development should be to empower teachers with the understanding of why corporal punishment is negative and expose them to alternative and positive discipline measures, such as those contained in *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* (DoE, 2001). The document has clear guidelines for 1) why corporal punishment is

banned, 2) alternatives to corporal punishment, and 3) disciplinary measures and procedures to be implemented.

However, the guidelines themselves are not acceptable to all teachers, even worse some claim they have not been exposed to the DoE document with the ATCP guidelines. Teachers in the study by Maphosa and Shumba (2010) believe that the question of children's rights in the policies is overrated and that the alternative discipline measures suggested in the guidelines are ineffective and a waste of time. On the issue of children's rights, one teacher commented:

I believe the issue of rights has been taken too far. Children now feel completely liberated and as teachers we now feel powerless because the children we teach have rights and they know. It is humiliating when you want to discipline a child and he or she tells you in the face that you are abusing him or her. In the eyes of our children we are weak as far as maintaining discipline is concerned (p.393).

This is an example of what Jansen (2001) referred to as a teacher who lacks professional confidence. To this teachers' sense of powerlessness, Jansen would say the teacher may need to abandon the symbolic and physical space of "power relations" where he occupies the centre of authority. This implies that teachers need to understand that children have the right to know their rights, as well as the responsibilities that go along with those rights. Democratic classroom practice gives children the responsibility to actively learn to behave in a manner befitting the respect, dignity and self-image they espouse.

With reference to ATCP guidelines, Maphosa and Shumba (2010) cite another teacher's disregard for the approach:

Most of these alternative methods are actually time wasting. A teacher would spend weeks just trying to deal with the case of a child who is not doing his or her work at school. This takes a lot of teacher's time and also disturbs serious children as the teacher may not attend classes while attending to disciplinary hearings or talking to parents summoned to the school (p.395).

While there is little available up-to-date statistical information attesting to the number of teachers who are aware of policy abolishing corporal punishment, in their research

on resilient schools, Christie et al. (1997) found that 9 out of 10 teachers interviewed were knowledgeable about the educators' Code of Conduct as laid down by SACE, and were aware that corporal punishment had been legally prohibited. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a renewed advocacy and awareness drive on children's rights and their bearing on the practice of corporal punishment. For instance, in 2011, the DoE embarked on a drive to raise awareness among teachers (personal communication with district official, M. Mokgawa, September 15, 2014). In the same year, SACE generated a report on school-based violence in which it argues that corporal punishment is a model of violence for both teachers and children (SACE, 2011). Though not expressed in so many words, SACE acknowledges the socio-cultural nature of corporal punishment, as it states that corporal punishment "as a form of conflict management and discipline" appears to be "quite thoroughly entrenched in South African society" (SACE, 2011, p.21). The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has sent a communication circular (see Appendix Y) to all its schools reminding teachers about the abolished corporal punishment, and together with SACE they have also produced and distributed booklets on alternatives to violent disciplining methods.

Pre-service teacher education has a crucial role to play in preparing prospective teachers to use non-violent discipline measures. However, my own study on training teachers on ATCP such as cognitive behaviour modification approaches, which included methods like modelling and positive reinforcement, showed that training yielded little change to teacher's beliefs on the effectiveness of corporal punishment (Mayisela, 2001). I argued that this was due to deeply entrenched practices of corporal punishment, as the research group consisted of teachers who themselves were whipped in childhood. Morrell (2001) found that some teachers have abstained from using corporal punishment, or have reduced its application. Nonetheless, according to Wa Kivilu and Wandai (2009), a steady 51% of educators still prefer corporal punishment as an effective method of disciplining, with their samples comprising of 4980 respondents in 2003, 5583 in 2004, 2 850 in 2005 and 2 904 in 2006.

Central to the teachers' responses to the abolition of corporal punishment is the disjuncture between the traditional view teachers have of "a child" and the progressive view of a child as an active participating citizen articulated in Article 12

of UNCRC. The concept of true citizenship, as articulated in Marshall's seminal work in 1950, could not be realised by enabling full participation in civic and social spheres in South Africa; children should be empowered and prepared for full and participatory citizenship, and classrooms are spheres where such empowerment should be practiced by creating an enabling environment for children to practice their citizenship (James, 2011). James (2011) maintains that in a community where "competency" is viewed only as an adult quality that children cannot possess, children's citizenship is often heavily suppressed and he cites some Scandinavian countries as communities where children are seen as competent people and are encouraged to participate as citizens. Mathebula (2009) a South African scholar on citizenship, contends that children's citizenship can be caught and taught (2009), and it is an essential developmental passage to functional adulthood. This means citizenship is culturally imbibed and mediated, with the possible benefits of developing higher psychological functions such as agency in children.

Although children are to be awarded full citizenship, it is still important to acknowledge that, by virtue of their age and stage of physical and cognitive development; children are dependent and need protection. These qualities are usually used as a point of domination of children by adults. From the accounts of South African teachers on how the abolition of corporal punishment has resulted in their loss of power and control over children (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010), it is evident that these teachers' views of the child's identity and status is contrary to the progressive views of children as full citizens. Having power and control over children suggests that children should be passive recipients of information, norms and values from adults in general and from teachers in particular. And "the reliance on power as domination is evident here with adults [*teachers*] drawing on their full range of their authoritative resources to socialise children in line with adult-defined goals and expectations" (Devine, 2002, p.307). A school as an institution is used to disseminate the power through its dominant normalising discourse, where such discourses determine what is normal and abnormal, what is sane and insane, what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Foucault, 1975). Such views ignore the rights and responsibilities of a child that are based on the child's developmental capacities and agency, and therefore necessitate the teachers' use of power, even

corporal punishment, to direct the child towards normality and sanity, and to produce obedient citizens with controlled or no voice.

The teachers' call for reinstatement of corporal punishment (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010) cannot be divorced from an understanding of the notion of discipline in the context of a governmental regime where discipline is used to enhance efficiency and obedience with the purpose of producing singularised and easily governable masses (Foucault, 1975). Smith (2012) asserts that families and schools are institutions which mould and guide children according to predetermined standards, fostering 'normal' and 'governable subjects' for efficient functioning of the institutions themselves, where the sameness of a mass becomes easy to manage.

The use of corporal punishment is not only about correcting the behaviour of the child, but is also indicative of deep-seated relational issues and biases. Maphosa and Shumba (2010) have also found that, even though corporal punishment has been abolished, teachers seem to have resorted to other emotionally abusive methods. The classroom ethos is also imbued with what Bateson (1976 in Engeström, 2010) refers to as a hidden curriculum. In the context of teacher-child relations, Christie (1985) posits that the hidden curriculum is manifested as teachers presenting themselves as authority figures who expect children to relate to them in an aristocratic manner in the teaching and learning space, where children cannot express themselves freely, and they are to take instructions without any excuse or question. It is in the understanding of these everyday activities that the cultural disciplinary practices are likely to manifest.

#### **2.4.3 Children's responses to the abolition of corporal punishment**

The call for the abolition of corporal punishment was part and parcel of the students' movement in the early 1980s. One of the reasons for the 1976 uprising was children demanding that corporal punishment be abolished. In the 1980s, school boycotts organised by children through social movements and students' representative organisations were the order of the day. In 1984, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) led a number of countrywide school boycotts. Among their demands was one for the national DoE to put an end to the use of corporal punishment (Hyslop, 1999) and to call to book those teachers who were using corporal punishment (Bot, 1985). This spawned an investigation into the matter by

the Health Workers Association, which found that Sowetan clinics treated approximately nine children per day sustaining injuries from assaults by teachers (Bot, 1985). In the 1980s, COSAS led the institutionalisation of Student Representative Councils (SRCs), which became the students' legitimate representative in place of Prefects and Monitors, who were perceived by students as tools of the principals, participating in meting out corporal punishment to their fellow students (Mathebula and Ndofirepi, 2016).

The earlier resistance to oppressive authority and harsh punishment in rural secondary schools and teacher training colleges was recorded between 1938 and 1940 in *The Territorial Magazine*. Students reported encounters of practices of tyranny by teachers, of illogical and unreasonable forms of punishment like flogging, clapping, kicking, expulsion and vulgar language, which gave rise to “antagonistic relations” and “enlarged the gulf between teachers and the students” (Molteno, 1984).

Currently, when many teachers adhere to corporal punishment because this is the method of discipline they were raised with, it is crucial to ask: “What is the impact of corporal punishment on the current generation of children who are exposed to it?” Maree and Cherian (2004) suggest that children in the school system have been socialised to believe that they need corporal punishment. In a study of four schools in Limpopo province, and with a sample of children from each of the four ‘population groups’, Maree and Cherian (2004) found that children from all four schools were still caned for various misdemeanours. The study showed that, even though the children acknowledge the effectiveness of other disciplinary methods, they still believe corporal punishment is effective.

Consistent with Morrell's earlier study in KwaZulu-Natal (2001), Maree and Cherian (2004) found that more African children were exposed to corporal punishment compared to their Asian, Coloured, Indian and White counterparts. These studies also suggest that more African children believe corporal punishment is an effective discipline measure. Morrell (2001) studied 16 Schools in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in 1998. His study indicated that 47.5% of African, 12.2% of Indian, 14.9% of Coloured and 17.8% of White children still considered corporal punishment as the most effective form of discipline.

An ethnographic study by Payet and Franchi (2008) in four Gauteng schools (selected as representative of schools that fell under the four systems of apartheid schooling) found that most children in a Soweto-based school justified the use of corporal punishment “to maintain discipline in a hostile environment” (p.157). The study also found that children who justified corporal punishment perceived that those teachers using corporal punishment are effective, while those not using it do not have a set of standards for effective disciplinary measures for classroom behaviour management (Payet and Franchi, 2008). Notions of fairness and moderation were important in children’s responses: the study found that they believed the use of corporal punishment is justified only if it is fair and moderate. They saw punishment as fair if it was a response to an offence. A similar view on the importance of moderation in punishment also emerged from the earlier study by Morrell (2001), where children’s views attested to a tension in the argument made by some people who supported corporal punishment as having a positive impact when used moderately.

A study by the HSRC (2009), investigating discipline methods preferences of individuals between ages of 16 and above between 2003 and 2006, revealed that we still have a generation of young people who believe in the effectiveness of corporal punishment. This makes us wonder what discipline strategies these young people will adopt for their own children, and what can be done to break the possible intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment suggested by this evidence. In the conclusion to their ethnographic study, Payet and Franchi (2008) make an important observation concerning the conditions for addressing this question:

At the heart of the matter, recognizing the enmeshment of violence and care in education constitutes the necessary condition for thinking about the issue of corporal punishment (p.171).

Payet and Franchi’s studies led them to view the motive for abolishing corporal punishment as a post-apartheid political strategy to exonerate the government from dealing with the reality of the enduring legacy of the apartheid ills it really did not have answers for. Payet and Franchi (2008) argue that there are two positions: the universal top-down theoretical view of corporal punishment as an anti-democratic practice, and what they call a contextually-situated position where actors involved –

teachers, children/teenagers, and parents from underprivileged contexts – voice the need for corporal punishment. Beyond these two positions, this study seeks to further illuminate that the need to use corporal punishment is a culturally inherent and socially-internalised practice that renders policy statements an essential but insufficient mediation tool towards the object of transformation.

#### **2.4.4 Parents' responses to the abolition of corporal punishment**

Historically, even though parents were not given a central role in the education of children, there were concerned parent bodies in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in the 1980s that objected to the use of corporal punishment on children in schools. This parental stance concurs with Rakitzis' (1987) earlier study, cited in Holdstock (1997), which found that:

Black pupils reported much lower physical punishment at home. Compared to 8.4 per cent Afrikaans speaking and 30.4 per cent English speaking White students, 41,2 percent of Black students reported not being physically punished at home (p.347).

However, it appears that the parents' voice opposing corporal punishment was not as strong as of those who were ambivalent towards its abolition – as some of them relied on this method to discipline children at home. A later study by Morrell's (2001) study revealed contradicting results to those of Rakitzis', it shows a correlation between domestic patterns of discipline and the corporal punishment support at school by the children, with 46% of African children indicating that corporal punishment was the most common method of discipline at home compared to 16.7%, 16.5% and 9.0% of Coloured, White and Indian children respectively. The difference in results of these studies maybe due to the time period of exposure to corporal punishment in the later study.

Parents are influential in the perpetuation of corporal punishment in schools. With parents playing a crucial role in school governance, and in keeping with a democratic view that parents as stakeholders in education, should have a majority representation in governance and decision-making power at schools (Hargreaves, 1998; 2010), their cultural and religious beliefs in corporal punishment as an effective disciplinary measure come into play. Since by law (SASA, 1996), parents comprise the majority of the SGB membership, they have an influential role in the development

of the code of conduct and the disciplinary methods (Morrell, 2001). However, according to Mayisela's, (2009) study, in some schools, the human rights and democratic endeavours of the Constitution are often overlooked in school policies in the interest of democracy and culture. Some parents still believe that corporal punishment should be used to discipline misbehaving children and to facilitate learning in schools. This belief system is in contradiction with human rights values.

#### **2.4.5 Religious organisations' responses to the abolition of corporal punishment**

Historically in South Africa, religion and schooling have been intertwined, and religious values continue to influence school practices and culture. While there are faith-based justifications for the use of corporal punishment in child-rearing and education, some bodies of religious influence have put their weight behind supporting non-violence in schools and in parenting. For example, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference Parliamentary Liaison Office supported parliament's 2007 Children's Act Amendment Bill deliberations on prohibition of corporal punishment in child-rearing. The Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, in support of ending corporal punishment on children, said:

If we really want a peaceful and compassionate world, we need to build communities of trust where home and school are safe places to be and where discipline is taught by example (cited in Vohito, 2011, p.72).

Whereas Christian Education of South Africa (CESA) challenged the prohibition of corporal punishment in 1996 (DoE, 2000), in 2007 the South African Council of Churches (SACC), an umbrella body of over 16 million Christians, supported the abolition and advised on the use of positive discipline and non-violent communication to resolve disputes within the home, community and the nation (Vohito, 2011).

Other religions have also taken a stand on corporal punishment. At a global level, at the World Assembly for Religions for Peace in Kyoto, Japan in 2006, more than 800 faith leaders endorsed a religious commitment to combat violence against children. This assembly threw its weight behind the UNCRC deliberations, urging governments to adopt laws that prohibit corporal punishment in schools (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, n.d.)

The Churches' Network for Non-Violence (2011) document, *Ending Corporal punishment of Children: a handbook for working with and within religious communities*, cites the Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, founder of *Hinduism Today*, who detested the practice of corporal punishment on children, and made this known among the international congregants of Hinduism. Similarly, in 2009, the Network of Imams of the Islamic religion agreed on the principle of fatwa which states that:

...it is necessary to desist immediately and finally from beating children, regardless of the pretext given. This is not only required by Law and piety, or in accordance with the principles and purpose of the glorious shari'ah, but it is also essential for the good of the child, the educator, the family and society. It is also necessary to adopt scientific educational methods in the upbringing of children following the example provided by the first educator and teacher, Mohammad may God be merciful to him, whose teaching are all kindness, love and goodness (Churches Network for Non-Violence, 2011, p.63).

An important question (though not one that can be answered in this study) is whether members of Churches in the Network for Non-Violence understand and accept the arguments against corporal punishment and are prepared not to punish their children physically. The assumption is that, as schools and society are closely related, whatever the answer to the question is, it has a bearing on how teachers respond to the abolition of corporal punishment.

It would be naïve to paint a picture that portrays cohesion among Christians regarding the abolition of corporal punishment. Scholars and activists in the Protestant and Fundamentalist movements are resisting the global drive to abolish corporal punishment as unbiblical. They view corporal punishment as a biblical phenomenon, stated in the book of Proverbs. Based on the philosophy of infallibility and inerrancy of the bible, and the view that it contains all the values and principles for all aspects of human life, they believe in the correctness of corporal punishment as it is stated in Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 19:18, Proverbs<sup>5</sup> 22:15, Proverbs<sup>6</sup> 23:13,

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<sup>5</sup> Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him

<sup>6</sup> Withhold not correction from the child; for if though beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Proverbs<sup>7</sup> 23:14, Proverbs<sup>8</sup> 29:15, and Hebrews 12:6-7. While some of the verses refer only to disciplining the child without specifying the form of discipline, four verses specifically refer to the use of a rod, which is interpreted to mean beating the child with a stick. However, there is counter-interpretation of these scriptures as not representing God's will for parent-child relationships, but as Solomon's examples of counter-productive parenting style (<http://www.religioustolerance.org/spankin3.htm>).

## **2.5 Effects of corporal punishment**

This review cannot exhaust the number of studies providing compelling evidence of the negative psychological effects of long term exposure to corporal punishment on individuals. Even though corporal punishment is perceived by some teachers, parents and pupils to be successful in preventing unacceptable behaviour among children and young people, and for maintenance of order in the classroom (Donnelly and Straus, 2005; Payet and Franchi, 2008), the numerous unintended negative consequences have been extensively revealed through research (see, for example, Strauss, Douglass and Medeiros, 2014; Donnelly and Straus, 2005).

Furthermore corporal punishment does not stop the misbehaviour of difficult children, especially when their offences are indirectly caused by other physical or social and family circumstances. In such cases, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds are likely to be punished repeatedly for the same offenses (Soneson, 2005). For example, Donnelly and Strauss (2005) reported a case where, on inspection, it was found that a school's punishment records show "the same small bands of pupils being caned regularly throughout their school career" (p.143).

There is evidence, too, that corporal punishment does not foster self-discipline, but instead instils aggression, anger and feelings of revenge, which may lead to anti-social behaviour (DoE, 2000, Soneson, 2005; Donnelly and Straus, 2005). While they are at school, children experiencing corporal punishment tend to direct their anger at other children. In Soneson's (2005) study, a boy said, "I felt like killing someone" (p.15) and another one from the Western Cape said, "I beat the children because I was angry" (p.9). Surveys on children's views on corporal punishment by

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<sup>7</sup> Thou shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell.

<sup>8</sup> The rod and reproof give wisdom; but the child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame

Clacherty, Donald and Clacherty (2004) and Morrell (2001) capture children's expressions of anger and severe emotional reactions they experience after they have received corporal punishment. Arcus's (2002) ground-breaking study, conducted in fifty states in the USA, shows a high correlation in prevalence of fatal shootings in schools by learners and the states that have legalised and practice corporal punishment. This suggests a relationship between aggressive behaviour and corporal punishment.

The most evident of the psychological damages caused by corporal punishment is the one stated by Holdstock (1990), corporal punishment in an extremely intrusive act, it invades the child's personal space beyond nature's provision of the epidermis. The act of corporal punishment communicates to the child that they are vulnerable, powerless and have no control over their lives. Through this process children learn that they themselves have the right to invade others who are less powerful than them, and therefore claim back their power by rendering others powerless by inflicting pain on them. It is therefore important to consider how this intrusion of corporal punishment affects learning and development.

Paulucci and Violato's (2004) meta-analysis of published research on the effects of corporal punishment suggests that instances of "exposure to corporal punishment do not substantially increase youth development of affective, cognitive and behavioural pathologies" (p.197). Straus and Paschall (2009) argue that, cognitively, corporal punishment takes away the child's attention from his/her wrongdoing, and directs attention to the punishment itself. As a result, the punished child fails to take responsibility for the offense and focuses more on avoiding being caught or, if caught, the child focuses more on tactics to endure the punishment. Considering Vygotsky's assertion that learning occurs through social interaction, motivation for learning cannot happen if there is no good human relationship between the child and the teacher. This relationship can only be healthy if both the teacher and the child can communicate effectively (Donnelly and Straus, 2005). According to DoE (2000), corporal punishment tarnishes this relationship; as a consequence, the opportunity to support the child where there is a need is undermined. Corporal punishment may also have detrimental consequences for cognitive development, as is shown by the evidence from Straus and Paschall's (2009) longitudinal study tracking cognitive development of children in the age range of 2 to 4 years at the beginning of the

study, up to when they were between 5 to 9 years in age. The study followed the development of children who were spanked by their mothers and those who were not. The results indicated that children who were spanked fell behind in cognitive development compared with those not spanked. A crucial finding was that the more spanking they had, the more they fell behind.

Durrant and Smith (2010) and Donnelly and Straus (2005) expound the negative effects of corporal punishment from a theoretical and an empirical perspective. They look at both social and psychological theories, such as theories of the child in society, ecological theories, attachment and moral internalisation, socio-cultural theory, classical and operant learning theories, social-interactional theories, social learning theory, attribution theory and conflict theory, to name but a few. They provide thought-provoking theoretical explanations of why corporal punishment persists in the light of all its negative effects. In tracking some of the compelling empirical studies which found negative effects of corporal punishment, Gershoff (2002), in her meta-analysis of studies eliciting effects of corporal punishment in its different forms, listed long- and short-term effects of corporal punishment. In addition to the negative effects already mentioned in this literature review, Smith, Lindsay and Hansen (2006) cited decreased moral internalisation, increased childhood aggression, increased childhood delinquency and decreased child mental health.

Several studies provide compelling evidence on the association of corporal punishment and impaired mental health. Turner and Muller (1994) found that corporal punishment experienced at the age of 13 years is “significantly related to the level of depressive symptomatology in young adults” (p.776). A Jamaican study reports 87,4% of minor physical violence and 82.3% severe violence associated with a history of high psychiatric disorders, including psychoses, among children (Steely and Rohner, 2006). In 1979, a report by the British Psychological Association argued that corporal punishment as a punitive method is ineffective, unnecessary, a bad example to children who learn through imitating this behaviour, contributes to poor teacher-pupil relationship, exacerbates difficult behaviour in some cases, and is incompatible with the idea of a community based on mutual respect and care for the welfare and dignity of others (Donnelly and Straus, 2005). Feelings of emotional blunting, a loss of empathy, a feeling of rejection and low self-esteem – all of which

have negative effect on development – are among the other effects of corporal punishment (Burnett, 1998).

Straus (1994) argues that there is a strong link between corporal punishment and physical abuse, and actively advocated for the ending of corporal punishment as a fundamental aspect of primary prevention of physical abuse of children. Contrary to Straus, there are scholars, such as Paulucci and Violato (2004), and Larzelere (1996), who argue that studies suggesting detriments and particularly the abusive nature of corporal punishment are not conclusive, especially if corporal punishment occurs in particular contexts. They advocate further in-depth research that looks at the distinction between the severity of the physical punishment, its abusive and non-abusive nature, and the alternative strategies used with it, and how it is used – whether as a threat and last resort (Baumrind, Larzelere and Cowan, 2002; Larzelere, 2000) – and correlates these with the outcomes in child compliance.

These salient arguments are pertinent to laying a foundation of understanding the reasoning behind the abolition of corporal punishment, as well as the meaning teachers and parents attach to the nature of their practice of corporal punishment in their school setting.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides a window through which to view the macrocosmic conditions under which corporal punishment continues to prevail in South African schools and globally.

Furthermore, through a review of research and policy literature as well as other relevant government publications, it provides insights into how the South African education community – teachers and teachers' unions, children as well as student movements, parents and religious organisations – responded to the legislative abolition of corporal punishment. Some teachers, especially those from backgrounds where violence in the form of corporal punishment has been a norm, believe that corporal punishment is an effective discipline measure in schools and that it is more effective than alternative disciplinary methods recommended by the education authorities. However, the underlying psychological processes and the depth of some teachers' ambivalence towards and utter rejection of the abolition of corporal

punishment have not been adequately investigated, especially from the South African context.

From this chapter, it is evident that corporal punishment has been extensively studied locally and globally, however none of the studies have explored the phenomenon using CHAT as a theoretical lens. Drawing from the overt contradiction existing between the legislative stance and the teachers' persistent use of corporal punishment, I locate this study within the CHAT framework, and I explicate this in detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*“With the internalisation of cultural tools [like corporal punishment], the individual begins to apply to himself the same forms of cultural tools that [were] initially applied to him by others.” Vygotsky, 1987, p.21)*

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an exposition of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), which will serve as the theoretical framework for understanding the phenomenon of corporal punishment as it manifests in South African primary schools. The chapter begins with an exploration of concepts within the CHAT framework. It then elaborates the notion of activity as a central concept of the theory, with particular reference to Vygotsky’s conceptualisation. This is followed by Leont’ev’s consideration of activity, action, and practice (Leont’ev, 1978), as well as Engeström’s (2015, 1999) and other current expansions of the concepts of activity and activity system. This theory will be employed to demonstrate contradictions and the embedded transformation opportunities located within the activity systems that are related to corporal punishment. I consider CHAT to be **an analytical tool that** would illuminate the in-depth nature of corporal punishment as a cultural practice.

### 3.2 Cultural-historical activity theory

Vygotsky dedicated much of his life to analysing and seeking epistemological understanding of human scientific studies, while trying to answer questions of human development of his time. His ideas were born out of his rigorous analysis of developmental theories of behavioural psychology, reflexology, neurobiology, psychoanalysis, and Gestalt psychology, which considered human development as a genetically master-planned process and development to be based on the behavioural stimulus-response conundrum (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991; Vygotsky, 1997a, 1997b). Vygotsky did not simply take the propositions of these disciplines as absolute truth with regard to human development. His rigorous search for truth for developmental psychology, from the analysis of different scientific texts and through his experimental observations and ethnographic studies of children and

communities, can be equated to an activity of “excavation”, a concept associated with an act of digging deeper and with the purpose of bringing that which is buried, out onto the surface. This excavation signifies the rigour and depth of Vygotsky’s research, which ultimately concluded that social interaction is an essential aspect of human development (Leont’ev, 1987).

Vygotsky maintained a phylogenetic<sup>9</sup> and ontogenetic<sup>10</sup> view of development, and elaborated these by postulating a dynamic interlacing between the two developmental planes he mentioned in his general socio-genetic law of cultural development, viz. the cultural and the psychological plane (Vygotsky, 1987). Vygotsky articulated his general socio-genetic law of cultural development as:

...any function in a child’s development appears twice, or in two planes. First it appears on a social plane, and then on a psychological plane. First it appears between people as an intermental [interpsychological] category and then within the child as an intramental [intrapsychological] category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition (Vygotsky, 1987, p.21; Vygotsky, 1997b, 106).

The *interpsychological* level is a social level, which means that children develop culturally from the relationship they have with others. Vygotsky refers to this as a cultural line of development. Cultural development occurs between people through the use of cultural tools produced through interpersonal activity. Cultural development is key for development of *intrapsychological* development, which occurs when cultural tools are transformed into psychological tools, resulting in the development of higher psychological functions.

To recruit effectively CHAT as a theoretical lens to advance an understanding of the nature of corporal punishment in South African primary schools, two intertwining developmental processes need attention. Firstly, in the practice of corporal punishment, children learn to relate *interpersonally* through physical pain with an adult or a teacher when there is misconduct, and then *intrapersonally* through higher

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<sup>9</sup> Suggesting a transformation occurring in human beings that is species bound, and therefore informed by the genetic predisposition which is biological in nature.

<sup>10</sup> Suggesting that the context and the environment, i.e. the nature of social interaction, have bearing on psychological transformation and development.

psychological functions like anticipation of physical pain and fear, associated with wrongdoing. This may also translate to other psychological developments like self-regulation associated with pain, problem-solving in social conflicts, and meaning-making of sensual stimuli such as pain. Furthermore, this may subsequently affect one's way of raising children or disciplining children later on in adulthood, as a parent or teacher. Secondly, where corporal punishment is used, children may learn to conform to what is socially acceptable in avoidance of painful stimuli (corporal punishment). Such conformity is likely to perpetuate further use of painful stimuli as a tool for teachers to get children to conform or learn to do right out of fear of pain, thereby limiting the necessary development of higher psychological functions.

The intersubjective relation within the cultural-historical human progression provides a foundational base for Vygotsky's socio-genetic law of development, whereby elementary processes are transformed to higher psychological functions. And, as the individual continues to interact within the social milieu through social activities, they too influence and transform it. This process involves a dynamic interlacing between the genetic and the social plane. As Vygotsky wrote:

In biological human development, the organic system of activity is dominant and in historical development the tool system of activity is dominant – the development of these two systems cannot be separated, it is simultaneous and a completely unique process of development (1997b, p.21).

Here Vygotsky is arguing that human development is neither a biological process nor a socially orchestrated process in isolation, but a complex dynamic unitary process of the two, resulting in the transformation of these very systems, while the individual child is also developing and transforming through the system of activities.

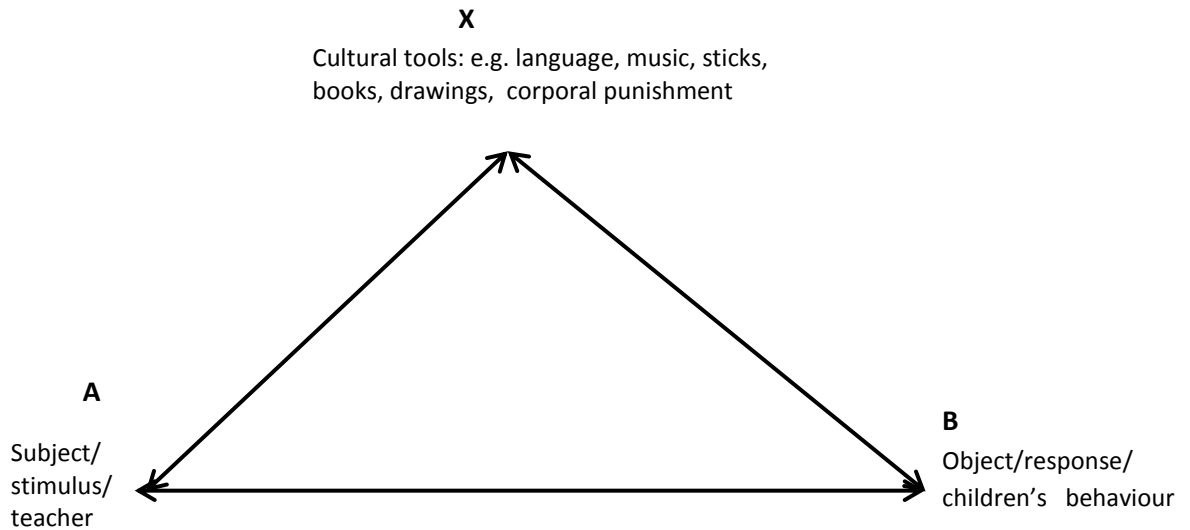
In the same vein, Vygotsky postulated development and functioning of the mind as a process of transformation from elementary mental functions to higher psychological functions characterised by the development of the capacity for voluntary control mediated through cultural tools (Wertsch, 1990; Bakhurst, 1996; Vygotsky, 1997b). Elementary functioning, which relies on the line of natural development, refers to basic biological functioning like sensory development, conditional reflexes, and formation of habits (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991; Vygotsky, 1994, Meshcheryakov, 2007). Elementary mental function also reflects primitive thinking

which is usually concrete and based on immediate response to situations, whereas higher psychological functions develop from the process of mediation and internalisation of cultural tools and symbols, and become part of the individual's functional system (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991).

### **3.3 Understanding corporal punishment as a cultural tool**

Vygotsky, through his work with his colleague Luria, came to the cultural-historical way of understanding human psychological processes, positing that human development emerges through culturally mediated, historically developing, practical activity (Cole, 1996). Such practical activity explains how development is mediated through intersubjective interaction by means of cultural tools. Here cultural tools represent auxiliary means that one exploits to meet a certain end or task. In an attempt to explicate the meaning of the concept of cultural tool, Vygotsky makes reference to the use of mnemonic operations – for example, a knot as a cultural tool to enhance memory, or language as a cultural tool used to mediate development (Vygotsky, 1999). These cultural tools are external and socially mediated, helping humans to organise mental functioning. This notion is simplified in the subject-tool-object triangle in Figure 1.

Vygotsky and Luria, identified in Cole (1996) and Hardman (2008) as the first generation of activity theory, have explained the significance of the use of tools and symbols in development of higher mental functions through a subject-mediation-object triangle, where A and B represent an unmediated natural activity between the subject(s) or interacting group of people (A) and the object or motive for the activity (B) respectively. To enhance the development process, Vygotsky conceptualised it as having an intermediate link (X) forming the vertex of the triangle between A and B. In this instance, X presents a cultural tool or a symbol that is later internalised to transform the initial natural functions to higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1987; Vygotsky and Luria, 1994; Cole 1996). For example, X may represent a mediational tool or psychological instrument that creates a linking activity between the subject and the object (see Figure 1 below). Using activity theory as a lens, corporal punishment may be viewed as a cultural tool used by teachers and parents with an objective of regulating children's behaviour.



*Figure 1: Vygotsky's activity triangle adapted from Vygotsky (1987) and Cole (1996)*

The use of cultural tools is tied to the historical context in the sense that the creation and use of tools is usually based on the rediscovery of already existing tools, within a social context, where the context is regarded as both the surrounding and that which occurs before and after the event (Cole, 1996). Cultural tools are created to enhance cultural-historical development. Through the process of enculturation, cultural activities and tools are transmitted from one generation to another within a particular social group. Greenfield, Maynard and Childs (2000) propose that culture at any given point is the product of historical change, whereby intergenerational cultural transmission serves to link culture from one historical moment to another. In an attempt to understand the persistence of the corporal punishment phenomenon, this research seeks to investigate the current generation of South African teachers' use of corporal punishment as an enculturation process of regulating children's conduct in schools.

Vygotsky distinguished between psychological and technical tools. He saw psychological tools as directed towards the mastery or control of behavioural processes of either someone else's or one's own behaviour. He viewed technical tools as directed toward the external work or nature whereby, in a dynamic process, mastery of these tools changes both the environment and the participating individual (Vygotsky, 1999; Minick, 1996). In line with this view, Stetsenko and Vianna (2009, p.44) further described cultural tools as a combination of any of the following:

- 1) forms of material objects, like a stick used during punishment
- 2) patterns of behaviour specifically organised in space and time, like when we consider corporal punishment as a cultural tool manifesting in a rural school in post-apartheid South Africa.
- 3) concepts that stand for ways of knowing and thinking, and language being the multi-level combination of the various forms of knowing.

Looking closely into the qualities of corporal punishment, it certainly falls within the three descriptive forms of cultural tools stated above.

According to Minick (1996), higher psychological functions develop when "...the individual participates in social activity mediated by speech (symbols), or by psychological tools that others use to influence the behaviour of others" (p.33). Vygotsky considered language as one of the key cultural symbols that shape and transform human development, thinking and thus behaviour (Minick, 1996; Daniels, Cole and Wertsch, 2007). With this in mind, corporal punishment as an intersubjective activity is not practiced in isolation. Language and other psychological tools contribute to the complex nature of its internalisation.

### **3.4 Internalisation of corporal punishment as a cultural tool**

Internalisation of cultural tools occurs through social interaction between two or more individuals participating in an activity. To be precise, Vygotsky says "all higher mental functions are the essence of internalised relations of a social order" (Vygotsky, 1997b, p.106). This is because mediation, the transmission of tools and social interaction take place in a particular culture. History makes a difference to the types of tools developed and to the social processes and the nature of social interaction among people. Hence development can be differentiated in relation to cultural-historical development (Davydov and Kerr, 1995; Muthivhi and Broom, 2008).

With the internalisation of cultural tools, "the individual begins to apply to himself the same forms of cultural tools that [were] initially applied to him by others" (Vygotsky, 1987, p.21; Minick, 1996, p.33). Since higher psychological functions are socially mediated, "every higher mental function necessarily passes through an external

stage of development” (Minick, 1996, p.33). This study assumes that the use of corporal punishment in South Africa is a cultural-historical phenomenon that is culturally internalised by individuals and by the community at large as a collective. This presupposes that all individuals who administer corporal punishment first experienced it externally through interaction with others and then internalised it as a tool to transform others and their world.

Vygotsky stated that transformation to higher psychological functions does not occur without consciousness and criticised the reflexologist tradition of his time for neglecting consciousness (Vygotsky, 1987; Davydov and Rhadzikhovsky, 1985; Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991). He argued that thoughts and emotions formulate the structure of consciousness. On his theory, the basis for consciousness is firstly, external through social encounters (specifically personal experience or social experience), and secondly, internal, as the mind has the capacity to be the source of consciousness. For example, when the individual is aware of his or her physiological reflexes, s/he becomes conscious (Vygotsky, 1987). The internalisation of corporal punishment seems to undermine the development of such consciousness, since the structures of self-regulation and problem-solving are likely to remain suppressed or unconscious. More so, the child’s conduct is hardly viewed as a manifestation of the zone of proximal development<sup>11</sup> (ZPD) and an opportunity to recruit mediational tools with the object to appraise the development of higher psychological functions that are necessary for the enhancement self-regulation and problem-solving. Instead the child’s development in relation to the punished behaviour remains elementary, in the form of actions driven by avoidance of pain, or desensitisation that renders corporal punishment meaningless or a consequence for the behaviour which is usually a false consequence.

### **3.5 The notion of activity**

The notion of activity in Vygotsky’s theory was conceived alongside the notion of cultural tool. Just as organs enable animals to perform certain activities (e.g. an amoeba can swim but it cannot fly) so too, Vygotsky argued, do different organs

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<sup>11</sup> A concept coined by Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) to explain the gap between what an individual can master and that which he need mediation or intervention in order to come to mastery. From the child’s behaviour and utterances, the child’s ZPD can be established for mediation.

enable humans to perform certain activities. However, although this proposition applies to humans as well, 'man' surpasses animals in the sense that man extends the radius of his activity by creating and using tools (Vygotsky, 1997b).

Vygotsky thought "the new determination of the crucial moments in the development of a system of activity unknown in animals conditioned by use of tools is what is new and decisive for all of infant and child psychology" (Vygotsky, 1997b, p.20). Humans have an organic system of activity (internal activity) dominating to facilitate biological development, and a cultural tool system of activity (external activity) dominating to facilitate cultural development. The two systems develop inter-actively and eventually emerge as one system.

While children undergo natural development that is facilitated and limited by the organic activity system, they concurrently experience cultural development within the schooling activity system, which may have corporal punishment as one of its tools. Within a cultural system, corporal punishment weaves together with the biological system in the process of psychological development. This means that, with intersubjective exposure to corporal punishment, at a biological level new neuronal networks are initiated that transform the individual's total outlook of intersubjective relations and the tools to transform others. Teachers who were raised within the activity system of corporal punishment where corporal punishment tools were utilised to influence and transform others are thus likely to internalise it.

### **3.5.1 Leont'ev's notion of activity in relation to corporal punishment**

Leont'ev and Luria, Vygotsky's proponents, expanded CHAT by shifting the focus to activity within the cultural-historical contexts as unit of analysis (Roth and Lee, 2007). For Leont'ev, the material and cultural tools that are usually the subject of contemplation with CHAT have come into existence as products of collective human activity, the division of labour and the object of activity (Leont'ev, 1978; Davydov and Rhadzikhovsky, 1985; Cole and Gajdamaschko, 2007). Leont'ev extended Vygotsky's theory by defining the concept *activity* and providing its structural outline. Leont'ev defines activity as an ensemble of specific actions, each of which fulfils a definite need of the subject, directed towards the object of that need, and which is extinguished only when the need is met and the cycle can start all over when the need arises again under different conditions (Leont'ev, 1978).

Leont'ev regarded human activity as existing at three hierarchical levels, namely, activity, action and operations, corresponding to motive, goal and condition respectively (Leont'ev, 1978; Kozulin, 1996; Engeström, 1999; Hardman, 2008). He viewed activity as connected to motive in the sense that activity arises as a response to fulfil a particular need, therefore fulfilling a need is a motive behind an activity. According to Leont'ev, one action may accomplish many activities or even transmission from one activity to another. This is because separate activities are realised through actions together with other intermediate actions to fulfil the activities' objective need. However, actions themselves are goal directed, where the goal determines "the method and character of ...actions" and "human activity does not exist except in the form of actions or a chain of actions" (Leont'ev, 1978, p.63). On his analysis, goals are a necessary object of study in order to understand the concept of activity. Goals are determined by a long process of approbation of action to fill the needs by activities. However, goals must be accomplished objectively through methods or processes which Leont'ev calls operations. The operation content can change according to conditions, so as to fulfil need related activities. Leont'ev also extended Vygotsky's theory by emphasising the dependence of human development on social interaction and collective objects that occur through the division of labour (Cole, 1996; Engeström, 1999).

Leont'ev's framework may be used as a tool in advancing an understanding of the activity systems, contributing to the psychological functioning of a teacher who is practicing corporal punishment in South Africa. In this framework, the motive of corporal punishment, as a motive-driven activity, is to raise a culturally and socially acceptable child. The goal, which may be driven by several actions, is to deter the child from misbehaving or to regulate the child's behaviour. Furthermore, corporal punishment is a collective activity, where different members of the community have a role to play and in so doing are transformed by the activity (Hardman, 2008). The operation, which refers to different forms of corporal punishment, is dependent on the context or conditions determined by the rules and norms of the community. In a school context where late-coming children are whipped by the security personnel at the school entrance, this is an example of the operation-condition concept in Leont'ev's proposition. Here teachers are not involved in the operation of corporal punishment to protect teachers from the penalty of the legislative abolition of

corporal punishment. This operation is different from, for example, one in which corporal punishment is meted by the principal.

### **3.5.2 Activity in relation to the practice and context of corporal punishment**

The expansion of CHAT took for granted the concepts of activity, practice and context and treated them synonymously (Cole, 1996, Cole and Gajdamaschko, 2007). This idea was inclusive of both Vygotsky's and Leont'ev's units of analysis and therefore led to the birth of the current cultural-historical activity theory. An explication of these concepts is necessary in order to enhance our understanding of the use of corporal punishment in schools.

As context refers to the sum total of qualities of the surrounding of the event or activity, Cole (1996, p.132) defines context as "that which surrounds" and sees it as a dynamic weaving together of the qualities of the environment and the activity (Cole, 1996; Muthivhi, 2008). Analysing cultural tools and activity without considering the context would be an unjustifiable exercise since these phenomena weave together. As indicated earlier, another concept not to be excluded in the process of advancing in-depth understanding of the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools is practice. Taylor, quoted in Cole (1996, p.138), regards practice as a baseline social reality which "provides intersubjective medium of the mind" and "the foundation for community and discourse". Cole further considers practices as "meanings and norms that are not just in the minds of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, practices which cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but which are essentially modes of social relations" (p.138). Cole's notion of practice clearly depicts corporal punishment as a practice embedded both in the minds of teachers and learners, and as a set of relational actions.

### **3.5.3 Engeström's activity theory and corporal punishment**

Engeström (2015), expanded activity triangle (see Figure 2 below) to emphasise the role of activity. The concept of activity here denotes individual activity to develop higher psychological functions and involves the individual's engagement in some activity using some cultural tools or with other members of the community, within a particular context and practice. Activity is characterised by the involvement of members of the community as a collective, with agents having specific roles in pursuing a common goal of production of cultural tools (Van der Veer and Valsiner,

1991). Activity in this context is motivated by an object or a motive resulting in a particular outcome. However, Engeström also emphasises Vygotsky's fundamental component of social rules, norms and values that informs the roles of participating agents. Engeström's CHAT recognises the impact of the community's activity on individuals' development to higher psychological functioning. The individual's participation in a complex system of activity also impacts on and changes the outcomes of the activity. Simultaneous with this process is change in the nature of the individual by social activity, whereby the individual also changes the environment (Vygotsky, 1987). This phenomenon is captured by current CHAT theorists as interventionist and transformative (Stetsenko, 2008).

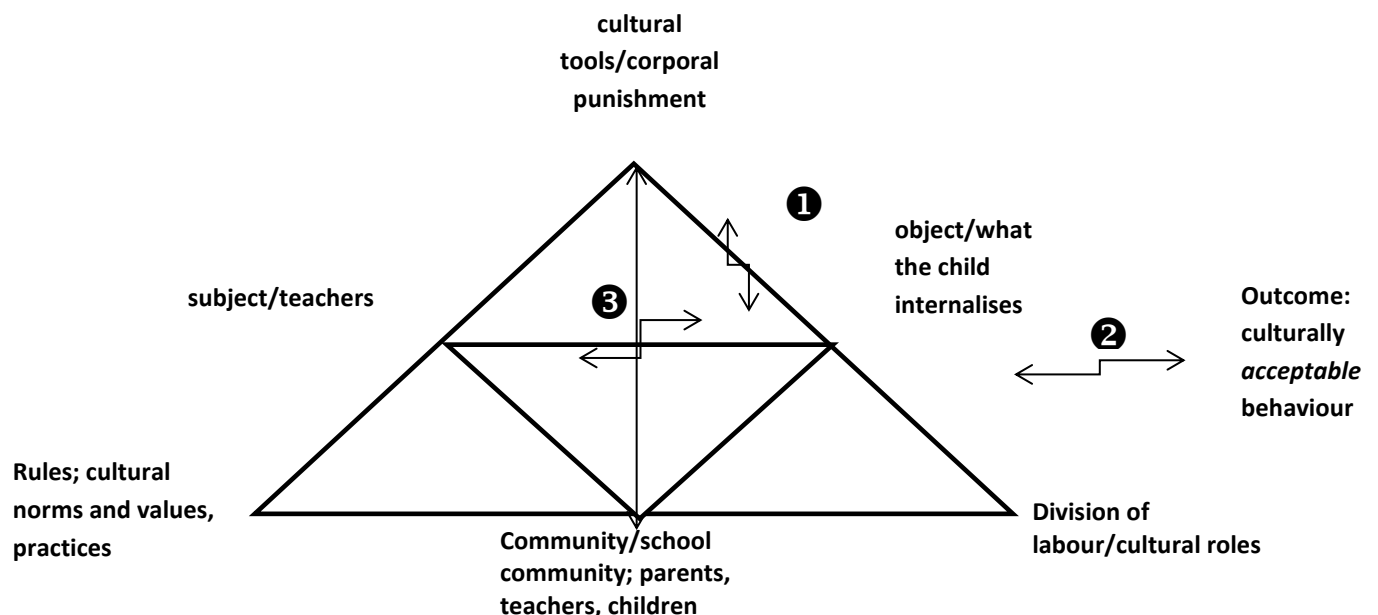


Figure 2: Vygotsky's second generation, CHAT model adapted from Engeström (2015)

Based on Leont'ev's off-shooting ideas from Vygotsky, current CHAT theorists also view CHAT as a way of thinking that human development is embedded in social activity, collective participation within the community where individuals live together with shared identity. Stetsenko and Vianna (2009) define community as

the world of people who do things with and for each other, who learn from each other and use experiences of previous generations to meet successfully the continuously changing demands of life (p.43).

In relation to this study, the activity systems as outlined in Engeström's (2015) model may be extrapolated to the practice of corporal punishment. Like all communities, school communities have rules, norms and values that determine the roles of different agents in the school community. The norms and values, ethos and practices within the school formulate the interpersonal and the intrapersonal content of the mind of individuals within the school community where similar ways of thinking create the dominant culture. Culturally, parents are responsible for raising children and mediating cultural norms and rules set by the society. Teachers mediate scientific cultural tools but also act in *loco parentis* in mediating cultural norms, values and rules. This teacher-child relationship is complex and dynamic as children continuously change and develop, which impacts their relationship with teachers and adults in general. At the same time, the social context impacts these relationships.

To add to the complexity is the fact that current social rules were influenced by historical developments and thus reflect the dominant political context as their source. In relation to corporal punishment, developments in the South African political landscape from the colonial to the apartheid system have depended on policies and legislation to mediate the domination and oppression of the Black masses. Since corporal punishment was legalised as a method to mediate oppressive rules from the colonial system which progressed into the various apartheid policies, with the result that at macro-level, education was used as a legislative tool to transmit the oppressive culture through corporal punishment into schools where teachers exerted their power and will on children by violent means.

To bring to surface the intricacies involved in understanding the depth of the tension between policy informed abolition of corporal punishment and the discipline practices of teachers, I resort to Engeström's (1999, 2010) five principles of CHAT, each of which are pertinent for this study. The first principle depicts fundamental activity system of the collective (subject), the tool-mediated and the object. The second principle recognises the multi-voicedness of the activity systems, while the third one is the principle of historicity. The fourth principle refers to "contradictions as a source of change and development" (Engeström, 2010, p.137), and the last principle extends from the latter and proclaims the possibility of transformations in the activity systems. While all these principles are important for the analysis of the practice of

corporal punishment, contradictions are highlighted in this study in a way that they also depict the other principles.

### **3.5.4 Contradictions within activity systems of corporal punishment**

On analysis of the elements of the activity system, such as the cultural tools and the object of activity, and perhaps the collective rules, one realises that there is likelihood for contradictions to manifest within and between activity systems. Engeström (1999) defines these “contradictions” as historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems. Roth and Lee (2007) assert that contradictions of a socio-political and economic nature have an impact in mediating practices, traditions and, ultimately, on learning and development. For transformation to take place contradictions are necessary, therefore contradictions should be identified, understood and embraced as fundamental drivers of change.

Engeström (2015, 1999) has identified four types of contradictions which occur within and between elements of the activity systems. A *primary contradiction* (zig-zag line 3 in Figure 2) occurs when, for example, a teacher intends to develop creative children, and yet still wants to control mental activity using rote learning and corporal punishment. In the broader scheme of things, a child is considered to be ‘cultured’ as he or she grows up in a social context that is culturally structured by rules, tools (both psychological and material), activities and religion. Schools as pockets of communities tend to imbibe some of the community’s cultural rules and values. The primary goal of schooling, through the use of cultural tools or tools like language, books, pictures and computers, is to transform the child’s elementary functions to what Engeström (1999) calls “culturally given higher psychological functions” (p.35), where these functions include reading, writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The acquisition of such higher psychological functions should enable the child to demonstrate self-regulated and culturally acceptable behaviour. Misbehaviour may signify a gap in internalisation of cultural tools and the development of higher psychological functions. The practice of corporal punishment constitutes a contradiction (zig-zag line 3 in Figure 2) against the object of schooling as it may hinder or limit the child’s development of higher psychological functions like self-regulation and problem-solving. Corporal punishment involves more of a stimulus-response activity that stifles development and keeps it at the elementary level.

*Secondary contradictions* (zig-zag line 1 in Figure 2) appear between the elements of an activity system. An example in relation to corporal punishment is that, within the activity system of schooling and its object, contradictions may occur in the relationship between material or cultural tool on the one hand, and vision or outcome on the other (Roth and Lee, 2007). The school's or the teacher's goal is to facilitate learning and development of higher psychological functions by mediating cultural tools like reading material, calculators and corporal punishment to the child. However, a child may internalise corporal punishment as a cultural tool to do what one is told to do, therefore yielding an outcome that is contradictory to the object of schooling. The contradiction embedded in this example pertains to the tension between the object and the tool used by the teacher. So the question here, which is the subject of this study, is: How does corporal punishment transform the participants involved in it? Children learn to behave in particular ways because they fear punishment, not because they understand the cultural value of the desired behaviour. This leads us to another crucial question: What meaning do children have regarding their behaviour or misbehaviour and is this meaning aligned to that of a teacher or adult? Can the misconduct be used to signify possible ZPD in a child?

*Tertiary contradiction* (zig-zag line 4 in Figure 3) is found when there is a tension between the object of the activity system and the object of the desired and more advanced activity system; I assume that the very problem of investigation of this study emanates from this contradiction where the object of activity system of the apartheid education which the teachers and parents still uphold is in contradiction with the object of new post-apartheid system that has abolished corporal punishment. According to Engeström (1999), contradictions experienced by people between activity systems are characterised by the "challenge of acquiring established culture and the challenge of having to formulate a desired culture" (p.43). The post-apartheid education system takes parent and the child's home as key partners for the success of the child's education. Thus, the child's home and parents are the activity system closely linked to schooling. *Quaternary contradictions* (zig-zag line 5 in figure 3) are found between the two related activity systems. In relation to corporal punishment this contradiction may be signified by parents who, as some literature suggests, still favour corporal punishment in an anti-corporal punishment system.

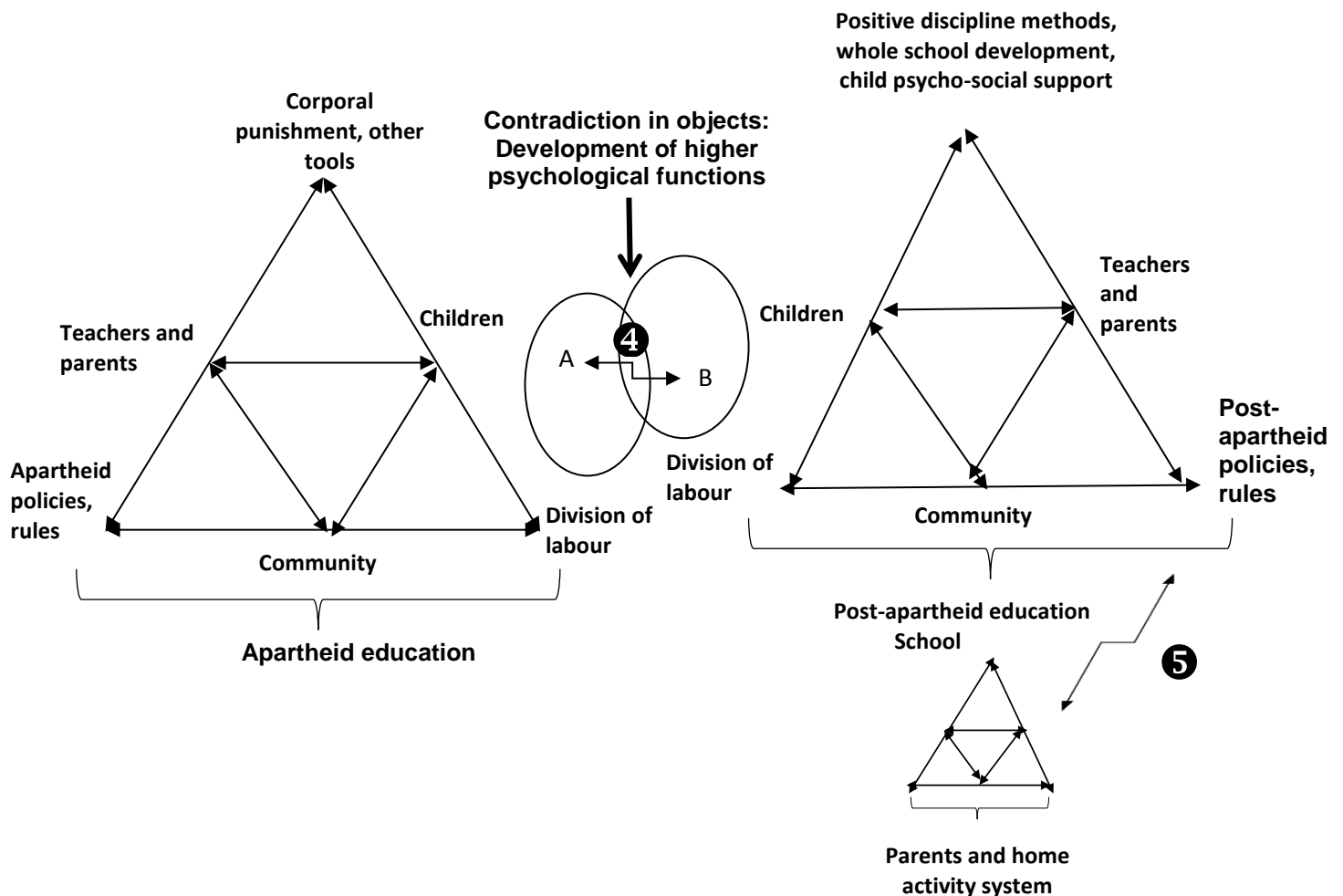


Figure 3: Tertiary contradiction between two activity system, adapted from Engeström , (2015).

In order to understand why teachers continue to use corporal punishment in the light of the prevailing socio-political milieu and to develop an expansive model to resolve the incongruence, it is essential to interrogate the contradictions within and between the activity systems of corporal punishment by using the research tools that are discussed in Chapter 4.

### 3.5.5 Corporal punishment and possibilities for transformation

According to Sannino, Daniel and Gutierrez (2009), transformation is the theoretical concept advocated by Davydov (1999b) as a fundamental CHAT notion. He posited that transformation – as distinct from the everyday concept of “change”, which refers to the change of natural and social reality where the object is only changed from the outside – can only be regarded as transformation when the change in the object occurs both internally and externally.

According to Stetsenko and Arieviditch (2004), CHAT offers a “historically, phylogenetically, and ontogenetically grounded” (p.480) view of the transformative nature of social activities which are reciprocally produced between the society and individuals. Furthermore it is a phenomenon that can be “achieved through human *labour* [and] is a collective and a collaborative use of tools in which individuals are necessarily blended to produce, deploy and preserve the efficient tools, as well as pass them on to new generations” (Stetsenko and Arieviditch, 2004, p.482), thus carving historical and cultural processes. Labour, according to Marx, quoted in McLellan (1971, p.138), is

the instrument of man’s self-creation.... and a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates and controls the material regulations between himself and nature...by thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature.

This Marxist view of labour captures CHAT’s principle of transforming ‘interactionism’ between individuals, society and social context. Based on this principle, the use of corporal punishment may be viewed as a form of labour because it is an interaction between individuals in a community that produces some change. Change in this context refers to the perceived change in children’s conduct. This kick-starts a ripple effect of changes, as change in conduct of children changes the communities’ view of corporal punishment. In the process, the individual teacher using corporal punishment continues to transform his or her views of corporal punishment as a necessary and essential practice. On the other hand, the use of other symbolic psychological tools, like semiotic tools, may be compromised by the continued use of corporal punishment, resulting in possible hindering of the higher psychological development.

The current generation of South African teachers has been exposed to the practices of corporal punishment, which were used to regulate children’s conduct in the classroom. While there are historical and legislative transformations regarding schooling practices, ostensibly there are continuities and discontinuities in the practices associated with corporal punishment and other relational processes with

the children. Transformation emerges through collaboration and further social interaction

...involving creation, expansive development and passing on, from generation to generation. With collective experiences reified in cultural tools, including language, [activities such as *corporal punishment*] and people not only transform and create their environment, they also create and constantly transform their very way of life, consequently changing themselves in fundamental ways while, in and through this process, becoming human and gaining self-knowledge and knowledge of the world (Stetsenko, 2011, pp.48-49).

Cultural tools are important factors in the process of psychological development and transformation, and one of the reasons Vygotsky's theory is pertinent to this study is its consideration of cultural tools and therefore, the view of corporal punishment as a cultural tool. Cultural tools are the ones that intensify the sense of being a collective and the identity of the human race, as they represent the embodiment of shared experiences which are collectively discovered through collaborative interaction and problem-solving (Vianna and Stetsenko, 2011). Vianna and Stetsenko argue that learning in the context of social interaction instantaneously impacts the identity formation of an individual.

Cultural tools in the context of CHAT can be better understood in relation to the concept of culture. Vianna and Stetsenko (2006), posit that culture is not a collection of dead tools but it is "a living continuous flow of practices that stretch throughout the history and are enacted by generation" (p.89). This notion of culture is complimentary to the view that corporal punishment as a cultural tool that has been acquired is also a psychological tool for managing children's behaviour for many generations in South Africa.

Another essential point, also made by Vianna and Stetsenko (2006), is the fact that generations join in the culture of the previous generations and are transformed by it. However, while in the process of being transformed they may also change the environment to the point where the original cultural practice can be discontinued or

modified. This change can be brought about by individuals' development. By virtue of these individuals being part of the broader community where they engage in collaborative and interactive social activities, the whole community can transform and create new meaning of the cultural tool. This is the kind of transformation necessary to resolve the apparent contradictions within South African schooling, a kind that is embedded in Engeström's notion of expansive learning. Expansive learning, which involves movement towards forming new objects and cultural tools, occurs in communities of learning through 1) horizontal movements or shifts into a zone of proximal development, 2) boundary crossing, 3) hybridisation or 4) third spaces, a space where shared aspects of objects manifest (Engeström, 2010, Engeström and Sannino, 2010, Sannino, Daniels and Gutierrez, 2009). In the current study, the observation of expansive learning opportunity is compromised since teachers, parents, children and other community members are not working together to identify contradictions and engage in problem-solving.

Stetsenko (2008) outlines CHAT conditions for collective or social transformation as 1) object-related, and as that which can be viewed as a 2) socio-historical project to change the world, while in the process, 3) the individual gets to know himself and the world, and 4) becomes the self. Stetsenko asserts that these conditions occur simultaneously and there is no gap between them. Collective transformation occurs when the individual process is also taking place. The dilemma in the South African context is that government policies are initiating social transformation in prohibiting the use of corporal punishment without ensuring the individual transformation processes are taking place. And with individuals forming a collective in their view of corporal punishment as an essential cultural tool, social transformation initiated by the government in this regard seems not to be understood by teachers, hence the perceived resistance in ceasing to use corporal punishment.

Mohr and Anderson (2002) assert that the result of the individual's learning and of transformation to higher psychological function through social mediation, also occurs at biological level where new neuronal connections are formed. This result in internalisation or psychological transformation, for example, formation of an attitude, or self-regulation, which when shared collectively may further constitute a cultural disposition within a society. Though this study will not focus on the biological and

neuronal transformation underlying higher psychological functions, which informs further social processes that manifest due to cultural exposure or socially engineered physical pain in the form of corporal punishment, CHAT does recognise transformation to be the result of the intricate interweaving of ontogenetic and cultural-historical processes. Thus corporal punishment may ostensibly be associated with non-observable physiological and neuronal changes that may be observable only through inhibitions, self-regulation, and thought patterns.

Although Vygotsky states that social relations genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Wertsch and Tulviste, 1996; Wertsch, 1990; Cole and Engeström, 2007), it should be appreciated that the psychological transformation of individuals, though originating from the society, may not necessarily be socially acceptable. Wells (2000) elucidates this notion:

Change may not always be in the direction that is either socially acceptable or empowering for the child. Negative experience with others can also be identity forming in the sense of disposing the individual to withdraw from involvement and to resist rather than to welcome the assistance (p.76).

In the same vein, the negative effects of corporal punishment may result in the need to refute it as a social practice by teachers; however, its very negative nature is also transforming, such that individual teachers show their conviction in the appropriateness of corporal punishment albeit the unfavourable legislative conditions.

### **3.6 Successful South African cultural-historical studies**

A number of experimental and research activities affirm the practical application of cultural-historical activity theory. Currently there are numerous models for human development and learning that use CHAT as their framework. Some of the foundational studies are those where Luria worked together with Vygotsky in his ethnographic expedition to Central Asia with the purpose of investigating the idea that elementary mental functions may be the same for all living people while the higher psychological functions differ according to different cultural background. The

social and cultural activities determined the forms of thinking and problem-solving strategies (Muthivhi, 2012). Luria undertook his expedition during the social and economic transformation period of “collectivisation of agriculture”, “emancipation of women”, and the “elimination of the kulak’s as the social class”, a process that resulted in the genocide of millions of farmers who were alleged to have benefited from exploiting less prosperous peasants (Cole, Levitin, and Luria, 2006; Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991), a historical period that transformed the collective psychological functioning of the time.

Muthivhi (2012) and Van der Veer and Valsiner (1991) have summarised Luria and Vygotsky’s research studies of cultural differences in perceptions of optical illusions and classification of objects in the Kirgizia and Uzbekistan communities. Here, cultural difference refers to three different cultural groupings: 1) the “primitive” and “illiterate” group of women from the Ichkari communities, 2) the collectivised women who received basic literacy to prepare them for the farming and economic developments of the time, and 3) a group which consisted of women who received normal education at teacher training level. The results of both experiments indicated differences in responses that are related to cultural differences. These results confirmed their hypothesis on the effects of culture on learning and development. The results of Luria’s expedition are pertinent to the broad question that this study is examining. With Luria’s finding in mind, does that mean the use of corporal punishment by teachers is due to exposure to this practice? And, can one also infer that the lack of exposure to other abstract and conventional forms of dealing with child misconduct contributes to teachers’ reliance on corporal punishment? Luria’s study challenges one to think of whether his practical experiment affirms that the teachers’ views of corporal punishment as an effective disciplinary method may be a cultural-historical phenomenon. Such inclinations are also stimulated by Morrell’s (2001) findings that different South African ‘population groups’ responded differently on the continued use of corporal punishment after its legal abolition (Morrell, 2001). Since the South African landscape of systematic violence was racially orchestrated, it is appropriate to ask whether these differences reflect differences in the collective cultural and psychological functioning in relation to the use of corporal punishment.

Among current Vygotskian South African studies, a study by Muthivhi (2011) examined the influence of cultural context on thinking and problem-solving of

children in primary school. The results of this study suggest that “the development of concepts and specific modes of thinking and problem-solving is connected to social and cultural context in which the children participate” (Muthivhi, 2011, p.44).

### **3.7 Conclusion**

As this study questions in broad terms why some teachers in South Africa continue to employ corporal punishment, CHAT appeared to be an appropriate theoretical tool to explain the manifestation of this practice in South African primary schools. Vygotsky’s socio-genetic law of cultural development provides the ground for assuming that development is the result of cultural social interaction, and therefore of transmission of cultural tools from one generation to another through activity. Here, corporal punishment (regardless of whether it is viewed as a practice, an activity, an action or as a tool) is transmitted within and between generations through social interaction. However, CHAT highlights that social interactions, through the internalisation of mediated cultural tools or symbols, transform the individual’s psychological functions. Thus, I argue that the use of corporal punishment is a manifestation of the internalisation of what was first external. The internalised corporal punishment is manifested in its use and the belief in its effectiveness, notwithstanding its unintended concomitant limitations in the development of other crucial psychological functions in a child.

CHAT’s strength as a thinking tool lies in the hope it gives for possible transformation where the contradictions in the activity system(s) is essential for transformation. Vygotsky’s theory is found to be comprehensively relevant as it also provides a framework for thinking about the research methodology and sets the ground for the research design and methods, as explicated in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*“Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And, worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is. It is a strange science whose most telling assertions are its most tremulously based...” (Geertz, 1973, p.9).*

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explicate cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) aligned qualitative methodology as it was used for this study. I then present case study as the research design and describe the case selection process. In keeping with Vygotskian cultural studies, this study uses observation, interviews and children’s drawings as data collection methods. These are discussed in detail, followed by an account of how data was collected and analysed. Finally, I describe the procedures used to ensure validity and to achieve an ethically credible socio-cultural study.

### 4.2 Methodology

For this research work, it is important to answer questions pertinent to the understanding of the sociogenesis of corporal punishment. In pursuit of this objective, one cannot gloss over a question like “Why do teachers continue to use corporal punishment despite its abolition?” and obtain a sound answer without engaging in an empirical process that leans on a qualitative methodology that is informed by theory. As Ratner (1997) writes, “a methodology will only be as good as the epistemological and ontological principles on which it rests. Technical procedures will only be useful if they are guided by epistemological and ontological principles” (p.53). The methodology and the research methods used in this study are those grounded in CHAT as a theoretical framework. In current South African studies, this notion is echoed in Muthivhi’s (2014) work, where he advocates Vygotsky’s view that methodology arises from theory, and theory and method ultimately are intertwined. CHAT methodology was found to be appropriate due to the possibilities it offers in unearthing an in-depth understanding of the ontological manifestations of corporal punishment as a practice prevailing in South African schools.

In the case of this study, CHAT methodology seeks to first clarify the activity, the unit of analysis under study. This then enables us to trace the historicity of the activity system. As Lampert-Shepel (2008) puts it, "...methodologically, one needs to find the basic concept or the so-called 'germ cell' and follow the history of its development within the system of concepts" (p.214). Furthermore, a concept that is the unit of analysis must possess the inherent potential to be transformed into a different form from its initial state (Lampert-Shepel, 2008). In short, for me to embark on this methodology, I have a hunch that corporal punishment as a tool used within the school has the potential to transform. According to the troika; Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria, it should be possible to study units of analysis within their natural context, which is within their activity system so to speak. For this study, corporal punishment as an activity is the unit of analysis, and the research questions of this research can effectively be addressed by focusing on a case.

#### **4.3 The research design: Case study**

In the interest of in-depth investigation, this research was designed as a single-site case study, with multiple participants, groups, generations and data collection methods. As Baxter and Jack (2003) argue, a case study enables the researcher to study the phenomenon in its context using a variety of data sources. Stake (1995) defines a case as a bounded system that draws attention to itself as an object rather than a process. He posits that a case has a boundary and working parts, parts working in an integrated system even when they may not be working well.

Stake's definition of a case is impeccably aligned with CHAT. As Lampert-Shepel's (2008) study demonstrates, a case study can be used as a CHAT method. In the present study, where the research school is identified as a bounded system of a distinct community, taking into consideration the community rules and values, and the division of labour of the different sectors of the community and the tools for the community's interactions or mediation, bearing in mind the object of the embedded activities and the outcomes thereof. A case study is also an appropriate design as it allows the researcher access to the natural context of the unit of analysis and social activities. For the purpose of in-depth illumination of answers to the research question, I decided to focus on a single case which is a school, where I used observation and interviews.

Yin (2009) asserts that while other research designs are better used for answering research questions that focus on “who”, “what”, “where”, “how many” and “how much”, the case study is suitable for responding to questions “how” and “why” Studies with such in-depth enquiry find appeal in cultural studies that, according to Ratner (2002), reveal the nature of the psychological phenomena. Thus the case study method is suitable for this research as the research questions are seeking answers to “why do teachers continue to use corporal punishment despite its abolition?” The benefits of a case study are that it offers evidence to complement the explanations for results yielded in surveys. A number of surveys on corporal punishment have been done in South Africa (Wa Kivilu and Wandai, 2009; Department of Basic Education, 2013); however, these surveys do not necessarily inform us why corporal punishment in school continues. Yin (1999) maintains that, as much as an experiment is considered to be a unit, a case study should be considered as an equivalent of a unit, with its parts that work as an integrated system. In this study, the school is the activity system, with several interacting activity systems and stakeholders constituting a case.

Among the concerns raised against the case study research design, is that it lacks rigour, in that it does not follow any systematic approach and is usually viewed as a design that has no ground for generalising the results. Stake (2003) defends case study research design against these criticisms and is adamant that some generalisations can be drawn. To support his argument, he distinguishes between petite and grand generalisations. Petite generalisations are the ones that occur consistently along the line of the case study, while the grand generalisation is when there is already a view about the phenomenon, the study may confirm it by providing specificity, while also providing some modifications and variability of the generalisation. Hence, a case is better viewed as particularisation rather than generalisation; a posture I prefer for this study.

In much social science, research sampling and sample size are commonly regarded as critical for the purposes of valid inference and generalisation of the findings of a study. However for socio-cultural psychologists, this remains a subject of debate. Yin (2003), cited in Sato et al. (2007), distinguishes between statistical generalisation and analytical generalisation. Statistical analysis focuses on making inferences from the sample to a wider population. By contrast, socio-cultural studies look at historical

traditions from which they analyse the psychological functions of an individual. And, as an individual is considered to be a system rather a unit, inferences can therefore be drawn from the analysis of a person's historical background and the analysis of his or her higher psychological functioning (Sato et al., 2007).

#### **4.4 Selection of the case**

In the process of developing Vygotskian psychology, the use of case studies was a norm. For example, in the endeavour to understand and study emotions, Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria deliberately worked with people [the community] who were experiencing strong emotions in real life situations. This is suggestive of purposeful and deliberate sampling or case selection. Informed by this notion of purposeful selection, the case selection for this study was based, firstly, on historical background of the school; secondly, on the assumption that teachers at this school and its community use corporal punishment; and lastly, on the feasibility and available research resources. Convenience and accessibility were considered as enablers that were afforded by the school community. According to Sato et al. (2007), socio-cultural psychology, particularly that of the Vygotskian tradition and his contemporaries, brings back the essence of history in sampling. They advocate that the "selection of a sample is best accomplished on the basis of the history of the object of investigation" (Sato et al. 2007, p.93). From a different perspective, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) write that researchers in social science "selectively choose persons, situations, [case studies] and events mostly likely to yield fruitful data about the evolving research question" (p.433). This reasoning influenced the selection of the site and participants in this research

For the purposes of this research, the principle of historicity is directly pertinent to the selection of the research site and participants. Thus, a purposeful selection was used in selecting the participants and the research site.

Although corporal punishment still occurs in higher classes (Morrell, 2001; Payet and Franchi, 2008), it is particularly rife in primary schools (Department of Basic Education, 2013). Considering that primary school age is formative and critical for development, a primary school in a village of Driefontein in Mpumalanga was chosen as a research site. There are three reasons for choosing a school in the rural setting

of Mpumalanga. The first one is that, at the time of drafting the research proposal for this study, there was very little published research on corporal punishment that had been conducted in Mpumalanga province. The second and third reasons are that I am familiar with the language (IsiZulu) and culture of the people, and had dependable networks to facilitate entry into the community. In a sense, the last two reasons afforded me a “partial insider” status. Therefore, the “partial outsider” aspect of me as a researcher is accounted for by not knowing any of the teachers at the school, allowing me to build rapport with the participants from a clean slate, and thereby creating a mutual trust between myself and the participants. The fact that I was an outsider who is not linked to authorities meant that I was able to assure the participants of confidentiality and anonymity. Lastly, the rural setting provided an opportunity to illuminate both the ontological and the sociogenetic aspect of the phenomenon under enquiry. Within the school itself I did not have to select or sample participants, so the whole school population was my sample.

## **4.5 Research Methods**

To come closer to an adequate answer to the research question of this study, I have used three major data collection methods: ethnographic observations, interviews and children’s drawings. Using multiple methods is in line with research principles in cultural psychology (Ratner, 1997). To elicit in-depth information that is pertinent to the research questions, variations of interviewing techniques; vignettes, double stimulation and clinical interviews were incorporated as theoretically informed technical processes where focus groups and individual interviews were used as differentiated data sources. Children’s drawings were also used as a consideration for child-centred research technique, used to stimulate children to present their cognitive and visual presentations of the research issues in question. The three research methods are discussed below.

### **4.5.1 Observations**

Observation as a research method is suitable to understand corporal punishment as a phenomenon that needs to be studied in its cultural-historical and socio-cultural context, and within a case study research design. Geertz (1973) refers to social and cultural context as “the natural laboratory” which gives the researcher a fuller sense and scope of the social context in which the phenomenon occurs. The natural milieu

of the research field enabled me to have appreciation of the salient and finer details of the phenomenon under study, which would not be experienced in other forms of enquiry besides through observation.

My approach to observation was guided by the principles of ethnography, considering the directives from Geertz (1973). He argues that ethnography is not a single and isolated incident like a method, establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing text or writing an observation journal. To show what ethnography is, Geertz builds on a metaphoric example taken from the philosopher Gilbert Ryle. In the example, Ryle describes two boys, each of whom happens to have his right eye constantly contracting. Here, the camera (metaphor for observation) alone cannot distinguish a wink from a twitch in these two boys, with one voluntarily winking to a friend and the other having a twitch. For Geertz, what constitutes ethnography is the rigorous “intellectual effort” that Ryle describes as doing the “thinking and reflecting” and “thick description” (Geertz, 1973, p.6). What Geertz means by this is that ethnography involves being in the community and observing with in-depth understanding, in the spirit of enquiry attuned to the meaning of actions, symbols, tools, rituals, patterns, processes, and so on. For him, an important part of ethnography is the interpretation of the data, i.e. being able to distinguish “a wink” from “a twitch”, which should be approached with the consciousness that the data interpreted is first of all the observer’s construction of other people’s construction of their knowledge. In all my interpretations and analysis, I asked myself the question “whose interpretation is this?”

As this study seeks to understand corporal punishment as a phenomenon that occurs in a primary school context within a child-teacher relationship from a socio-cultural perspective, observations were undertaken in a school – a setting where the socio-cultural interactions are continuously taking place and are interrelated. The observational techniques used enabled me to capture specific settings, events, sequences and patterns of activities, and socio-economic and demographic factors in the location of the school (Angrosino, 2007). Specifically for my case study, items of observation in this research included: material entities such as the buildings and classrooms; learning and teaching processes and resources; relationships and interactions; behaviours, school policies and implementations; and communication and discipline strategies used at the school and in conversations (see Appendix G,

Observation Checklist and some actual observations). Though observations were taken as events that happened in time and space holistically where I found myself in the field, the process involved a constant pursuit to find answers to the research questions and meaning-making from the participants' perspectives and within the theoretical framework.

A common practice in observation is to employ participatory techniques that involve activities like interviews, informal conversations and limited interactions with participants in the study. Walcott (1988, p.189) advises that the observer should 'walk on a fine line' between too much distance and aloofness, on the one side, and too much empathy and identification, on the other. An excess of empathy leads to the researcher coming to be viewed as having 'gone native' to the community researched, a position rendering the researcher enmeshed in the society. I believe that, depending on the nature of the study and the background of the researcher in relation to the community of research, the level of proximity and participation one negotiates may vary. In this research, following Ratner's (1997) principles of social relations in research, the relation I forged with the community was close and open enough to gain sufficient understanding of the cultural phenomena in the community to enable me to make appropriate interpretations of my observations. Although I am conscious of the inevitability of the impact of my presence as a researcher in the research spaces, in the classrooms I kept myself seated at the back of the class so as to reduce my intrusion and to have a full view of interactions between the children and the teacher. I interacted with the teachers and learners only when invited to, or when asking for clarifications for the purposes of addressing my research concern.

This study is one cultural-historical and socio-cultural study among several others that have previously used observation with success in South Africa (for example, Muthivhi, 2008 and Hardman, 2005) within a Vygotskian CHAT framework. Like these studies, the present study used interviews to access unobservable reflexes like thoughts and mental processes that account for the observable behaviour and processes.

#### **4.5.2 Interviews**

In simple everyday language, interviews have to do with a conversation between two people, where one is making an inquiry and the other is responding (Cohen and

Manion, 1980). However, Vygotsky (1987) takes a radical view. He uses the term 'interrogation' when referring to interviews and argues that interrogation is a system of stimuli which, when carefully chosen, can access hidden or unobservable psychological processes or reflexes<sup>12</sup>. This means interrogation is a purposeful and goal-oriented action on the part of the interviewer. Vygotsky argues that:

...interrogation is no superstructure upon the experiment, it is the experiment itself, which has not yet been completed and still continues. The interrogation has to be composed, therefore, not like a conversation, speech, an interrogation by the experimenter, but as a system of stimuli with an accurate registration of each sound, with strictest choice of only those reflected systems of reflexes which in the given experiment can have an absolutely trustworthy, scientific and objective meaning (1997, p.41).

What Vygotsky means by "accurate registration...reflected systems of reflexes" is first about designing questions that are fit for the purpose of the research. Secondly, it is about listening to and observing the respondent with consideration of the context so as to get the meaning of what he or she is saying. Here Vygotsky considered an interview as experiment, where interview questions are a stimulus to which the respondent responds to according to the interpretation the respondent makes of the question. As much as the questions are essential and have to be appropriate for their purpose, participants' interpretation is equally important but not under the researcher's control as is a methodological requirement in the dominant experimental research designs. However, the interpretation of the participant and the response can make a meaningful whole when considered within a double stimulation method and principles.

The discussion below explores the double stimulation, clinical interviews and vignette as interview techniques used in this study.

### ***Double Stimulation***

Vygotsky found the method of dual stimulation or double stimulation to be a relevant method to illuminate hidden or unobservable mental processes like thoughts, memories, emotions, volition and agency (Vygotsky, 1999; Van der Veer and

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<sup>12</sup> Vygotsky, in his attempt to make his debate relevant to his critiquing of some neuropsychological and behaviourist ideas, termed psychological processes, like thought, hidden reflexes

Valsiner, 1994). Double stimulation was first used by Vygotsky and Luria, treating patients with Parkinson's disease who struggled to carry out verbal mediation for motor responses. These patients could only walk across the room when pieces of paper were placed on the floor as second stimuli to mediate between the verbal instruction and the motor action (Wertsch, 1991). Vygotsky also used double stimulation in a waiting experiment as a method to analyse how people control their behaviour and the world around them (Sannino, 2015b; Sannino, Engeström and Lemos, 2016).

While there has been a misunderstanding that limits the use of double stimulation only to experimental research for cognitive performance, Sannino (2015a) and Engeström, Sannino and Virkkunen (2014) made an effort to elicit the neglected inherent principles of double stimulation. Through their literature reviews, they have brought to the surface the use of double stimulation in research settings that elicited higher psychological functions like volition, agency and dialectical processes. Since the purpose of the present study is to elicit that which informs the use of corporal punishment by teachers regardless of the law that forbids the practice, it is my intention to access the teachers' unobservable psychological processes that inform this phenomenon.

Double stimulation entails both the researcher and the participants manipulating the stimulus. As the researcher in the current study, I put forward the problem in the form of a vignette or question that represents the 1<sup>st</sup> or primary stimulus. In response to the vignette or question, the participant is likely to identify the 2<sup>nd</sup> stimulus (maybe an artefact or a tool), which is the stimulus that forms the link between the outside world and the inner, thus stimulating a response eliciting the psychological processes of the participants. This means both the researcher and the participant are involved in manipulating the stimulus. Contrary to the simple behaviourist notion of stimulus-response without the manifestation of the operations of the psychological processes (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1994), Sannino (2015a) posits that double stimulation is based on the principle that human beings are capable of manipulating the tools or the outside world to create new conditions that are suitable for their survival and that produce knowledge and possibilities for transformation. It is this principle that motivated the use of this method of enquiry as part of the interview process in this research.

This method brings forth hidden thoughts of teachers, parents and children of the research school regarding contradictions and possible transformation regarding the use of corporal punishment within the prevailing historical context. The richness and the value of using double stimulation is that it has been referred to in Engeström, Sannino, and Verkkunen (2014) as a technique that serves as formative intervention within the expansive learning process. Double stimulation elicits conflicting stimuli, thus it brings to consciousness the contradictions (discussed in chapter 3) in the activity system or of the cultural practice. The participants' response in resolving the conflict allows for the recognition of the ZPD in the individual or in the activity system, creating the possibility for expanded learning.

### ***Clinical Interview***

Clinical interview as a technique is usually structured, and may also follow the flow of the responses of the respondent (Brenner, 2006) as the interviewer probes to establish the genesis of the expressions of the response. Though questions are structured, they are open ended in nature, allowing the full expression of the interviewee. (See Appendix I, Interview Questions). The main objective of these interview questions is to elicit the personal experience and opinion of the interviewee, as these pertain to the research questions. Unstructured questions were used when seeking clarification or confirmation of data gathered from the responses to the structured questions and from observations.

As a socio-cultural research tool, interviews are a natural and crucial form of finding out what is in the mind of an individual. Arguing on this point Vygotsky asserted that, "every word that people use in telling their story is the microcosm of the consciousness" (1987, p.26). Interviews can reveal the psychological and the cultural phenomena under study. When using interviews as a research instrument, language use and understanding of the respondent's background are key to enabling meaning-making and interpretation of expressions. According to Ratner (2002), meaning in interviews is expressed through a network of verbal expressions. What is more, "meanings are social meanings in the sense that they are all known by members of a social group" (Ratner, 2002, p.146). In this study, I found that what sustained the group interviews is the fact that the utterances of one person in a group seem understood by all other members.

Social meanings and their essence are best captured in the Bakhtinian concept of “ventriloquation”, a way of appropriation of cultural resources and a device for cultural transmission (Castro-Tejerina and Rosa, 2007; Wertsch, 1991). Simply put, ventriloquation refers to an utterance which, “besides being pronounced by the speaker addressing a particular addressee, also borrows some categories and ways of speaking belonging to a social language and previously uttered by other voices” (Castro-Tejerina and Rosa, 2007, p.64). This is how cultural-historical transmission occurs, through verbal expressions that reflect the others’ voices and later appropriated as one’s own.

### ***Vignette***

Vignettes as an interview research technique have been used with success in qualitative research. This method involves giving a fiction story or scenario as a setting that is related to critical incidents that can yield non-directive and open-ended questions. Vignettes were included in all surveys and interviews; group and individual. In this study, vignettes were planned with the room to modify and formulate new ones in response to critical incidences. Vignettes were formulated to fit the group or individual that was being interviewed (O’Dell, Crafter, de Abreu and Cline, 2012). The advantage of using a vignette is that it gives the participant control over how much personal information can they release.

In this research, the vignette was used with all participants. The vignettes used with the children were the same for all the groups, and were designed from the pilot study critical incidents and those observed within the school. From CHAT perspective, in this research the vignette is used as a mediational stimulus, it also elicits the unobservable psychological functions that would not be revealed without the use of the vignette.

### **4.5.3 Draw and talk method**

With rising consideration for children’s rights and for their voices to be taken seriously, different modes of expression such as play and drawings by children need to be given attention over and above their verbal expressions. The draw and talk method allows the research (adult) and the children to create an inter-subjective relationship where children participate in the co-construction of knowledge and giving voice to their meaning-making on issues that concern them (Tay-Lim and Lim, 2013).

In this study, data on issues of corporal punishment was collected from children. Here, children's drawings were used to initiate a non-directive process of finding out about the use of corporal punishment in a school. Questions were used to elicit information that relates to the children's explanations of their understanding, and further questions relating to the research questions of the study. Two grade 1 classes, a grade 4 class, a grade 4 focus group of 6 children, and a grade 6 focus group of 7 children were requested to make the drawings. The instruction given to the groups was about the children's observations of the teacher-directed classroom activities.

“Every day when you come to class, there are things that the teacher uses; can you think which are these things? Remember all the things that the teacher uses every day when she is in class (Silence). On the sheet of paper you have there, I would like you to use your pencil to draw me all the things that you see your teacher use in class every day.”

Once the children had finished making their drawings, I followed with the classroom interview process. I asked children to tell me what they had drawn. Each time they mentioned an item, I asked them what the teacher uses that item for. On items that related to corporal punishment, I asked further questions to address the research questions of the study.

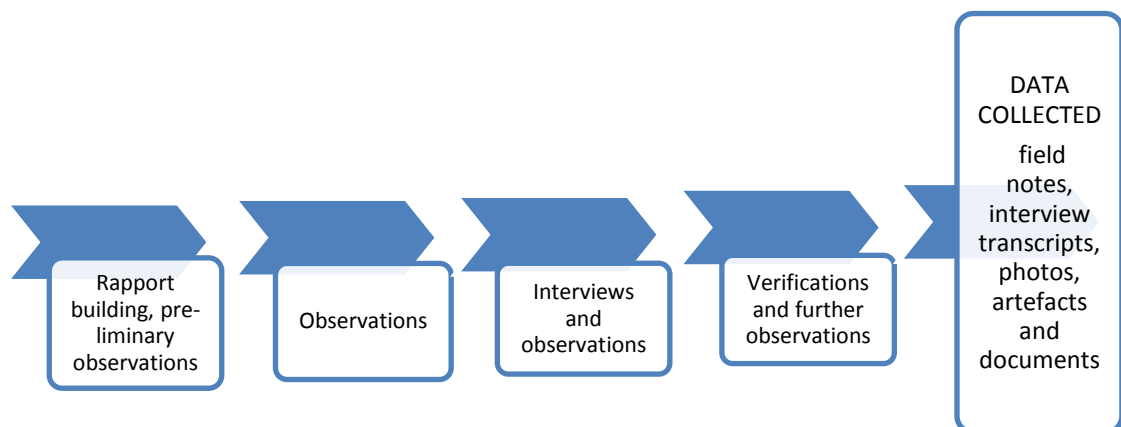
#### **4.6 Data collection process**

Interview questions were piloted at a township primary school of Nyanga, in the Western Cape Province. I conducted individual interviews with two teachers and the principal, and four focus groups; two with children (grade 4 and 7), one with teachers and another one with parents. The purpose of the pilot study was first to establish whether teachers and the community were open to talking about their experiences and current practices of corporal punishment, as it is an illegal practice. Specifically, the responses to my questions would help me to decide on whether full disclosure, a partial disclosure or deception (Mayisela, 2015) should be used when approaching the research school, with implications for ethical considerations for the study. Based on this pilot study, seeing teachers being open and forthcoming in sharing their

experiences and practices related to corporal punishment, I finally decided to use the full disclosure approach for this study.

In addition, the pilot study aimed to test the practical and technical viability of the interviewing tool. From the pilot study, it transpired that the interviews took two hours at the most with each group, and an hour with individuals. This prepared me for the research study interview. I also used the pilot study as a self-reflective process and to sharpen my interviewing skills. I designed the vignette based on the contextually typical incidents for the school; therefore the initial observation was intended to give me time and data to design such a vignette.

Data was collected in four stages for the main study (see figure 4). The purpose of the stage approach to data collection was to provide time between the visits for me to reflect and prepare to address pertinent issues that emerged from the data collected in the previous visit. Secondly, the stage approach allowed the school and participants to progressively review their position in assenting and consenting their involvement in the study.



*Figure 4: The staged approach to data collection process*

The research site was visited four times during the research period. The first visit was in August 2013, with the purpose of building rapport with the school, getting permission from the principal and the SGB, and obtaining consent from the

participants. I spent three weeks (from 6 to 23 August 2013) in the area and the school conducting preliminary observations and familiarising myself with the school and environmental context. Observations and conversations that took place during this period were not to be used in the study, as ethical clearance from the university had not yet been obtained at this point. The second visit to the school was for two weeks in February 2014 for observations, and for another two weeks and three days (from 7 to 25 April 2014) for further observations and interviews.

All 22 teachers, including the Deputy Principal and the Principal, were observed and interviewed. I observed teachers in their morning briefing meetings, in assembly, in their classrooms as they were teaching, during lunch-time, and on the sports fields. I interviewed all the teachers in three focus groups, and six individual interviews and one informal group interview with teachers were conducted, including with the Deputy Principal and the Principal. All five parents, who are members of the SGB, were included in a parent group interview. Another five parents were interviewed in an informal interview together with the general support staff. Parents' activities were also observed within the school, including parents' meetings and disciplinary hearing meetings. Children were observed during learning in their classrooms, and a number of informal interviews with learners as well as teachers were conducted. Two grade 1 classes were interviewed, and 3 focus groups with children from grades 1, 4 and 6 respectively were held. All interviews and interactions were conducted in IsiZulu. During transcription I, an IsiZulu first-language speaker and a fluent English speaker translated interviews to English.

The third visit to the research site was for one week (from 22 to 27 September 2014). This visit was for verification of data and further observations. With each visit, the consenting of participants was revisited, and participants were reminded about the purpose of the research activity. During the verification visit, I met with all participants in groups or individually, depending on the nature of the interviews they had participated in. Participants read through the transcripts and validated their contributions. In addition, I had an opportunity to clarify meaning in some of the participants' statements and some of their observations.

Since this is a single case study, the aim was to work deeper with a small sample. As teachers are the subject of analysis, I ensured that I allocated more time to teachers.

*Table 1: Research methods and participants in this research*

<b>Research Methods</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Children</b>
<b>Observations</b>	All	All	All
<b>Double stimulation</b>	All individual and group interviews	1 group of parents	All groups of children
<b>Clinical interview/ Class interview</b>	All individual and group interviews	1 group of parents	1 group of grade 4 children 1 group of grade 6 children  2 grade 1 classes
<b>Vignette</b>	Individual Interviews	All	All
<b>Drawings</b>	None	None	1 grade 4 class 1 grade 4 group 1 grade 6 group

#### **4.7 Data recording**

Data recording is a cornerstone of every research activity, without which there would be no evidence of research done. According to Angrosino (2007), observations should be recorded descriptively through detailed note-taking, without inferences and interpretations. This sounds ideal, however, I found that recording for a qualitative study can be a challenging exercise especially if one is doing observations within a closed community like a school, where one's attention may be pulled in different directions at once, or where continuous note-taking may sometimes be met with suspicion and resentment in the field, especially if things are not going right. I found myself needing to withdraw into some private space where I could record my observations, but that proved to be difficult as there was no private space, besides in the car. Ultimately, I had to find ways to write only keywords and phrases that would remind me of incidents and events, and then write notes later.

In this research, audio-recording was the main means of recording in interviews. In addition, some proceedings like assemblies, morning briefing meetings, classroom processes and the parents' meeting were also recorded. In these cases, audio-recording captured and made alive the surrounding and the ambience during the

event. Audio-recording of interviews was an advantage in the sense that it freed me from writing and thus enabled me to focus on the interview and be fully attentive to the participants.

My other experience is that the audio recorder captured important cues and sounds from the background, which could have been missed had I only relied on note taking due to my selective focus. An example from this research is one teachers' interview which was conducted after school. On listening to the recorded interview, I could pick up the noise of the children at the beginning of interviews and the sound gradually disappearing as the children left school. Similarly, during the interviews with children, which took place during lunch break, the school bell for ending the break time was picked up as a background cue in the interview setting.

Photographs also provided crucial contextual information and certain cultural nuances that could not be adequately captured in my words, and yet their essence and meaning are valuable. For instance, I could describe the limited resources in the grade R classroom, but the picture expresses this phenomenon with far-reaching depth. I requested permission to take photos from the school, and I used the opportunity with caution; by not being intrusive and offensive to the community.

#### **4.8 Data analysis**

I believe the crux of data analysis is to explicate the cultural meaning out of the data with the purpose to answer the research questions (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). Data gathered through different methods was analysed thematically to establish patterns and categories of information pertinent to specific research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as “a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data” (p.6) as informed by the theoretical framework. As a CHAT informed analysis, in this study I seek to find meaningful themes from the activity systems that incorporate tools, rules, objects and the outcomes of the activities, and contradictions that informed possible transformation.

The formulation of categories that make up themes is dependent on the interpretation of data, which can be approached from the perspective of Seidman's (2006, p.22) question of “whose meaning is it?” This calls for the researcher to

distinguish between “emic” and “etic” categories of meaning analysis (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). Geertz (1973) calls the form of interpretation where the researcher is “seeing things from the actor’s view” “emic analysis” (p.4), and where the researcher interprets from the researcher’s view ‘etic analysis’. Steward, Shamdasani and Rook (2007) provide a clear distinction between emic and etic research data. Emic data arises from natural and indigenous forms of activity, as understood by indigenous communities, while etic data represents the researchers’ *imposed* views on the situation based on what s/he has read or comparing to what s/he knows from elsewhere (Steward et al., 2007; Angrosino, 2007). Ratner (1997) and Steward et al. (2007) warn against thinking of particular research as purely emic or etic, but as existing on a continuum of these two types of research analysis. In this research I have adopted an integrated approach that is suggested by Steward et al. (2007), where my meaning-making has oscillated between and integrated emic and etic analysis.

Sutter (2011), cited in Sannino and Sutter (2011), criticises the current CHAT’s unit of analysis as a “dominated by the researchers’ views and theory” (p.568), at the peril of ignoring those developed by other participants. Contrary to this view, I have found that the analysis of this work, using the activity system, opened opportunities to analyse that data, as the CHAT’s theoretical concepts, tools, community rules and values, and labour divisions, and the objects of activities were merely illuminating but not changing the participants’ meaning contained in the data. In addition, research methods used in this study such as clinical interviews and double stimulation, were more participant focused.

In keeping the qualitative methodology values, Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that it is essential for the researcher to articulate what forms the theme as the measure in terms of size and prevalence within each data item and across the entire data set. They argue that the “keyness” of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measure – but in terms of whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question” (p.10). In this study, the first criterion used to constitute what I consider to be a theme is its prevalence across all the interviews, as well as from observation notes and supporting tools and documents. The second criterion is its prevalence in a data item, where multiple participants echo the same sentiment or idea in the same conversation or interview.

Ratner (2002) described the analysis process in the following manner: “the first step for analysing transcribed interview is to identify meaning units within the document” (p.169). Meaning units are “coherent and distinct meanings embedded within the discourse protocol that may contain a single or complex idea. A meaning unit may be constituted by one word or any number of words, a sentence or several coherent and distinct sentences that create an idea (Ratner, 2002, p.169).

According to Ratner (2002), the selection of meaning units requires the interpretation of what constitutes a coherent distinct theme and this can only be established by the researcher who has been part of the entire protocol and who comprehends what the interview participant is saying. Each meaning unit should be analysed in relation to other meaning units to create a theme. The selection of meaningful units is determined by the research questions and the concepts within the theoretical framework. The same approach can be followed for observations; as incidences and tools have meaning too, their meaning can be organised into meaning units which are linked to others, therefore making themes that can be further interpreted using the theoretical concepts.

In this study the data analysis process leaned on Ratner’s (2002) suggestion because, while I kept the research questions and the theoretical concepts in mind, I first focused on the participants’ meaning units (and the meaning units of other participants in the study) of their utterances in relation to the research questions and my interpretation. Added to this, my interpretation drew by and large from the theoretical framework, which informed my use of clinical interviews, double stimulation and the vignette; techniques that involved continuous interpretation while engaging with the participants. These interpretations kept the conversation flowing to produce comprehensive meaningful chunks of information. With the meaning units emerging from utterances and observations, patterns of meanings were identified, and grouped together to formulate themes (See Appendix J). These themes were then analysed in relation to the research questions, each theme analysed as to how it provided an answer to each question. It emerged that some themes were responding to more than one question, and some themes were not specifically responding to any of the questions. However, they formulated a theoretical response to the question (See Appendix J).

In keeping with Braun and Clarke (2006), data analysis process started from the data collection stage. As I was encountering some pieces of data by means of association, I identified the research question that each data piece speaks to, and I reflectively formulated further questions that deepened my understanding of incidences and occurrences using the theory. The second level of analysis was a conscious listening to the recordings and mentally translating the content from IsiZulu to English, and then the transcription was done in English. While translation was taking place, analysis was also occurring. I then read through and reflected on the observation notes and the transcripts to draw out patterns and meaningful themes from the notes. These themes were first coded into conceptual categories, and a collection of similar conceptual categories formed a basis for categorising data into themes. The themes were then further formulated using the CHAT activity system as a model to identify tools, contradictions, continuities and transformations, thereby unearthing the cultural practices of teachers in corporal punishment.

As my analysis strategy, I implemented Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) approach in order to penetrate the data deeply and widely. This involved trying to find what stands in the gap between the interviews (transcripts and observation data) and the research concerns (research questions) with reference to meaning created through the activity system's theoretical concepts. After identifying the meaning units (common concepts, words, and phrases), I analysed the ideas, the meaning or the voice carried by the themes. I then applied a vertical and horizontal analysis to identify repeats of themes appearing within the same interview and across group and individual interviews, across formal and non-formal interviews and across different genres of data.

#### **4.9 Reliability and validity**

Reliability refers to the consistency and trustworthiness of the research findings. It also answers the question, "if everything remains the same, will the same results be reproduced?" Validity in social science refers to the question of whether the method investigates what it purports to investigate. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2001, p.407), validity also refers to "the degree to which explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world".

A fundamental point articulated in Ratner (1997), and echoed in Morse, Barrett, Manyan, Olson and Spiers (2002), is that reliability and validity should not be determined by external validation, namely, by the external readers, peer researchers, and examiners. Rather, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure rigour with every step of the research process through a *verification* process. This means the researcher needs to identify and correct errors in each step before they have a ripple effect onto the next level of the process. I therefore needed to work immaculately and reiteratively to identify errors and self-correct. This process also “ensures congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies and analysis” (Morse et al., p.10). Though verification strategies will not be discussed in detail in this thesis, this research has taken cognisance of the fundamental principles within the qualitative methodology, captured in Morse et al.’s (2002) process of “methodological coherence, case study selection, developing a dynamic relationship between the participants and the researcher, data collection and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development” (p.11) in order to attain validity.

Triangulation is a common approach to achieving rigour in qualitative research. Triangulation refers to strategies used to reduce bias by using multiple research methods, bigger or multiple samples, and by employing multiple research techniques (Golafshani, 2003). In this study, both verification and triangulation are considered as techniques to ensure validity and reliability. Multiple research methods, namely observations and interviews, were used. Using a variety of and multiple participants from the same community was another triangulation strategy, where data collected from children, parents and teachers was used to confirm and validate the assumptions embedded in each data set. After interviews were transcribed and interpreted, I revisited the participants to verify the utterances and the interpretations of participants themselves and those of myself as a researcher.

#### **4.10 Ethical considerations**

In keeping with best practice internationally, most South African universities have Research Ethics Committees which ensure ethics regulation of their institutions’ research work (Israel and Hay, 2006). This research project has obtained clearance from the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of

Cape Town. In addition, the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDE) was approached for ethics clearance of possible infringement of its ethical principles. After perusing the research proposal for this study and having all questions relating to its ethical standards satisfactorily answered, the MDE granted permission to continue with the research (see Appendix A). The SGB of the target research school subsequently granted me permission to do the research at the school (Appendix B).

This research has considered and observed to the best possible terms all ethical principles stated in the British Education Research Association (BERA)(2011), which relate to respect of research participants, and protection of the rights to autonomy of all individuals, even those who are in vulnerable positions like children. The first principle, the right to autonomy, was observed by providing participants including children, with adequate information regarding the research, and by giving them the choice not to participate in the research if they want and assuring them of no penalty for not participating (See Appendix C, D, E and F). The use of appropriate pedagogic strategies in interacting with children was necessary as an enabler for children's genuine and informed participation (David, Edwards, Alldred, 2001).

The second principle is that of beneficence, which concerns the commitment of the researcher to do no harm, to reduce risk, and maximise benefit to the human subjects involved in the research (BERA, 2011). This principle is also re-iterated in the UNICEF's Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC), which advises that children involved in research should not be harmed by the research process or outcomes (Kirk, 2007; Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson and Fitzgerald, 2013). In this research project, participants were informed that the interview may evoke their past traumatic experiences of corporal punishment, and therefore they may need counselling and debriefing to reduce the psychological impact of interviews. To address this concern, I visited the local social development office and arranged for counselling of participants who may need counselling and debriefing.

The third principle involves justice in equitable and fair selection of participants and extension of benefits (Seidman, 2006). Children involved in the research should be treated as equitable and just (Graham et al., 2013). With this principle in mind, cognisance of the aims, objective and methodology of the research, which are the principal drivers of the selection of participants, was taken into consideration.

The fourth ethical principle taken into consideration in this study is that of informed consent and voluntary participation. Participants need to give informed consent for their participation in the research process (Seidman, 2006; BERA, 2011). Participants in this study, both adults and children, were given full information on the nature and the purpose of the research. The level and the extent of their participation was clarified, enabling them to make an informed decision before participating. On agreeing to participate, each of the participants was requested to sign a consent form (see Appendices C, D, E and F).

Although the protection of the identity of participants is key, conversely this principle of confidentiality and anonymity has limitations that have implications for this particular study. According to Woodhouse et al. (1995), this limitation is a thorny issue, especially when researching on illegal phenomenon like corporal punishment. This research may yield information that is legally conflictual to the interest of the education policy in the SASA (1996), therefore the researcher need to highlight this conflict of interest to the participants, bearing in mind that the researcher may be subpoenaed by the court of law to reveal the details of the data, including the participants' identities. Although such revelation may offset the outcomes of data, it is only ethical for the researcher to inform participants about this exclusion on the principle of protection of participants' identity before they consent (Hagan, 1982) (see appendices G, H, I and J for this research). Further consent for voice recording, interviews and photos was sought from participants. Here, the participants were assured that only I will have access to the recorded information and the photos, which are always kept under lock and key at my home. They were assured that photos used will be censored to conceal their identities. Whenever the recorded information was transcribed, I took special care to codify identities of participants. Permission for publishing the data in journals and in a thesis was also requested from the participants.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has explicated the use of a CHAT-oriented qualitative methodology, with particular reference to Ratner's qualitative research principles. I believe it is through the research method embedded in this methodology that I could access the participants' (teachers, children and parents) psychological functions that inform the

practice of corporal punishment used for disciplining children at school. Within this methodology, ethnographic observations, interviews, children's drawings were used at a public primary school in rural Mpumalanga. This chapter also demonstrated how double stimulation, clinical interviews and the vignette as Vygotskian methods were effective in eliciting hidden mental processes beyond the stimulus-response rhetoric. A further exposition was made on finding themes and meaning units as data analysis technique through which data was interpreted in relation to the research questions and the underpinning theory. Though this is a qualitative study, considerations on reliability and validity as well as the ethical procedures and principles relevant for this study were discussed within the methodological perspective.

Considering the essence of historicity in understanding the sociogenesis of corporal punishment, Chapter 5 illuminates the historical processes that are pertinent in understanding the phenomenon of corporal punishment within the South African context.

## **CHAPTER 5: CULTURAL-HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT**

*An emphasis on psychological approaches without consideration of anthropological, sociological, historical and linguistic characteristics of activity is risky and narrows the focus to the study of specific and limited aspects of activity (Sannino, Daniels and Gutierrez, 2009, p.1)*

### **5.1 Introduction**

Historicity is a central principle of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). In this chapter I foreground relevant historical and social activities that illuminate the cultural genesis of discipline and corporal punishment in its manifestations within the South African rural school context. To accomplish this, I provide a brief reflection on the development of the South African education system, particularly but not solely in the context of schooling, as well as the historical and social background of the research school and its surrounding community. The chapter draws from selected historical literature, utterances of the retired teachers (who are the older generation among the interviewed participants), government records and the historical account of the school as it was presented by the principal. My observations during field work informs the account of the current context and practices within the school and in the community. I also provide a lens into the practices of child labour and child work over time as these practices continue to have spatial-temporal connections to schooling and corporal punishment. I draw on interview data from children to illustrate the current relational landscape between teachers, children and their families, and the domestic work context.

### **5.2 Cultural-historical background in education**

A theoretical assumption of this thesis is that the aims and objectives of schooling shape the cultural activities and tools within the schooling system. An understanding of these aims and objectives as they change over time is thus crucial to the question of why the practice of corporal punishment persists in schools. These activities and tools are internalised and then, in the process of being externalised, they transform

the environment and the society, thus transferring these activities and tools across generations. It is through a reflection on the history of South African education that the emerging patterns of thinking underpinning the aims and objectives of schooling can be understood as cultural tools and as an essential part of the activity system that created a fertile ground for the perpetuation of corporal punishment in South Africa.

Scholars of South African education history often categorise time periods of education development in relation to the centres of power of the time (Kallaway, 1984; Jansen, 1990). During the pre-colonial *Traditional Education era*, education was informal and the curriculum was based on oral transmission and modelling of historical and cultural values, norms and skills. This was followed by the *Slave Education era*, when formal education was first introduced in South Africa through the establishment of the first slave school in 1658 which aimed at transmitting basic Christian religious teachings and values. The notion of “slave school” set the tone for decades of race and power relations, with dominance and subservience forming the South African social fabric. The third era identified is the *Mission Education era*, which was the result of the influx of missionary agents who introduced European and liberal education to all South Africans. However, this liberal form of education was not appreciated by the Dutch who believed Africans were associating themselves more with the thinking of the Europeans, which threatened the Dutch’s power (Jansen, 1990; Molteno, 1984). This tension was resolved by the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. This led to the introduction of *Native Education*, when Blacks were legislatively excluded from socio-political activities and education was overtly pronounced in racially segregative terms. The purpose of this segregation was to provide inferior education to Black people. When the National Party took over governance in 1948, it introduced the apartheid system that overtly shaped the education system in racially segregated terms. Under the apartheid system, racial segregation formed the foundation that cut across all policies. During the time of all these education systems, judicial use of corporal punishment on children had been legalised, and its use in schools was part of the normal practice which was not restrained; rather, it was openly encouraged by tools such as log-books or punishment registers (Holdstock, 1990).

South Africa's current education system is legislatively a post-corporal punishment era, but the practice of corporal punishment remains ubiquitous, particularly in township schools. Townships bear their history from the different strokes of systematic violence by the various colonial systems which existed in South Africa prior to 1994. The systematic violence was orchestrated towards the natives through oppressive racial, social, labour, land ownership, and economic policies and laws. More specific to this study are education laws, which resulted in the current evident deprivation of higher psychological development that would be essential for the transformation and reengineering of child discipline tools relevant for the post-corporal punishment era.

Bantu Education<sup>13</sup> had a pronounced governance activity system that orchestrated psychological violence in the schooling system through the denial of quality education and the provision of education of inferior content for the native majority, using oppressive cultural tools in the classroom. The curriculum and teacher training were inferior in content and quality, and valuable subjects like math, science and geography were excluded. (Hartshorne,1992). The apartheid architect H. F. Verwoerd articulated this philosophy around the education of Black people:

What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice...That is absurd (Jansen, 1990).

This kind of thinking about the education of Black people, which was characterised by poor curriculum design, was actually spelled out earlier by Loram in 1927 and Pells in 1938. They believed that Black people only needed to know hygiene, gardening, home craft and handcraft, all of which were mediated under strict and oppressive disciplinary measures using the stick.

These curriculum objectives continued to be pursued under the Bantu Education system, as Hartshorne (1992) has critically noted from Eiselen's (1949) report which highlights the same objectives. For the purposes of this study I highlight Hartshorne's (1992) reference to the 1948 Transvaal<sup>14</sup> curriculum for primary school objectives

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<sup>13</sup> Bantu Education is the 1953 education policy that racially separated education and schools, providing black South African natives with inferior education through its poor and oppressive administration, inadequate education resources and inferior curriculum geared, all towards manual labour production.

<sup>14</sup> Transvaal is the pre-democracy name for Mpumalanga province.

which were “to train the children in habits of moral and physical cleanliness so as to make them useful members of a progressive society” and “to be taught to respect their elders and the institutions of their people.” By virtue of their race, Black people were naturally inferior in the land and had no access to ownership of goods, land and other economic resources. Therefore, they did not need to learn any scientific or industrial knowledge, which would give them the necessary psychological tools for social advancement. The schools for Black people were not provided with learning aids and teachers were not adequately trained for teaching higher order thinking skills (Jansen, 1990). The education of Black people served to produce a well behaved and conditioned working class as part of cheap labour.

During the apartheid era, the National Party government also instituted the Christian National Education, which adopted a philosophy grounded on compulsion, moulding and corporal punishment as ‘scientifically irrefutable’ cornerstones for educating children (Porteus, Vally, and Ruth, 2001). According to Holdstock (1990), effective keeping of discipline was the major key performance indicator in the teaching career which was tied to the expectation of the teacher to successfully employ corporal punishment to enforce learning. In this setting, corporal punishment is clearly elevated as an essential tool and skill in education that shapes the ethos of suppression and subservience.

With regard to teachers’ career success, the report stated that “the teacher who succeeds through his school to teach his community to live a healthier life, has to cultivate the lands more effectively...[and] will be amply awarded for his service by the increasing support of the community” (Hartshorne, 1992, p.32). It is without doubt that these forms of teacher appraisal had an agenda to produce “a degree of correspondence between the schooling system’s demand of the pupil regarding discipline, and the modes of behaviour required of an ideal worker” (Kallaway, 1984, p.11). Here, the use of corporal punishment was rewarded without the provision of thinking tools necessary for the development of higher psychological tools such as self-regulation, problem-solving and agency.

It is against this political and historical backdrop that the majority of the retired and current teachers were trained. Some of them taught during the apartheid era (i.e. before 1994) and were part of the education transition process, when the new

curriculum and policies were tried and tested. With the new democratic era, these teachers were expected to abandon the oppressive teaching approaches they had learned and culturally imbibed from their social and schooling environment and teaching lives. These generations of teachers were further expected to adapt to the new post-apartheid education system which sought to provide democratic and child-centred education at the stroke of a pen.

The objectives of schooling are closely linked to the teaching methods. These teachers relied on rote learning as their teaching method, a method that they internalised and anchored during teacher training where emphasis was on teacher-centred approaches with limited cognitive stimulation. Rote learning is also lacking of the appraisal of problem-solving, self-regulation and reasoning skills. The adopted pedagogical approach gave little attention to praxis of the teaching and learning processes. Teacher-child relations, the pedagogical approach and the curriculum design reflected those observed by Paulo Freire (1970) in his popular *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He observed that in the classroom the teacher is regarded as the apex of all knowledge, while the children are considered as *tabula rasa*, who were there just to imbibe knowledge from the teacher and regurgitate it when needed by the teacher in exams. More significant for discipline and power relations, Freire (1970) contends that “the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he set in opposition to the freedom of the students” (p.54). So here, even the teaching approach serves as a symbolic tool to oppress psychological development, within the teaching and learning activity system.

Some of Freire’s tenets of teacher-centred pedagogy were still observed in the research school in 2014, in the current democratic era in South Africa. Similar observations were also made by Muthivhi (2008), who noted teacher-centred classroom practices, which he linked to African traditional teaching approaches of story-telling and folktales, whereby only the adult told the story and the children listened and asked questions at the end of the story. Following MacDonald (2005a, 2005b), he argued that the authoritarian teaching approach bears a Pan-African identity, with teachers assuming professional authority and administering corporal punishment in the classroom. Muthivhi seem to believe that such practices are embedded in the long term cultural exposure, based on the historical systems of the

day. Drawing heavily from the views of Wertsch (1998) and Cole (1996), Muthivhi (2008) affirms the essence of historicity imbued within socio-cultural practices and interactions. He argues that the practices observed in post-apartheid classrooms and schools reflect some continuity of historical and some possible transformations manifesting in the present political, societal and institutional nuances. Hence, the oppressive and authoritative socio-political atmosphere, and tensions resulting from the resistance thereof, all characterised the previous historical dispensation which continues to permeate all pockets of society, including classrooms.

### **5.3 The school's historical and socio-economic context**

#### **5.3.1 Brief history of the village**

Fundani Primary School (a pseudonym), henceforth Fundani, is the research school for this project, is in the village of Saul Mkhizeville (henceforth Mkhizeville), historically known as Driefontein. It was recently renamed Saul Mkhizeville, after a community leader who fought against forced removals in the early 1980s (See Appendix X), and who, after a spate of police brutality and harassment of the community, was eventually murdered by the apartheid police regime. Mkhizeville is located 45 kilometers from Piet Retief in Mkhondo Municipality, which is under the jurisdiction of the Gert Sibande Metro-Municipality of Mpumalanga Province.

There was very little development, if any, in this village and the surrounding areas due to the 1913 Land Act, which prohibited native people from owning land in South Africa, particularly in areas designated for White farmers and for state ownership. Based on the notion that the people 'had no land' and no resources to buy land, they were by default tenants wherever they settled. In this way, people were subjected to the exploitative tenant labour system, where the tenant, his wife and children had to labour for the farmer in return for their tenancy of a small piece of land for subsistence and small scale cattle farming to survive. Since the wife and the children were a shared labour resource for both the farmer and the tenant, sometimes a quarrel between them would erupt over who the wife and the children should work for in a particular season (Delius and Hay, 2009). In 1912, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the founder member of the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress (ANC)) bought Driefontein through the South African Native Farmers Association (Delius and Hay, 2009). From then on,

Mkhizeville became a refuge and a home for South Africans who wanted to escape farm slavery and for those who were evicted from the neighboring land. After 1994, some portions of land were sold to more people, and as a result, one can see brick houses being built in that area, although most of the houses are still mud structures. According to Statistics SA, 35% are mud houses, 30% are brick structures, and the rest are Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses, [http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page\\_id=993&id=mkhondo-municipality](http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=mkhondo-municipality) accessed 8 August 2016). In the years of Mkhizeville as an establishment, most young people left the place for employment opportunities in Johannesburg and other developing industrial cities to financially sustain the livelihood of their families in the village. A few who had received formal education with at least Standard 8 between the 1950s and 1970s received further training in community serving careers like teaching and nursing. While some of these young people drifted to urban areas after training, only a few returned to work and serve the village. The retired teachers interviewed in this study represent the second generation of teachers in this community. The third and the fourth generations are currently teaching in the schools (MaKhumalo, February, 2014).

### **5.3.2 The school: location and surroundings**

The first school in the village was called Driefontein Bantu School. This school was later divided into Qalani (*The Beginning*) Junior Primary (grade 1-grade 4) and Cabangani (*Think for yourself*) Senior Primary schools (grade 5 and 6). Later, Qedela (*Finishing*) Secondary School was established. With time, the number of schools increased and the research school is one of the seven schools in Driefontein. The research school was started by Lutheran missionaries in 1972 in collaboration with the community members (their names are not revealed for confidentiality purposes). The school operated in two mud classrooms and it was called Khanyisa School (pseudonym). In 1994<sup>15</sup> the Department of Education bought the land from the farmer on whose land the school was situated and, over time, developed the school to its current state.

The school is situated at about 400 meters from a tarred main road that cuts across the length of the village, linking the town of Piet Retief to the coal mine, which is one

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<sup>15</sup> A significant year in South African history, the year of the first democratic elections.

of the main economic resources of the region. The other main economic resource is the Sappi plantation, which produces paper and other wooden products. The Sappi company is on the far west of the village. Monetary circulation is between these two enterprises, their employees living in Mkhizeville (the village) and in Piet Retief (the town), government employees like police, health care workers, teachers and social grant holders, and the local market place. Between the school and the main road is the local market place, with buses and taxis that transport people from the village to town (Piet Retief), and the local service centre.

At the local service centre there are some satellite offices of government institutions, such as social services, a local health care centre, municipal offices, a police station and a community hall. The local supermarket, which is known for charging double the cost of an item compared to when an item is bought in town, is also situated here. All pensioners and social grant-holders from Mkhizeville and surrounding villages receive their payout at the local social services offices. Usually it takes place during the first week of the month, and during these pension payout days, there is excitement and a 'Christmas' vibe in the village; this is the only time during the month that people have access to goods and money as the market operates in full swing and people have received social grant money (Observations, February 2014, April 2014, September 2014). This creates a high rate of absenteeism and truancy among children at the school during this time. Children do not go to school for reasons such as the following: they go to the pay-point to ensure that they get some money from their mothers or fathers before they spend it on alcohol or other things, some who do not live with their parents or grandparents go there to meet them and inform them of their needs, and other children go just for the sheer pleasure of being at the market place (30 September 2015; IP.209, 15-22).

Due to the presence of the coal mine and Sappi forestry, the village draws migrants from other South African provinces like Limpopo and Kwa-Zulu Natal, and from the neighboring countries of Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho. Even though IsiZulu remains the dominant language, the diversity in linguistic and cultural ambiance of the area gets particularly pronounced on market days.

### **5.3.3 The school: tools and activities**

Currently the school has fifteen brick and cement classrooms, four of which were donated by the local coal mine operating in the area. Each classroom is painted and vinyl tiled, and has a ceiling (although it is falling down in some classrooms) and a chalkboard. Some are electrified, while in some classes electricity is not available. However, observations suggested inadequate maintenance of these available resources.

The school has a total of 640 children, with grade R, grade 2 and grade 7 classes populated with 55, 54 and 66 children respectively. Other classrooms have an average of 45 children. The staff compliment of the school is 22 teachers, including three Heads of Department (HODs), and a Deputy Principal, the Principal and two administrative officers. Work space is a serious problem for everyone in the school. The school has a make-shift administrative facility as there is no space for an office or even a staffroom. They have improvised by partitioning a classroom into three to create the principal's office, an HOD office and the administration office. All management staff shares their offices, which also serve as storage with boxes of books and bags of sports equipment piled on the sides of the offices (see Appendix T).

Every morning the school starts with a 15-minute staff meeting, in which morning prayers are performed and briefings on new updates are given. This meeting takes place in a tiny administration office where close to 15 teachers squeeze in and others stand at the door, just to capture a little of what is being announced in the meeting. The meeting starts with a song in which all teachers participate. Their beautiful and lively singing is bound to lift and awaken even the dullest soul. From this meeting teachers go the assembly where they find children in the process of gathering. Teachers join and encourage children to stand in lines according to their respective grades and classes. Teachers continuously keep discipline and children respond appropriately. Some teachers have a stick in their hand as a reminder for children to be quiet, listen to teachers and behave as expected.

The school's medium of instruction is IsiZulu in the Foundation Phase and English in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. Both the teachers and children come from diverse language backgrounds, since some of the teachers come from different parts

of the country where different languages are spoken and some of the children are children of the migrants. The school has reading material, workbooks and exercise books for children and teachers. However, there was still a shortage of text books by February, 2014 and teachers were still ordering from the Department of Education. Teachers reported that in some cases the delay was due to the fact that incorrect books were delivered, like the grade R workbooks were written in SiSwati. The school lends textbooks to children who return them to the school at the end of the year.

The school has no library; however, fortunately for this school, the community library is situated about 500m from the school (a community library was launched in September 2014 during my fieldwork visit). The school also has no laboratory or conventional teaching aids. Besides the radio that only works with a battery, there are no audio, video or any other electronic teaching and learning support materials available at the school.

A grade R class of 60 children only has 4 pre-school tables. Blankets and mats are brought from home by the generous grade R teacher, while some are brought by parents (see Appendix T). No other necessary furniture for a grade R class is available, besides a jar full of broken wax crayons and chalk. The little available material is broken or unusable (for example, there are bags of paint powder, but there are no brushes and mixers). There are no coloring books, and the teacher cannot make as many copies as she needs. If she manages to make copies, these are only enough for three or four children to work together on one copy.

The school has a backyard shelter used both as a feeding scheme kitchen and a toolshed. In the shelter, there are no tables, stove, water supply or sink. The feeding scheme mothers improvise by using tables from the classrooms and cook on the wood fire made on the ground outside the shelter. In principle, all children are fed from the feeding scheme. There are two women employed by the school to work in the feeding scheme and a grounds-man to clean and do maintenance of the premises.

Since the school is situated in a grassland region, most parts of the school premises are covered in grass, except for the area between the classrooms, which is used as the school's assembly area. This area is just uncovered ground, with loose soil that

makes dust as children run around playing. Usually dust can be seen rising among the children as they gather at assembly, some coughing, probably from inhaling the dust as they sing (see Appendix T). More dust is produced as they routinely march in a military “left right, left right” rhythm to their classrooms at the end of the assembly.

### **5.3.4 The community: “Give them a hiding”**

While this study focuses on corporal punishment as it occurs in a school setting, this section provides a view of how this phenomenon manifests in the community in which the school exists. I had numerous informal conversations with community members that culminated in their expression of support of corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool. During my rapport building visit in August 2013, I took advantage of an invitation to go along with the delegate of teachers to represent the school at a community meeting that was hosted by the village chief. The meeting was under the banner of a government poverty alleviation programme which made the community aware of business opportunities available, especially for women and youth. Representatives from government economic development programmes, such as the Youth Development Fund and the Department of Agriculture, were present to introduce projects on stock farming and the “Masibuyele Emasimini<sup>16</sup>”. The meeting was at the community hall and observed all formal meeting protocols. The chief was one of the stakeholder participants in this meeting, and his final word was sought on every item discussed. This meeting was an epitome of my experience of the collective nature and cultural manifestation of a number of activities

In this meeting community members brought up other community related problems, one of which was the scholar transport problem. Here, a community member complained about the poor service of the scholar transport which results in children not reaching school. Another person responded and spoke of children’s lack of sense of urgency when they walk to the bus stop, which is the cause of children getting left behind by the bus. The chief pleaded with parents to keep an eye on their children’s coming and going, and stipulated that they should give children a hiding so that they do not get out of control. On hearing this from the chief, the teachers who

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<sup>16</sup> “Let us go back to the fields” – a Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture government’s project supporting emerging farmers with the aim to alleviate poverty and curb food shortage.

came to the meeting with me looked at me as a way of making sure that I had heard that even the chief encourages parents to use corporal punishment.

These observations were not anticipated as I never planned to conduct observations outside the school, but this community meeting has shown how the community of Mkhizeville functions as a collective whereby teachers are invited to represent the school in community meetings organised by the chief. This means that schools are run both legislatively and traditionally, and thus cannot be divorced from the traditional influence. If the chief openly supports the use of corporal punishment to discipline children, schools within the chief's jurisdiction are likely to use corporal punishment to discipline children.

#### **5.4 A practice historically embedded in child labour**

The Anti-Slavery Society (1983) has documented a history of child work and child labour in South Africa dating back from 1715, or rather from the “earliest European settlement” in the south-western Cape (p.9). In 1775 the government legislated that the children of slaves should be apprenticed as early as the age of 18 months, and be released to the farm owner on which they lived at twenty five years old. Delius and Hay (2009) cite records of children who were beaten by slave masters and farmers in the Mpumalanga area in 1959. These were confirmed by retired teachers who attested to this culture of child slavery and beatings between the 1930s and the 1940s. One of these teachers praised her father for progressive thinking, for having the vision to educate his children. This vision inspired him to move out of a farmers dwelling and to settle in Mkhizeville in an attempt to free his children's descendants from the farm labour system. He intentionally looked for a place with education opportunities for his children. This is how Teacher K and her sister got into teaching (RT.110, 22-25).

The beatings of children by farmers were perpetuated by the perception that children needed to be punished in order to perform adequately, as this is the language they understand in order to learn (Anti-Slavery Association, 1985). It is possible, too, that, in a literal sense, the language barrier between the children and the farmers may have exacerbated the use of corporal punishment as a way of communication. In most parts of Southern Africa, children were seen as miniature workers who needed

to be apprenticed in household and farm work, thus denying them opportunities for schooling and education (Anti-Slavery Association, 1985). Remnants of this view of children are still perpetuated in families, particularly in the rural areas where labour and household activities are still largely manual.



*Figure 5: Child labourer dressed in sacks on a Bethal farm, in 1959 (Delius and Hay, 2009)*



*Figure 6: Child fetching water for domestic use in Mpumalanga, in 2014*

Children – both boys and girls – are expected to tender their domestic livestock, fetch water from the rivers and wells, and participate in every work activity that adults are involved in. This has not changed much in this village, as some households still depend on wood for energy, fetch water from the river streams (see figure 6) and keep livestock that needs to be tended. Such domestic duties are usually left to children to perform, including looking after their younger siblings, cleaning and cooking. At school, too, children have duties such as cleaning the classrooms (see figure 6, in Appendix T), cleaning the board, and being sent by teachers to do chores like warming teachers' lunch food in the microwave or on other errands. Children's presentations in an interview highlighted the tension existing between the attainments of education goals and satisfying the cultural expectations of doing home-chores.

## 5.5 Home chores vs homework: a culture clash

Though the focus of this research is on the question of how children's chores and schooling as cultural-historical and socio-cultural practices seem to have contradicting developmental objects, one cannot continue without noticing the historical exploitative nature of child work in South Africa and its profound connections to the normalisation of the use of corporal punishment. I am of the opinion that here is nothing amiss with children engaging in work-related activities. Firstly, as part of development, children have a natural inclination to engage in goal-oriented activities within a socio-cultural environment, be it through play or what is perceived as work. Secondly, children naturally display the innate desire to imitate adults in their vicinity, and participate in socio-cultural activities, which brings about learning and development (Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, what could be perceived as inappropriate work in one culture, could be part of child development in another culture. Home-chores regulated according to the child's development, interests and needs may foster the development of a healthy identity, self-worth and parent-child relations. Social and economic conditions in families are likely to make this developmental process a disadvantage for children, as is apparent in the way it clashes with the school culture of homework.

From this study and numerous other studies it appears that the notion of "homework", which is a popular practice in the South African school system, does not seem to fit well with the poor socio-economic and rural contexts. Even though not doing homework has been cited as one of the major reasons why children were beaten at school (Holdstock (1990), corporal punishment has not guaranteed the eradication of this phenomenon. The excerpt below is from a conversation with the children, their articulations reveal the hidden complexities and the conundrum of the education system as it plays out in the rural socio-economic and cultural milieu.

Children: There are those [teachers] who hit for a valid reason and others for a no good reason (all)

Researcher: what is an invalid reason?

All: It's when you haven't finished your work, you haven't done your work [all at once], when you have not written the homework, why you didn't write the homework, or when the teachers give us classwork, and homework [all voices struggling to be heard].

Child 1: And when others do not finish the classwork, then when she comes the following day then she demands her work, when she looks at her work and she finds yesterday's class work you didn't write it, but you haven't written the homework

Child 2: Or when he has given homework [could not finish]

Child 3: Or even when we have written, they say what we have written is nothing, even though we have written everything in full, they hit us with pipes, with a pipe here [showing me on his hand].

Researcher: For writing what is not right

Child 3: yes, but we have written

Researcher: for not finishing your work?

Children: No, we had finished [all, others helping to explain], the problem is we do not know if what we have written is right or wrong, but we think it was right.

Researcher: Mhhh, it means you were not agreeing with him [the teacher], he says is it wrong, and you say it is right.

Children: Yes, we thought it is right.

Child: Even when she gives us classwork then the period ends, and if you haven't finished he say you must go and finish and if you come back not finished she hits you.

Researcher: Mhhh

Child 4: Or when he gives you homework and when you arrive at home they make you work...

Children: They make you work, and you eventually don't finish your school work

All: Then when you write in the classroom, then he comes in he hits you, when you tell him he does not understand, he says he doesn't care he wants his work.

Children: Even if it was raining, and the electricity goes off they don't care when you tell them they don't care, they say they also studied with a candle

Researcher: Mhhhh, you were saying something, please say it [allowing another who has been trying to say something].

Child 5: I was saying even if you ran out of electricity at home, and you come having not written, you write in the morning they shout you or they hit you, they say they don't care.

Child 2: when you write in the morning, when do you write, is it before the school starts or during the period.

Child 6: Even when we write at home in a hurry, at home they say "go to school you go, go to school" [shouting], then we go to school and even there we try to write, and the teacher says you must check your neighbour if he is writing, then they tell on us, then they hit us.

Researcher: you had something else that you wanted to say [talking specifically to another who got less chance to talk].

Child 2: Yes they hit us even when we come late in the morning, maybe at home there was no electricity, or when you were not able to write, you busy at home, when you arrive very early, and you arrive very early and you write, you just wrote your homework then the teacher hit you.

Researcher: In other words, teachers do not want you to write homework in the morning.

Child 1: Yes, they don't like, even if we explain

Researcher: Is there anything you want to say? [giving focus to another child].

Child 6: Or when you were not able to come to school because your mother was sick and she went to the clinic and the children cannot stay on their own and you remained to look after the kids and when you come here they hit you they say they want the work.

Children: even if you explain that...

Researcher: Let's hear what he has to say [directing that another child speak, who was struggling to get through].

Child 7: If it happens maybe you see that the electricity is little as you go to school, you come back from school there is still little remaining and you play and play and play, or they make you do some work, you work and work, when you start doing your work the card goes off, and there is no money to buy a new card, then when we come in the morning and we try to write and because we also write slow we cannot be fast, you write, you write and write then teacher eventually say you must stop (G6C. 261, 9 - 264, 1).

In this excerpt, the children talk about being beaten every day for not doing their homework. With a sense of helplessness, they describe how they are never able to do the homework as expected by their teachers. Firstly, some of their homes do not have electricity and, where there is electricity, families do not have the financial resources to buy electricity, and when there is electricity they are urged to use it sparingly. Therefore, these children find that after sunset, they cannot do their homework, and they cannot start their homework earlier because when they come from school they have “household chores waiting for us [them]”.

I also had an informal discussion with one of the HODs, Teacher Kw, who lamented that most children do not do any school work at home because most of those who live in the RDP homes are child-headed families, and where there is an adult, usually it is the child’s grandmother. Some of the elderly try hard to assist the child, but it is difficult for them. Adding to the list is the homes where some form of business is taking place, like a spaza<sup>17</sup> shop, a tavern and traditional healing schools, where children are expected to assist their parents. Despite all these challenges which are related to children’s family and socio-economic conditions, teachers at school continue to demand that children do homework, and they punish children for failing to deliver the homework.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that, within the rural South African context, the practice of corporal punishment can be traced historically from the interacting socio-political and economic activity systems and the education activity system. Within these interacting activity systems, one can tease out the social rules and values, and find clear divisions of labour set out within these communities that were mediated through corporal punishment and other forms of systematic violence as a cultural tool from different levels of social structures. At the government level, governing systems, policies, police brutality, violence, power abuse, and land dispossession of the oppressed have been activities that are associated with the use of corporal

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<sup>17</sup> Is a small and informal convenience store within the residential neighbourhood operated from a family’s home serving the neighbourhood.

punishment. At social level, the traditional system of chieftaincy evidently encourages parents to raise children in a particular way, by watching closely what they do, and even to use corporal punishment to instil desired behaviour. Teachers as members of the community and subjects of the chief are also indirectly encouraged to use corporal punishment. To further understand the teachers' internalisation of corporal punishment as an effective mediation tool for the development of psychological functions that lead to appropriate behaviour in children, chapter 6 presents data on the teachers' childhood exposure to corporal punishment.

## CHAPTER 6: TEACHERS' CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND CONTINUITIES OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

*"How can you say that corporal punishment be abolished? The very instrument that made you who you are" (Foundation Phase Teacher, September 2014)*

### 6.1 Introduction

If there are cultural tools that have been transmitted through generations, child-rearing practices are among them. Teachers rely on their traditional knowledge of discipline – a constellation of their previously internalised child-rearing and disciplinary strategies, with corporal punishment being the dominant tool. For an in-depth understanding of why teachers use corporal punishment in their classrooms, it is essential to look into how they were raised and at their childhood discipline experiences. This chapter answers the research questions: What are teachers' childhood experiences of corporal punishment and their present understanding of the practice? What do teachers make of corporal punishment and their current disciplinary strategies? What reasons, if any, do teachers give for believing in, or resorting to, corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice? This chapter presents data on how the two generations of teachers – retired and current – experienced discipline within their schooling context, where corporal punishment was intricately integrated into the rote learning and teaching approach. In an attempt to understand current disciplinary practices and beliefs, I juxtapose their remembered experiences with the discipline strategies that current teachers are using in their own classrooms, and against the current legal framework that renders corporal punishment illegal.

### 6.2 "We were beaten as children"

All the participants in focus groups and in individual interviews asserted that being beaten as a child was a norm both at home and at school, although more severely so at school. For example, when asked how the teachers were disciplined as children, the Foundation Phase teachers responded in this manner:

Researcher: Now let me change focus and ask you a different question, or let's start by taking you back to your childhood. Remember the way you were raised, while you were in primary school. How were you disciplined?

All teachers: we were disciplined, we were beaten.

All teachers: we were beaten indeed [emphasising] (FPT.7, 11-16)

This response is similar to that of the rest of the teachers interviewed. As observed by numerous researchers on school based violence, the majority of South African teachers had experienced corporal punishment as the legitimate form of child discipline until 1996 (Morrell, 2001). The teachers' response left no doubt that, as a norm, they were beaten at school as children. According to the teachers' utterances below, being beaten meant teachers used a stick to hit the children.

Researcher: ...as children, if you had done something wrong or unacceptable at school, what would happen?

All: *Besishaywa!* [We were beaten] (An explosive response)

Teacher Mt: the punishment was a stick.

Teacher Mk: (laughing) we were beaten!

Researcher: was it a stick?

Teacher Mt: yes, they would beat us, they would never say "pick up papers"<sup>18</sup> (IST.61, 18-24).

Grade R teachers, in their focus group, also responded to the question on their childhood experiences of discipline saying that they were beaten as children. One of them captured their experience as "we were beaten, it was not something to negotiate" (GRT.35, 12). 'Non-negotiable' captures the typical character of culture: it is pervasive, practiced as a collective, and unconsciously imbibed in the process of psychological development. These teachers emphasised more the fact that at school they were beaten for not doing the work that they were given to do at home, or for failing to bring learning materials that the teacher instructed them to bring. They also highlighted "wrongdoing" as the reason they were beaten at home and the purpose as being to deter them from "repeating the mistake". They mentioned that "adults in general would beat you if they see you do something wrong", therefore being beaten was a norm. So the activity of corporal punishment remains goal-oriented, with the purpose of deterring children from acting inappropriately, or encouraging desired actions.

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<sup>18</sup> This is one of the discipline strategies used for late-coming at the school.

The Deputy Principal remembered that, as a child, she was punished through to grade 12. Her grade 3 teacher was so passionate about beating children that she usually prepared herself for this activity by soaking the cane in salt water (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.2). All the teachers from this case study had similar experiences of corporal punishment from their schooling.

Although the retired teachers experienced corporal punishment at school, the emphasis of their articulations was more on corporal punishment as an activity subsumed within teaching and learning practice. These teachers also gave some account of having to memorise times tables, and recite poems and other learning material. If the teacher asked questions about this material and the child did not know the answer or provided a wrong answer, he would be beaten by the teacher. The same culture whereby children were beaten as part of teaching and learning practice continued from the previous generation, and still manifests in the current generation of teachers. Details of the use of corporal punishment in teaching and learning processes will be discussed in more detail in section 6.4 of this chapter.

### **6.3 “I was never beaten...maybe we should stop”**

The use of corporal punishment as a discipline method, especially in schools, was known to be a ferocious everyday classroom practice, such that it was not easy for any child to escape being beaten. Discipline strategies for keeping order in the classroom were often inconsistent and unjustified. For instance, a teacher would beat all the children in the classroom because two children had been talking, but none of the children could say who had been talking. Another teacher might ask a difficult question that none of the children could answer, and they would all be beaten for not knowing the answer.

During this interview with the Foundation Phase teachers, an interesting argument ensued. Teacher K stated that she was never beaten at school, and all the other teachers in the group vehemently disagreed with her. This disagreement emanated from her being perceived as having had experiences that are outside the cultural norm, while she was part of the same community and exposed to the same teaching and learning culture as the other teachers (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.3).

The essence of the conversation in the excerpt was that, as a child within the school setting, it was nearly impossible to escape corporal punishment, because children “were not beaten for noise” only, but “also for performance”. Furthermore, corporal punishment was also unjustly used, and therefore being a good child was not necessarily a guarantee for escaping corporal punishment. Teacher K acknowledged that, even though the beating of children at school for noise and for performance was a normal practice, her family circumstances (her mother was a teacher and supportive of her) and her fear of punishment (which translated to doing her work and keeping quiet in class) gave her qualities that fit an ideal child image within the school culture. It is worth noting that, because her mother was a teacher, she was probably able to properly mediate to her daughter cultural tools that enabled Teacher K to function in a school setting. The fact that she was also never beaten can be interpreted as the result of her fear of corporal punishment; as she said, “I would do work even before I come to school, because I knew we were beaten at that time”. In essence, her primary intent in doing school work was not for learning but to avoid punishment, the same with her not talking in class. This has been cited in many studies as the detrimental effect of corporal punishment on learning, whereby the child’s focus is not on learning but on avoiding the punishment. Furthermore, her active participation in the interview with her experiential views suggested that she was conscious of the fact that she was an outlier from the norm, confirming that the use of corporal punishment was the norm during her schooling.

From observations, it also appeared that Teacher K was cut from a different cloth regarding her cultural exposure. In the later interview, Teacher K uttered, “maybe we should stop using corporal punishment.... and maybe these children have a challenge that they do not have these people whom they can ask from” (*FPT.12, 12-15*). During observations in April 2014, on a school reopening day, she conducted the assembly, and encouraged children to start working hard and to ask their teachers if they do not understand what they have learned (Observations, April 2014). I also observed her giving remedial support to children. She was one of the two grade 3 teachers, and she and her grade colleague would have periods where they put together all their well performing children to be taught by her colleague and she would teach the struggling children. This grade was the only grade in the whole school that had such an initiative to support children.

Teacher K seems to exude a different psychological make up that may need further investigation. However, what is glaring from this data is that she has a different 'story' from the rest of the teacher cohort, possibly informed by transformations that she experienced through her mother.

#### **6.4 Corporal punishment as a mediation tool**

Holdstock (1990) provided an outline of a plethora of reasons that children were beaten for at schools. Among these were those related to academic performance such as not being able to complete homework or give a correct answer to a question. Being beaten by teachers as part of teaching and learning in the classroom was also found to be the norm according to the interview responses of the retired and current teachers. As children, the retired teachers were beaten almost every day as part of teaching and learning practice, particularly during the revision time. The participants claimed that there was a tradition whereby at the beginning of the period the teacher would ask questions, moving from row to row, and desk to desk until every child had had an opportunity to respond to the questions. When the children gave incorrect answers, they would be beaten. Children would be beaten with the purpose of motivating them and making them learn spelling, memorise mathematical tables, and recite poems and verses.

Teacher N, a retired teacher, said, "there was a father (teacher) who was called Nkolelo, he used to say 'the notes of today, should be known tomorrow', when I come home I would take my book" (RT.286, 11-12). Their teachers used corporal punishment to ensure that the lesson notes the children took in class were read on the same night and memorised by the next day. The participants' classroom experience of learning, that is, of internalising the learning material, is captured in this expression by three teachers:

"...we used to have note books where we used to write notes.  
Tomorrow morning, you will be standing against the wall, reciting his notes.  
You would know 'mene mene tekele ufarasini'<sup>19</sup>, he would give us the  
recitation on Thursday - 'Die Reus'<sup>20</sup>, In die land van die reus!', 'Amakeia!'<sup>21</sup>,

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<sup>19</sup> A Biblical extract, from the book of Daniel

<sup>20</sup> Die Reus - An Afrikaans poem – The Giant

<sup>21</sup> Amakeia - Afrikaans poem about a Xhosa woman who died protecting a settler's (coloniser's) baby.

tomorrow, 'amakeia', one child will come out, and do it...and do it very well" ('Die Reus' and 'Amakeia' are Afrikaans poems that children had to memorise) (RT.114, 30-115,4).

The above excerpt is indicative of the fact that it was a normal practice for teachers to use corporal punishment as part of the pedagogic tool/mediation tool. During the verification interview session with Ms. Kh, I asked if they understood what they recited. She explained that they did not understand most of what they learned, that they did not know "what Amakeia was all about?" It was "just a song that a teacher wanted us to know, remember we did not ask our teachers questions, if the teachers said you must learn and know this, you would learn it" (RT, verification visit, September 2015). Teacher Kh's (and the current teachers') experience of learning concurs with Freire's (1970) banking notion where the teacher is the only one who knows, and imparts knowledge into the passive child who receives it like a receptacle and regurgitates it when needed, with no objective of how the child would utilise that knowledge in his own life circumstances. This was so much part of the classroom practice that it was not a concern then because the apartheid education was designed to train children to be subservient. However, this phenomenon still manifests in the current South African primary education system.

In terms of this research, one can track the same trend of the use of corporal punishment for teaching and learning in the current generation of teachers, as in the previous generation (retired teachers). In an interview conversation with a group of Foundation Phase teachers in the following excerpt, they testified how they were taught to memorise times tables. As children, these teachers had to "know the table as they know themselves, and the composition as well" (FT.10, 10). To this I enquired further:

Researcher: Let me ask, do you think it helped you to learn, the way you were taught?

All: it helped us, even today we still know the times table, because you knew it by your head.

Teacher F: even today you still remember it

Researcher: even now you still remember?

Teacher H and Z: even now we still remember (emphasising)

Teacher Z: what I learned in 1977, I still know it today. If you say 6x4, I don't hesitate...

(FP.10, 10-16)

The focus group of the Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers had similar childhood experiences. It should be highlighted that all the teachers were not relating these experiences in the spirit of complaining or resentment; instead, they were grateful to their teachers for having taught them in this manner using corporal punishment. All the teachers at the school hold the belief that there was a direct relationship between the use of corporal punishment and their academic success, which is what they aspire for the children they are currently teaching.

This appreciative stance towards being taught with a stick in the teacher's hand is not peculiar only to the current teachers. The previous generation of teachers also appreciates being taught in this way. This is evident in the conversation with retired teachers below;

Teacher N: We used to memorise it ... (teaching methods, curriculum-memorisation)

Researcher: How did you memorise it?

Teacher Kh: In the morning we would sing 6X table, we would go in a row...if you make a mistake, you would get sweets (learning motivated through corporal punishment).

Researcher: So what made you memorise the knowledge, was that you will get sweets?

ALL teachers: Yes

Researcher: What do you mean by 'sweets'?

ALL teachers: Punishment

Researcher: Punishment as in...what ...what kind of punishment ...corporal punishment?

Teacher N: Of course, but that is not what was paining me, is the next person, for me it was about being laughed by the next person, my peers. If you asked 7x and you do not get it right, when you get outside, they would laugh at you that you got it ...

Researcher: Why are they laughing? That you did not get it right or that you were beaten?

Teacher N: That why didn't you study, why didn't you study, because you knew we were going to do the 7X table. (Corporal punishment and being laughed at by peers as a motivation to learn) (RT. 287, 11-26).

They believe that this practice made them academically successful. The theme of doing school work because of fear of corporal punishment also emerged in the non-formal interview with the teachers; however, this time, the teacher was making reference to the current post-apartheid situation, specifically to her son's school. The conversation started with the statement that was made by Teacher Mk about her son who is diligent about doing homework because his teachers beat the children if they come to school having not done the homework. Again, from the conversation it was

evident that although she admired her son's diligence, she believed it was a direct result of the administration of corporal punishment.

As above, their teachers referred to corporal punishment as "sweets". The use of "sweets" mediates to the child that being beaten is a reward, and is thus acceptable. This way of sugar coating corporal punishment is likely to desensitise children into perceiving physical pain as an endurable experience. Such desensitisation is evident in the same conversation with the retired teachers. Teacher N in the above excerpt shows signs of being desensitised to corporal punishment as a painful activity. He says, "but that is not what was paining me"; rather it was being laughed at by his peers for not getting the answer right and then being beaten that pained him. This statement dismisses corporal punishment and apportions the blame onto the child who did not get the answer right.

## **6.5 Teaching, punishment and learning intertwined**

The everyday exposure to corporal punishment resulted in it being normalised in the community as a tool for raising children. Children had internalised it as a cultural tool and an essential part of their learning. In fact, as children in a school context, teachers appreciated that their teachers had presented the learning content and made them memorise it well, the success in memorisation being evidence of learning in that context. Children identified with the teachers who presented new knowledge to them and rewarded their learning by withholding punishment. The system also created a fertile ground for a competitive spirit in the classrooms, where poor performers were likely to be beaten by the teacher and laughed at by those who performed well. The retired teachers related that they were usually concerned about being laughed at by their peers for not knowing the answers. One participant was evidently a good performer: "We were enjoying the competition! You see, we were placed in classrooms, in groups, it would be known that this is a group of *izinqwayinqwayi* (intelligent ones)" (TR.120, 15-16). Learning was about avoiding being placed in a poor performers' group, the physical pain of corporal punishment, and peer ridicule. It seems the teachers' good performance and ability to reproduce what they were taught was rewarded by belonging to a group of clever children, and by not being punished.

Even though there was an element of wanting to excel beyond others, there was interdependence among the children as well. The sense of community, of a collective, still prevailed. There were situations which required group or even class performance facilitated by the teacher's questions and response manner expected from the children (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.4a)

The fact that children will look upon those who can provide a correct answer denotes an unpronounced, or rather a cultural, division of labour among children who exist as a collective within the system of teaching and learning, where the stick is used as a mediation tool. Those who can provide a correct answer are "rescuers" in this system of learning, and thus bear the identity of heroes or heroines among their peers. What is evident here is that little content and development of higher mental functions based on scientific knowledge was taking place in this classroom activity system.

It is also important to highlight that the participants did not separate corporal punishment from the teaching and learning process. They seem to have conceptualised the three as a single, intertwined activity. Hence during the interview, they all found it difficult to detest corporal punishment, as that would consequently equate to rejection of all the good knowledge and values they learned alongside the beatings. On occasions where I tried to draw their attention to corporal punishment as a method of disciplining or as part of the teaching method, the teachers focused on the contextual experience which included teaching, punishment and learning. Corporal punishment was so much part of the classroom activity that it was fused with teaching and learning, and this was so internalised that the teachers found it frustrating that I made deliberate attempts through my questions to make them focus specifically on corporal punishment. It didn't make sense to them to separate corporal punishment from teaching and learning activities (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.4b)

In the classroom, they focused more on the content of knowledge; in this case, their teacher taught them the sequencing of writing an essay in a way that they still revere. They have memorised the essay writing so well that they are proud to recite it even today (as I interviewed them). Their focus is more on what they learned, not on corporal punishment, which they considered as a normal part of learning. While

they presented corporal punishment as an ever present tool in their classroom learning, they also dismissed any attempts to focus on it. At some point one of the teachers said, “oh you talk about the punishment...that’s a useless thing” (RT.292, 3-4), dismissing the impact of punishment in their schooling as nothing (it seemed to the teacher I was making a mountain out of a mole hill).

The above attitude towards making corporal punishment a central conversation shows that at this stage corporal punishment has become an unquestionable part of the classroom culture. Here, corporal punishment was already entrenched and internalised as a cultural tool. Paying attention to corporal punishment was like focusing on the use of chalk on the board, instead of focusing on what is written on the board. It is simply an activity within the practice of teaching and learning. Taking this analogy further, just as the writing on the board cannot happen without the chalk, so learning cannot happen without corporal punishment. Here, the tool, which is the stick in its technical and symbolic forms, is enmeshed with the learning process and has become part of the learning activity.

In an attempt to paint a picture of the classroom context where everyday teaching and learning occur, the retired teachers gave a vivid description of the classroom context in which they learned essay writing as new knowledge. These retired teachers praised the way their teachers taught them to write an essay, and further stated that in the process of practicing the essay writing skill in the classroom, the teacher would be walking around supervising their writing. While they (as children) were focusing on writing, being unaware of what was coming, the teacher would just unleash the “hoorkai<sup>22</sup>” on one child for misspelling (RT.291, 20-21). Even after relating this seemingly terrifying classroom situation, these teachers continued to relate the full account about how they were taught essay writing. It is worth noting that exactly the same experience was reiterated by the grade 6 children. Although children’s experiences are discussed in chapter seven, this striking similarity in the use of corporal punishment as experienced by two different generations cannot go unexplored. In Appendix U (Excerpt 6.4c) is the presentation of the grade 6 children’s report of their experience of corporal punishment as a common thing.

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<sup>22</sup> This is a leather string tied to a stick, used to beat animals like cows and horses

This striking similarity between all three generations' acceptance of corporal punishment as normal explains how this form of punishment was transmitted across the generations. The light-heartedness with which the three generations respond to what is supposed to be a humiliating experience, retired teachers saying the experience was "lovely", and children saying "you get scared" and "you start to shiver" but being helpless about the situation and therefore laughing about it – these are all signs of coping and acceptance of the practice (discussed in details chapter 7). Getting scared is an emotional response related to fear, which induces the physical reaction of shivering. These symptoms are cited by Harber (2001) as evidence of psychological harm induced by school related violence.

Current teachers' belief in the positive effects of corporal punishment is linked to their own experiences of discipline in that they did their school work because they knew they "were going to be beaten". This sentiment was expressed by all the teachers during the interview. Beyond the internalisation of the notion that learning occurs effectively with the use of corporal punishment, is the conceptualisation of "teaching" as a cultural practice that cannot be understood without corporal punishment as a fundamental technical and symbolic tool.

Furthermore, I am noting some similarities between the practice manifesting at Fundani and Vygotsky's observations of the pedagogy at the German school for deaf children (Vygotsky, 1993). Here, Vygotsky observed that children were forbidden to mimic and the pedagogical focus was on teaching children pronunciation. He thought that there was no logical justification for focusing their efforts in eliminating mimicry and teaching children to produce pronunciation in the place of teaching phrases, oral speech and vocabulary. He further observed the bluntness of feelings or the indifference in the learning process that is mediated through corporal punishment and, that involves infliction of physical pain. He describe the method as teaching with "exceptional cruelty and coercion", like "forcing a pupil to master a difficult sound, the teacher could knock out his tooth and, having wiped the blood from his hand, he would proceed to the next sound", whereby the child "successfully learns oral speech, but his personal interest is lost along the way" (1993, 69). According to Vygotsky, the method resulted in successful learning of mimicry even though some parts of personal interest were lost. Similarly in this study, teachers were focusing

more on the learning outcomes they had in mind, which was the regurgitation of content, without having to recruit higher mental processes to facilitate comprehension and application of the knowledge. It seems children develop in one area while under-developing in other areas of psychological functioning. This is true where teachers consider corporal punishment as effective for rote learning, while in actual fact the child's personality and development of higher cognitive skills is compromised. A case in point is when the teachers (in their childhood) had to recite the poem "Amakeia" without understanding the meaning or even the content of it. Vygotsky (1993) refers to this form of teaching as "cruel" teaching method as he observed at the German school for the Deaf.

## **6.6 "What have you done for your teacher to beat you?"**

Parents are one of the key stakeholders in the education activity system. In this research, all participants; the retired teachers, the current teachers, parents and children testified that their parents allowed their teachers or even encouraged them to use corporal punishment to discipline them. According to them, it was normal that when a child came home reporting that they had been beaten at school, the parent took the child back to school to find out why the child had been caned. If the child had disrespected the teacher, the parent may have beaten the child even further, to show teachers that he was in agreement with the teacher's way of disciplining the child. In the excerpt below, a retired teacher describes how they were punished at school. Realising how gruesome it sounds, he then justifies the punishment by explaining that parents were supportive of this form of disciplining.

Researcher: Let me ask then, if a child had done what was considered wrong, what did your teachers do?

ALL: Oh oh oh let me tell you, the child will be held by her four limbs on the air by four boys, and the teacher would beat him (all agree, seemingly it was a common practice).

Teacher N: and the child will not go home and tell parents that he was beaten, not the today's thing that the child must fetch parents, parents do not have time for that, they are working, they are ploughing the land (parents seem to support that). Besides, they would ask; what have you done? (RT. 289, 5-11).

The above excerpt shows a gruesome and traumatic punishment that the retired teachers were exposed to as children. In addition, the manner of the punishment

would more than likely have caused vicarious traumatising to the children who assisted and the onlookers in the classroom. Even more psychologically damaging was the fact that the children had no support at all. They couldn't even contemplate reporting such punishment incidences to their parents because parents would ask the rhetorical question "what have you done?" Such a question insinuates that the parent does not believe that the teacher can beat the child for no apparent reason therefore there must be something wrong that the child has done to deserve the punishment. This experience is evident in both generations of teachers as well as the current children.

Teacher Z described a childhood experience as vividly as if it had happened the previous day. At school she was beaten by her teachers so severely that she sustained some injuries and even bled. When she went home she showed her grandmother, who went to school with her the following day and instructed her teacher to beat her again (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.6a). Parents and teachers believed that a teacher who beats children is moulding them, making them afraid of doing wrong. In the above excerpt Teacher Z was indeed scared, but she was not scared of doing wrong. Instead, she was scared of the teacher and scared of going to school. This was also expressed in his individual interview by Teacher G, who stayed away from school for a number of weeks after he was beaten so severely that he had to be hospitalised. When his parents discovered that he hadn't been attending school for some weeks, and he was further beaten and forced to go back to school. According to him, he went back to school because he had no place to escape to. He reveres his parents for forcing him back to school, for he believes he is a better person today.

During the interview with the foundation phase teachers, some repeatedly and emphatically reiterated the question '*wenzeni wena?*' (What have you done?) as a reflection of their parents' responses to having been beaten by teachers at school. This question is loaded with the connotation that you must have done something that makes you deserve the punishment given by your teacher. As in the retired teachers' account, when parents asked such a question, it dispelled any possibility or misgivings that the teacher had been wrong to beat the child. Just like the retired

teachers, parents supported the current teachers for beating their children at school, as parents themselves beat children who do wrong (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.6b).

This kind of response to a child being beaten at school or by another adult is a socio-cultural dynamic in this study, because this was experienced by all participants, including the parents. The parents who were interviewed also referred to their childhood experiences of corporal punishment as the major disciplinary method, although the focus of their responses was more on their leadership role as SGB parents. When a vignette question was presented to the parents (“what do they think the teacher must do if the child in their class does not do any classwork, but he plays?”), the SGB chairperson’s response was indicative of corporal punishment as the immediate form of discipline. Parents’ use of corporal punishment can also be traced from their own parents (prior generation); one parent spoke with admiration of her father’s way of disciplining, although she also emphasised the role of communication used along with corporal punishment (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.6c).

## **6.7 In favour of corporal punishment: beliefs and practices**

Teachers at Fundani use a range of discipline measures, positive, and mostly negative ones, like shouting, humiliation and corporal punishment. During my classroom observations (February, April, September 2014), I also saw teachers use positive methods like well-prepared lessons, teaching aids like charts, reading books, clapping of hands, and praising and award ceremonies to reinforce positive classroom behaviour, effective engagements and performance. Some of these positive methods have become rituals; for instance in grade 1, children spontaneously clapped hands for their classmate who gave the correct answer, even before the teacher could instruct the class to do so. However, teachers do not consciously view such a practice discipline related.

Teacher H: the punishment is when I have my stick and child that I keep reprimanding and he doesn't listen then I lift the stick and say "hey!"

Researcher: oh you just lift the stick only?

Teacher H: yes, I do lift it as a first step and as a last resort I hit the child.

ALL: oh then that is corporal punishment (all others).

Teacher H: with no mark at all?

yes (myself and all others).

Teacher H: the truth is in my class there is a stick, I always used the stick, but not even my principal can attest to that because there was never a report about me hitting child going to the office, I made sure that I leave no mark on a child (RT. 295, 22-296,6).

Even though corporal punishment had already been abolished at the time, this retired teacher still preferred using corporal punishment. This teacher believed that hitting a child and not leaving scars and marks on the child did not equate to corporal punishment. This is evident in her question "what is the difference between corporal punishment and punishment?" (RT.295,19). She then explained that she believed that hitting the child and leaving no scars is punishment, while leaving the child with some scars is corporal punishment (RT.295, 20 – 296, 2). I found that this belief permeates all the generations and levels of the community, even internationally. Straus, Douglas and Meideros (2014) observed that outside the academic world people do not use the term 'corporal punishment' at all. They found that when they talk about corporal punishment, parents do not realise that corporal punishment includes spanking on the buttocks or even smacking on the hand. Parents as well as teachers tend to think that corporal punishment implies severe physical punishment that causes physical injuries.

All the teachers and parents expressed their disapproval of the abolition of corporal punishment on the basis that hitting a child to injure is not beneficial. These teachers also emphasised parental involvement and the use of class rules as important aspects of disciplining children. However, for them, the use of these discipline methods did not equate to the cessation of the use of corporal punishment; if children break the class rules, then they would follow with corporal punishment. The current generation of teachers also used class rules, and they hit children who broke them. This seems to have been witnessed by children too. Grade 1 children mentioned the chart of class rules as one of the tools that they use every day. When asked what happens when a child breaks these rules, they said "she [the teacher]

hits you” (G1.229, 16). Grade 4s and 6s also mentioned that their teachers use class rules and they too stated that the teacher would hit a child who breaks the rules.

Although the teachers do use other forms of discipline (which are discussed in chapter 8), they still believe that corporal punishment is the most effective one. There is a persisting belief that corporal punishment makes children learn. They say a grade 1 child who does not want to write, who just sits in class, “*wakes up*” when they beat him or show him a stick (See Appendix U Excerpt 6.9). The teachers still prefer the use of corporal punishment, even though it has been abolished in South Africa, because they believe that it encourages children to learn and improve their concentration and focus: “the person (child) begins to think” (FPT.11, 13), whereas if they are not threatened with a stick, or even beaten, they do not learn, “they relax” (FPT.11, 17). Teachers’ observation that children wake up when shown a stick is likely to be indicative of children being hypervigilant, which is evidence of the children being scared. Contrary to the teachers’ belief, Holdstock (1990) cited studies that indicated that effective learning cannot occur if the child is operating in fear that corporal punishment in fact leads to the inhibition of learning. Excerpt 6.6b (Appendix U) shows that this belief is a collectively shared belief, as even parents believe that children cannot learn without being beaten.

Despite the instances of harsh physical punishment experienced by teachers, they still believe that the fear of being beaten makes children learn better. They are adamant that the children’s performance improves when exposed to corporal punishment. Although some teachers confessed that they themselves were scared of going to school for fear of being beaten – which, for some of their peers, led to early school leaving – they still believe that being beaten helped them to learn better and be successful, as some teachers reflected with satisfaction: “They helped us, otherwise we wouldn’t be where we are.” (IS, 53, 2). Their pro-corporal punishment stance, as according to Noang (2007), emanates from their belief that they did not experience any harmful effects of corporal punishment; therefore they see no reason to abandon this method. Teacher’s opinions as expressed in this research provide us with a link into the convictions of teachers about being beaten at school, as well as evidence for the transmission of the same beliefs and practices onto the children they taught or are currently teaching.

What is further explicated here is the normalisation of the use of corporal punishment. With reference to the retired teachers; all four participants looked back with feelings of gratification, imbued in the statement “it was lovely in our times” (RT. 121, 3) when they were describing the way they were beaten during learning for not knowing the answer to the teacher’s questions. It did not occur to them that for the whole class to be beaten for not knowing an answer could be indicative of the teachers’ poor teaching strategies. Furthermore, they did not criticise the act of beating the whole class as taking time away from actual teaching, which resulted in a further lack of learning; the very reason they were beaten.

Teacher Z, in the excerpt below, brings in another important aspect of teacher-children relationship, that of modelling teaching as a career.

Teacher Z: I learned there and then. From being beaten. I became a teacher; should have hated a teacher

Researcher: Mhhh, you didn’t hate teaching

Teacher Z: No no I didn’t

Teacher M: actually we used to like teachers who were beating us.

(Other teachers laughed) (FPT.7, 26 - 8, 2).

Teacher Z’s utterances suggest that she has internalised a beating teacher as a good teacher, hence she believes they used to like teachers who used corporal punishment. For these teachers, teaching is associated with the power to use corporal punishment to produce good citizens. Holdstock (1990) makes a point about the meaning of a ‘good teacher’ as one who can instil discipline, where discipline means the ability to exercise control to produce great subservience like “lining-up, sitting in straight rows, speaking only when spoken to by the teacher, and a host of other rigid measures of control” (p.344). Hence as children, these teachers identified with the teachers who beat them, as they perhaps symbolised power and a sense of aspired future security from physical trauma, intertwined with the noble idea of being in control of the knowledge to be transmitted. Retired teachers also showed an inclination to like teachers who taught them by using a stick as a mediation tool.

Clearly the retired teachers idealised the teachers who were using corporal punishment as a teaching tool. They externalised their idealisation by emulating these teachers and using corporal punishment when they became teachers

themselves. Furthermore, even today, years after corporal punishment has been abolished, they still honour the teachers who used corporal punishment on them and consider them the best teachers. One teacher said, “Oh we like it [being beaten at school], it makes us happy, if he was still alive I would give him part of my salary, I am happy about it” (RT.291, 19-20). This indicates that being beaten was not a concern as it was an acceptable punishment for not being able to demonstrate that you have learned. At the time of the interview the retired participants still revered the fact that they learned ‘effectively’ under these conditions. The same sentiments were expressed by the next generation of teachers.

At this stage, this community has not fully accepted that any physical punishment that is aimed at deterring a child from misbehaving is corporal punishment and that all corporal punishment induces physical pain which is harmful to children. However, the harm that corporal punishment does to children does not appear to be a concern for the teachers. Their reliance on corporal punishment is perpetuated by the view that it is cultural, “we were raised by a stick” (PI.272, 17) “the stick does not kill anyone” (FPT.8, 14), and the stick “had moulded us” (FPT. 8 -19-20). The fact that they perceive their having survived corporal punishment as evidence for their conviction that corporal punishment does not harm anyone. These teachers also declared that they are inspired by their belief in the Bible, which says “the stick does not kill”; instead it shows the child the right way to live. Here, this teacher is quoting a combination from the Bible, from the book of Proverbs 23:13-14. Although the Bible represents religious authority in the minds of the teachers, when probed deeper about their personal and critical take on the Bible’s instruction to use corporal punishment, one teacher, Teacher Kw, argued that as much as they take the Bible as the authority, they believe more in it when what it instructs is evident in their own life experiences, where they have found that corporal punishment does work (Appendix U, Excerpt 6.7). She argued that based on this experience, they therefore found the Bible’s instructions worth following. Beyond the biblical inspiration is the view that the use of corporal punishment as a discipline tool is Black people’s way of raising their children (this view is discussed further in section 6.10).

Teachers at Fundani find the idea of not beating children at school so foreign that they do not trust schools which claim that they do not hit children. They believe these

schools use this as a marketing ploy for parents to bring their children to these schools and pay high fees, this results in children failing and becoming like a “rotting banana” (FPI.31, 12-14). The connotation of this argument is that it is not possible, as a teacher, to raise or educate a successful child by not using corporal punishment; when children aren’t beaten, they fail, become spoilt, or do not become successful.

The Deputy Principal attempted to put forward an objective view on corporal punishment. She believes that there are several factors that contribute to a child’s discipline. Earlier in this interview, she mentioned that teacher dedication and work ethics contribute to a child’s learning, a teacher who does not do his work may not even notice when the children have not done theirs, and therefore such a teacher may not be justified to punish the children. The Deputy Principal had teachers who used to beat them within reason, meaning three strokes at the most “for misdemeanours like not doing your homework” (DP.167, 18-19). Based on her previous experience of teaching in KZN, she noted that children in KZN schools are beaten more compared to here (Mpumalanga), and she also noted that children in KZN are more studious than those in Mpumalanga. However, the Deputy Principal does not make a direct correlation between the prevalence of corporal punishment in KZN and studiousness of children. She believes there are other factors that contribute to the motivation and performance of children, like the available support system (for example, mothers who assist children with their school work) (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.7a). This Deputy Principal’s thinking depicts the readiness for transformation in the school.

## **6.8 Parents’ experiences and beliefs**

Parents are in partnership with teachers in raising the child. Schools are located with the community and there is certainly some cultural pollination between schools and the community through the homes where children come from. Every day the child moves between two activity systems; the home and the school. The parents at Fundani, even though they appreciate and encourage parental involvement they still believe corporal punishment has a place in disciplining children in school. This finding is in keeping with Straus’ (1999) decades-long experience in international

research of parental use and attitude towards corporal punishment; he claims that parents believe that beating a child as a disciplinary measure still has a place. Straus' findings concur with my observations of parents at the meeting, where the meeting addressed strategies that the school can use to improve the academic performance of the children. At this meeting a parent stood up and boldly encouraged teachers to beat children who do not listen or adhere to the rules (Observations, September 2014). However, in a small group interview with the SGB, parents clarified that they support the use of corporal punishment only if teachers use it justly and do not injure or physically harm the children;

“...we parents we should accept it [corporal punishment on children]. Even us at home, if you do not raise a hand at home, how will the children end up being? We end up using facecloths at homes, you make it wet, you see, the child ends up knowing that if he does something wrong, I'll take I facecloth, the child knows that the facecloth induces pain, therefore everything of his should be right, you are trying to help him that everything of his be right. So that when the teacher does a punishment, like one stroke when the child is late...” (PI.88, 28-34).

Parents also believe that the use of corporal punishment on the child brings success. The SGB chairperson acknowledged the fact that the law says children must not be beaten, however he believes “that, the truth is; where children are scared from a stick, that's where success is” (PI.91, 6-7) and that where there is no use of a stick there is unlikely to be success, instead that is what would make “vulnerable children, vulnerable” (PI.90, 18). This parent's view is similar to a teacher's view reported in Maphosa and Shumba (2010), who when asked about the abolition of corporal punishment as a children's right, the teacher said:

“...The worst abuse of children is to produce lawless and undisciplined kids in the name of children's rights...without disciplining [corporal punishment] we are killing the future of our country” (p.392).

According to these parents, disciplining a child by beating him is essentially about helping him [the child] to be successful and thus ultimately the country.

Furthermore the chairperson also emphasised that punishment is not meant to be done in temper and to injure the child, he said “it is wrong” (PI.90, 33). According to him, punishment should scare the child, meaning; to instil fear that would deter the child from doing wrong. Parents are adamant that learning of good behaviour and therefore 'success' can only happen if children have fear of a stick, which means

children should be aware they will be beaten if they do wrong. So when a parent also raise his voice and instructs a child in a stern tone, then children would know that this is probably the last of reprimand, what would follow next is a stick (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.9a).

An issue of greater concern, which is behind the parents' favour of corporal punishment is the fact that parents, or adults (as this includes teachers too), do not believe that children have the capacity to know the difference between right and wrong, they believe it is through corporal punishment that they can be taught this. In response to such a suggestion; I asked parents if they think the child would not know he is wrong without having to be beaten. A parent responded with an emphatic "never, no, they can't" (PI.91, 16) indicating her strong belief in that children will not know what is wrong, without being beaten. Further, parents commended a particular teacher in the school, who uses corporal punishment, saying, their children have drastically and positively changed since they were in her class, they have become more conscientious about doing homework. (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.7b). These parents sounded very proud and commending of the teacher who beat children for homework. It appears that such a teacher does what they want for their children, especially that they can see the change of behaviour in their children.

When asked for the suggestion on what teachers should do with children who do not do homework. The first response from parents was that the teacher should "scare" the child, with the meaning of "scare" is "beating" the child. The parents did not even consider advising that the teacher should investigate why the child has not done the homework? This response is similar to the one given by the grade 1 and 4 children, where "hitting the child" was the first and immediate response to child's misbehaviour in the classroom (discussed in details in chapter 7). This kind of a response is a punctuation for elementary reaction, that is based on automatic response to stimuli which is short of the recruitment of higher psychological functions like problem-solving and use of symbolic tools that transforms the self (the teacher), as well as the child.

This sentiment in favour of children who are scared of being beaten by the teacher for not doing the homework also transpired from the informal conversation with the group of teachers; where one teacher talking as a parent in this case, echoed that

her son who is in primary school is very diligent with homework because the school where he attends, which is a private school, children are beaten for not doing work. This teacher and others who were part of the conversations praised the school for using corporal punishment. Here we see teacher's entrenched belief in the effectiveness of corporal punishment that they support it even for their own children. This teachers' sentiment concurs with the SGB chairperson, who commended of this kind of teacher-child interaction around homework brings about success, and according to him, such success happens if children are made to be scared of corporal punishment.

### **6.9 'Non-abusive' corporal punishments**

An example of an abusive corporal punishment is when a Foundation Phase teacher, Teacher D, was beaten 50 times for retreating in fear from a queue, waiting to be beaten 3 strokes (See Excerpt 6.8). It is in the light of such punishment, which was common in South African schools, that the participants consider the use of what they call non-abusive corporal punishment as an argument against total abolishing of corporal punishment.

Among the numerous accounts cited by the teachers from the school, I chose to interview three individual teachers who had had harsh childhood experiences of corporal punishment, and yet currently oppose the abolition of corporal punishment. Teachers at Fundani are generally of the opinion that corporal punishment was effective to get them to learn, hence they find it hard to understand how they can get children to learn without punishing them. However, all teachers deeply condemned the "unjustified" and "abusive" use of corporal punishment, which they experienced during their schooling years. I will use the cases of Teacher G (the HOD and disciplinary committee chairperson), the Principal and the Deputy Principal because they hold influential positions at the school, and therefore set the discipline tone within the school.

Teacher G is a diligent HOD, a member of the school's disciplinary committee, and a member of the sports committee. Above all, he holds the demanding position of Academic Officer of the school. According to him, in this portfolio he oversees the enrolment of the students, that they get learning material, that they have classes and

teachers allocated to them for every learning area; in short, he ensures the smooth running of teaching and learning. In business terms he would be called an operations manager. In addition, as mandated by his position, he handles cases of excessive absenteeism of learners and removal of learners. In that sense he interacts with any parents who come to the school for a number of issues, including disciplinary issues. As a member of the disciplinary committee, he attends and mediates disciplinary cases. On a few occasions, I saw children coming to him to report cases of their misbehaving peers. Children seem to trust him on issues of justice, especially if they are wronged by their peers. Some examples of these cases will be discussed in the alternatives to corporal punishment section. He is the only other male figure besides the Principal and Teacher T. On occasions when I saw him interacting with children, G appeared to be a “gentle giant” – even though he is firm and strict, his gentle spirit allows children to feel secure around him. When he speaks to children, he addresses them in an affectionate and parental manner (Observations, February, April and September 2014).

Teacher G experienced such severe corporal punishment that, like his peers, he contemplated leaving school, which he failed to do due to pressure from his parents. After the traumatic experiences of corporal punishment, that led to children not wanting to go to school because they were beaten for things which were not their offenses as such. For example, if the child’s parents could not afford to buy stationery and school uniforms, that child would be condemned to everyday punishment until the parents could afford the uniform. This is similar to the case of Teacher Z, who was beaten for incorrect school uniform (FPT. 15, 4-6). She and her sister shared a school tunic, and whoever’s turn it was to wear the tunic would attend school. Soneson (2005) has rightfully identified such children from poor socio-economic backgrounds, who are likely to be repeatedly punished for the same offenses that are beyond their control (Soneson, 2005). In schools where punishment registers are well kept, Donnelly and Strauss (2005) inspected the data in these registers and found that children with the same characteristics were regularly caned throughout their schooling life.

The Principal of the research school also related his childhood experience of corporal punishment. The interview with him was inundated by his views on the need to support the children. The socio-economic condition of the children in his school appeared to be a great concern for him. I think this concern is the one that drives the ethos of social support in the school and which seems to have permeated all the stakeholders, including the parents. The Principal as well had something to say about his experiences of corporal punishment as a child:

“I remember when we were doing Standard 4, there came a teacher in our class. He said “you and you and you come to the front”, then the rest of us were beaten because... it was around August when this incident happened, he said “I’m beating you because you have never given me an answer in class since January”. But then we asked “What is the question now, so what should we answer?” Truly it was not used correctly. That is why I personally I think it needed to be controlled, it needed to have some limit, that these are limits to it, you see. But the way it was before, really, it was wrong!” (P.212, 26 – 213,1).

As one of the Principal’s early life experiences of discipline and corporal punishment, this formed his character in the way he views discipline and punishment. Even though corporal punishment is abusive regardless of the reason and context, the incident in the excerpt clearly shows the unjustifiable use of corporal punishment, abusing power by beating children for no sound reason. This experience seemingly shaped the Principal’s conviction that the use of corporal punishment needed to be regulated.

The Deputy Principal also had experiences of discipline by corporal punishment during her schooling. She thinks that her grade 3 and 4 teacher used corporal punishment in an abusive manner, and she was so scared to be in her class that she was prepared to sacrifice her progression to the next class if it meant she wouldn’t be in that teacher’s class again the following year. Although she had this experience with this teacher, she remembered that other teachers used corporal punishment within reason.

Even though these teachers have personally experienced the unjustified or abusive administration of corporal punishment, they and all the other teachers in the school concluded that corporal punishment, when used within reason or in a controlled manner, encouraged them to do their work or behave appropriately. I will capture the expressions of the teachers from the three cases I have selected to demonstrate

this. When asked what they think about the abolition of corporal punishment, these teachers expressed their lamentations, saying it should rather be used in a “controlled” manner. This is what the Principal had to say in relation to this notion:

“ehhh, corporal punishment was bad its true, I’m from that generation of corporal punishment, there are instances that I would remember that teacher, where I see clearly that, number of things did not have to happen in this way you see, the only thing I think of is that corporal punishment needed to be controlled, it needed to be controlled in actual fact you see, not to say 100% do away with it, but it needed to be controlled. Because, there are situations, maybe you are schooled during that period, that there are situations whereby when you evaluate the punishment vs the offense, you find that the punishment was far beyond the offense and that’s why we say it was abused. And sometimes the educator’s frustration is taken out on us with a stick, you see, something like that. Only to that really, really there was not much that we have done (emotional) (P.212, 17-26).

In this conversation the Principal is touching on two crucial factors that he thinks renders corporal punishment uncontrolled and abusive. He believes corporal punishment has to be used within limits, the limit being not more than 5 strokes. It has to be used fairly and justifiably, in a manner that does not ‘abuse power’. The Principal reflected on the times when corporal punishment was acceptable with some control, and he lamented that it had been abolished (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.8a).

In the same vein, Teacher G explained how he was hospitalised after being beaten, yet he remains adamant that there is a place for corporal punishment in the school context (Appendix U, Excerpt 6.8b). According to Teacher G, it is fair to abolish corporal punishment because teachers abuse it and use it in an angry manner. He believes that teachers should use it in such a way that they communicate to the child what offense they have done and they do not exert pressure when beating the child – the kind of pressure that makes the child think they were beaten with hatred. He stressed that the use of a stick is important because children forget and repeat the offense if the stick was not used, but when the stick is used children never forget, as they do not take instructions for granted.

While some teachers still believe that corporal punishment should not be abolished, the Deputy Principal thinks it makes sense to abolish it. This is because it would be

difficult to regulate corporal punishment to ensure that teachers are non-abusive in their administration of it.

The teachers' preference of non-abusive corporal punishment is in line with the parents' views on this matter. This is what one parent had to say:

“As I say there is a difference between abuse and punishment. Like if a teacher gives one stroke, just once, cu cu cu, or one, one, one on the hand, that is punishment - that is not abuse, but that is punishment, the parent cannot complain to take me to court [chairperson agreeing with her]. The teacher does not beat the child so that the hand falls off or the child breaks a bone” (Pl. 88, 22-25).

This parent is of the opinion that the form of physical punishment that is not abusive should be acceptable. This kind of an argument emerged in all interviews, including in interviews with retired teachers and children, in which there was a preference for corporal punishment that does not bear any physical marks. Almost all the teachers and parents, as well as some children, advocated for the non-abusive corporal punishment, despite their personal childhood traumatic experiences of corporal punishment. They still believe that corporal punishment is effective in teaching and for reprimanding children. For instance, most of them say that, with corporal punishment, children never forget instructions. The Foundation Phase teachers said “they [children] wake up” in class, which means with the use of corporal punishment children concentrate better in class and therefore learn effectively. These parents' and teachers' arguments and support of corporal punishment without injuries brings us to Baumrind, Larzelere and Cowan's (2002) critique of the current academic view of corporal punishment as detrimental, without distinguishing between abusive and non-abusive physical punishment.

It should be understood that culturally, it is largely within the context of caring that corporal punishment is administered at the school. Teachers do not perceive it as necessarily abusive. Corporal punishment is praised as a tool to make the children wake up, and be clever and courageous to learn.

## 6.10 Corporal punishment, racial and cultural identity

Although there is a history of corporal punishment in all racial designations of South Africa, studies by Morrell (2001) and Maree and Cherian (2004) reported high incidences in township schools, which are predominantly populated by Black people. Some participant teachers, in a conversation among themselves, it appeared that they believed there were no incidences of corporal punishment in former Model C<sup>23</sup> schools, asked “how do the White schools manage without beating children?” (FPT.31, 4-5). They concluded that teachers in these schools do hit children, except in schools where there are cameras. Teachers also strongly argued that “Black people cannot learn without a stick” (FPT.67, 15), and seemed to believe that teaching and learning without the use of a stick is an impossible phenomenon. Substantively, on the question of how they feel about the abolition of corporal punishment Teacher Z, vehemently retorted:

“This is a political ploy to get the youth to vote for them (the government), can’t you see?...how can you say that corporal punishment be abolished? The very instrument that made you who you are” (FPI.25, 8-10).

This suggests that this teacher does not believe that children, particularly Black children, can be raised or can learn without the use of a stick. Such statements put the neglected historical-cultural processes in the centre of the argument. As confirmed by empirical information and in line with the historical analysis discussed in the previous chapter, corporal punishment has been an ever present tool in these teachers’ lives. The fact that they see corporal punishment as a tool used for Black people means that they exclude other races, particularly as users of this tool. In the following conversation, Teacher Ny enthusiastically argues the point that the use of corporal punishment is viewed as a cultural way of raising children for ‘Black people’.

Teacher Ny: We, as Black people we believe that a child is raised with stick

Researcher: mam you say “we as Black people’ say that again

Teacher Ny: we as Black people we believe that we must raise a child with a stick because if you do not use a stick, this child can even climb on the table, sometimes you must just scare him with a stick, but do not injure him.

(IST.67, 15-20).

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<sup>23</sup> Are a term for South African previously White schools

It seems Black people use the stick to raise a child, to make the child scared of doing something wrong. This articulation of corporal punishment as being the discipline method for Black people appeared in other interviews (IST.68, 1). Here, the belief is that being scared to do something wrong is the best deterrent, without the considerations for dialectical processes. In the above excerpt, the meaning of making the child scared is hitting the child in such a way that the child does not get injured, but feels enough pain to want to avoid the misbehaviour.

According to Leont'ev (1978), actions are operational and activities are goal-driven. In the excerpt from Teacher Z above, she seems to have evaluated the motive behind the government's abolition of corporal punishment as a "political ploy to get more votes from the youth". All the other participants, even the teachers who were interviewed individually, testified that the use of a stick as a disciplinary method at school, as well as at home, was the norm. The use of this method is so deeply entrenched in community practice that the abolition of corporal punishment is viewed as uncultural. This was expressed by some of the Foundation Phase teachers: Teacher DI who said, "I think we Black people we cannot learn without...", and Z asked rhetorically, "how can you say something that you were raised with be abolished?" Such articulations from teachers who grew up exposed to corporal punishment suggest that these teachers cannot even comprehend raising children without using corporal punishment. This practice is culturally internalised; they own the thought which is now orchestrated from within into the world as a practice. Being prohibited from using corporal punishment is like uprooting them from their cultural roots and identity.

Considering the legislative abolition of corporal punishment a decade ago, it was surprising to observe that the participants did not appreciate the notion that the former Model C schools do not use corporal punishment, and showed no desire to learn from these schools. In fact they saw it as a flaw, causing children to be spoiled, like "rotting bananas", who are then expelled, to come to township schools to be fixed by township teachers. (See Appendix U, Excerpt 6.10). They also did not appreciate the policy eradicating corporal punishment in schools. This suggests that the policy change in itself does not as yet have the power to transform this community.

## 6.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented data on childhood experiences of corporal punishment of the retired and current teachers. While it is glaringly noticeable that rote learning was the form of learning upheld by the education system and therefore part of the education practice, parents and teachers considered the use of corporal punishment in teaching as the only way children could become successful beings. According to them, this is the motive for this form of discipline. In the next chapter, I highlight the current discipline practices as seen through the eyes of children at Fundani.

This chapter has highlighted the teachers' childhood experiences of school discipline, as well as their reflections on their own parents' beliefs on corporal punishment. It is evident from the data presented in this chapter that the use of corporal punishment was such an integral part of teaching and learning that the retired teachers found it difficult to separate the two. Teachers' and parents' notion that a child must be afraid to do something wrong emerged strongly as the underlying belief perpetuating the preference of the practice of corporal punishment. An unexpected finding that is crucial in this study is the teachers' explicit articulation of their belief in that their use of corporal punishment is associated with their racial and cultural identity as "Black people" in a post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa. A glimmer of possible transformation was captured, where one teacher, who said she had not been beaten, suggested that children should not be beaten, and the Deputy Principal expressed that there is more to child scholastic success than just corporal punishment. She pointed family support as a crucial aspect to the child's success. In the expressions of most teachers, non-abusive corporal punishment is the preferred disciplinary tool, against total abolition of corporal punishment.

## **CHAPTER 7: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT FROM CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE**

*“When you were not able to come to school because your mother was sick and she went to the clinic and the children cannot stay on their own and you remained to look after the kids and when you come here they hit you, they say they want the [home]work” (Grade 6 children, April 2014).*

### **7.1 Introduction**

Everyday classroom activities constitute a constellation of mediation activities and opportunities among children themselves, and between teachers and children. These mediation activities are presented in the form of both the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum that the teacher spontaneously and unconsciously transmits to children. Bateson (1972) quoted in Engeström (2010, p.137) posits that “people acquire deep-seated rules and patterns of behaviour characteristic of the context itself”. In this case children learn what it means to be a child in the classroom, and what the best ways are of relating to particular teachers and the curriculum. Furthermore, they learn without being taught the functions of the various artefacts in the classroom.

This chapter foregrounds discipline practices as experienced by children at Fundani, in the context of everyday school and classroom activities. As this is a cultural-historical and socio-cultural study, with the purpose of highlighting the historical-cultural transmission of disciplinary tools, this chapter does not divorce the children's experiences from the experiences and thoughts of their teachers and parents. Parents' views on the use of corporal punishment by teachers will be discussed from the children's perspective. The figuring of corporal punishment in cultural forms, such as in children's rhymes, is a manifestation of its normalisation and a means of intergenerational transmission. I begin, in the next section, by considering the ways in which corporal punishment figures in the rhymes that play so crucial a part in children's first experiences of school when they enter the reception year (grade R). This leads to a discussion pertaining to the cultural development of these children based on the discipline activity within the school. The chapter includes the

presentation and discussion of data that addresses two of the research questions, namely: 'What are the current discipline practices?' and 'What do children and parents make of these discipline practices?' An interpretation of children's drawings and their articulations is presented with the purpose of illuminating both the meaning children attach to corporal punishment and the collective psychological functioning that informs the continuing prevalence of corporal punishment. The chapter also highlights how psychological transformations in children are advanced by the mediational relationship between the children, teachers, and parents.

## **7.2 Internalisation and normalisation of corporal punishment**

Corporal punishment as it manifests itself in the South African context has been a normal practice for a long time. Its normalisation is manifested in various ways, one of which is its appearance in cultural activities like conversations, stories, songs, poems, praises and art work. The internalisation of corporal punishment cannot be divorced from the fact of its existence and appearance. In other words, through their enactment of cultural activities that refer to corporal punishment, social actors externalise the values and norms, as well as the social rules, associated with corporal punishment that they have internalised.

In a school context, manifestations like counting, praying, singing, reading and walking in line are everyday practices, and are thus normalised. Schools are organised organs of society through which intergenerational cultural transference occurs. Schools have their distinct culture where learning is performed in particular ways that differ from home learning. Therefore when the children start school they are given time to adjust and learn the culture of schooling. From my observations at Fundani, this has been the case with the grade R children. It was in the first term of the year when I observed the grade R class. These children, who were at the start of their schooling, were taught songs, poems, rhymes and stories. They also played games.

Every day grade R class activities started with singing and rhymes, which children recited collectively as a class. Rhymes are an important part of the South African primary school tradition, especially during Foundation Phase. Children show their

understanding of the meaning imbued in the rhyme or song through body movement and sometimes dance. Most of the rhymes recited in this class were traditional; some I recognised as rhymes that were recited in the 1970s when I was at primary school. The rhymes contain different themes: themes about counting, schooling and learning, and themes depicting social context and culture of the school. I consider this rhyming as a snapshot of the intricate interweaving of interpsychological and intrapsychological processes.

One of the rhymes about social culture was “*Nomathemba*” (see the rhyme below). This rhyme is an interrogative dialogue between a girl child called Nomathemba, who comes home crying, and her parent, who asks her about who beat her. “*Nomathemba*” captures the violence experienced by children and its traumatic impact, as is evident in the lines: “No I am afraid”, “No, I am tired” and “my bones are collapsing down”. These lines represent the intense state of fear experienced by the character Nomathemba, fear of the man who beat her. The contradiction is that as children recited this rhyme, they were playful and seemingly unperturbed about the meaning embedded in the rhyme, as if the story line in the poem is about a normal social activity.

Class:

*We Nomathemba* (Hi Nomathemba)

*Ushaywe wubani* (Who hit you?)

*Yileya ndoda* (It is that man)

*Yibize ize la* (Tell him to come here)

*Hayi ngiyasaba* (No, I am scared)

*Ngibelega nanti hashi* (go on a horse back)

*Hayi ngiyangena* (No, I am tired)

*Ayehla amathabo wukubeheke zansi X2* (my bones are collapsing down)

*Eyehla amathambo wukubeheke zansi X2* (my bones are collapsing down)

“*Esikoleni*” (At School), another rhyme that was recited by this grade R class, also suggests the normalisation of school as a place where children are beaten (see the rhyme below). When reciting this rhyme, children demonstrated the action of a teacher beating a child with a stick. These actions are imaginative and it is through imagination that the learning of the content is internalised and normalised. The rhyme is as follows:

Class:

*Laphaya esikoleni* (There at school)

*Kukhona abantwana bayafunda ke* (there are learning children)

*Bathi a, e, i, o, u* (they say a, e, i, o, u)

*Bathi shaya thishela* (they say beat up teacher)

*Bathi shaya thishela* (they say beat up teacher)

*Bathi shaya thishela* (they say beat up teacher)

In this poem it is difficult not to note that the three times repeated line is about the teacher who is beating up the children. The recitation of these rhymes, accompanied by a happy mood and playfulness, indicates that the children have internalised the rhyme and its meaning. However, if one uses a sociogenetic lens, it appears that teachers have internalised the practice of children being beaten as a norm, and that the community's division of labour has mandated them to transfer their internalised cultural knowledge, values and skills by employing tools such as rhymes to transfer such knowledge to this generation of children.

It would be disingenuous of me not to mention that children in this class also recited many other traditional rhymes and poems that enhance other essential cognitive, social and language skills through dialoguing and rhythm. For example, "*Izinyoni ezinhlanu*"<sup>24</sup> (See Appendix W, Rhyme 6), which develops counting, addition, subtraction and social dialogue; "*Nginemino emihlanu*"<sup>25</sup> (See Appendix W, Rhyme 4), which is likely to mediate the development of identification and differentiation of objects by size, length and function as well as body image; and "*Umama*"<sup>26</sup>, which promotes family cohesion and attachments. Although only rhymes that mention corporal punishment are directly relevant for this study, they cannot be isolated from the normal everyday cultural activities in the school, especially when they are chanted alongside rhymes with more intentional pedagogical purposes.

Another manifestation of the normalisation of corporal punishment is the ubiquity of the stick. From morning until noon, the stick was always present at the school. Among the ways in which the stick and its symbolism are normalised in a school

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<sup>24</sup> About 5 birds planning to escape the danger they are in: a hunter with a gun

<sup>25</sup> About the five fingers, suggesting each finger's function based on its shape and size

<sup>26</sup> About the value of a mother, and the wish to help the mother in the future

setting is its use as an instantaneous early morning reminder of power balances within the school. When children got to the school gate, there were some teachers at the gate to supervise children in general and monitor late-coming (Observations, 2014 and 2015). It was usual to see one or two of the teachers holding a stick, ready to reprimand or beat those who got out of line. As children walked to the assembly, teachers would join them and stand at the back of the assembly lines. There, too, one or two teachers would be carrying a stick. The grade R teacher was always watching her little children, ensuring that they were adjusting well to the school culture of assembling, and she was invariably carrying a stick. Even on the sports field, the sight of a stick-carrying teacher was not uncommon (Observations, 2014).

In these examples, the stick is a visible tool that certainly has some meaning in this school community; it is a symbolic tool, communicating to children the need to be disciplined by behaving according to the rules. Children's behaviour around the teacher who was holding a stick was noticeably different; these children were 'well behaved'. For example, those who were late could be seen hurrying or even running towards the school gate. When I asked the grade R teacher about her carrying the stick, she explained that although she always carries a stick, she does not necessarily beat the children with it. Rather the stick is a reminder to do what is right; it is used to instil fear, as children must be afraid to do wrong.

The very same grade R teacher (Teacher Kh in the excerpt below) testified about her own childhood experience of corporal punishment at primary school:

Researcher: And at primary school, how were you disciplined?

Teacher Kh: we were beaten, of course.

Teacher Nk: we were beaten; it is not even something to negotiate.

Researcher: how were you beaten?

Teacher Kh: even though we cannot remember that well, but we know we were beaten, though we were not beaten in that way, it was just to scare us.

Teacher Nk: that when the child has done something wrong, you just touch him so that he can see that he is wrong. (GRT.35, 10-19)

What this grade R teacher and her colleague's articulations suggest is that in their childhood they internalised the meaning of corporal punishment as a way of instilling fear of wrongdoing in the child. This suggests that the stick serves as an auxiliary or

external tool that regulates children's behaviour from the outside by instilling fear (of pain) of doing wrong. Through the stick, the teacher is creating an association between pain and behaviour, with the result that children behave as instructed, not because they understand the need to behave in a desirable manner, thus denying the children the opportunity for formative learning.

The stick was not only visible at the assembly and sports fields only. In the latter days of my field work, I had earned the teachers' trust and they had become used to my presence, I was able to observe how common a tool the stick was inside the classrooms. It was found in most of the classrooms in different forms: pipes, plastic straps, tree branches, covered with adhesive tape, and longer sticks (see Appendix T). The stick had many functions, not all of them disciplinary. For example, in the Foundation Phase, the stick was used to point to the wall chart or the board as the teacher was teaching. When children were asked about something on the wall chart, they would naturally go to the table to take the stick to point at the word or number they were referring to as their answer. They would also point to the words as the class read aloud from the wall chart. The teacher used it to point to particular children in the classroom. At one of the interviews children were talking about the



*Figure 8: A teacher carrying a stick at the assembly*



*Figure 7: A child using a stick to point at the chart as she reads*

stick that Teacher Mg uses as a walker, but also to beat them with.

As a cultural tool used for disciplining, the stick was called by names that reflected the beliefs teachers had about its use. In IsiZulu it is common that objects are named

after their function, hence the stick has such names. In interviews, children referred to the stick as '*umqondisi*' (a person who makes something straight, the connotation is, making things to be in order) '*uphiphizinyefu*' (cleaner of your mess), or 'sweets'. All these names have positive connotations of the function of the stick. The meaning behind this rhetoric suggests that the stick is a good tool or at least it is not bad. For instance, when the teacher says "come, let me give you sweets", this suggests that it is a reward for something that the child has done.

As the '*umqondisi*', the stick assists teachers to put children "on the straight and narrow" – to discipline them. As '*uphiphizinyefu*', the stick cleans up after those who are careless, those who forget rules and do not follow instructions. None of these pseudonyms for the stick make reference to the physical pain that goes with it. This communicates the focus and objectives of the use of corporal punishment. As explained in the introductory chapter that the 'infliction of physical pain' is core to the definition of corporal punishment, here it seems that teachers' focus is not on the inflicted pain, but on the goal, i.e. the object of the activity, namely, the prevention of misbehaviour. The meaning embedded in these 'personifications' attests to that logic. Vygotsky has asserted that language and other sign systems have a mediation function and are used to access the conscious mind. That argument suggests that these personifications for a stick have a functional meaning – they clarify the intention or the motive for using the stick – and they externalise what is in the conscious mind of the user.

The normalisation of corporal punishment, by teachers and the community, as an everyday practice is further illuminated in a critical incident I experienced at the school. On a day in September 2014, teachers at Fundani attended a staff meeting. As is traditional at the school, when teachers leave their classrooms for more than 30 minutes, they call on the assistance of the class monitor. On my way to join the teachers in their meeting, I heard sounds of crying children in the grade 1 classroom. When I went into the classroom, I found a grade 3 girl, supposedly a monitor, beating some of the children (April, 2014). When I enquired why the children were crying, the monitor confidently and proudly explained to me that she was beating the crying children because they did not listen. When I intervened, reprimanding her not to do this again, she became emotionally disturbed and cried, and insisted that her teacher said she must look after the class. Clearly, her understanding of looking after the

younger children meant beating them if they did not listen to her or keep to the known class rules. What is evident from this incident is that the monitor-child believed that she had the power to use corporal punishment to direct the behaviour of those younger than her. This belief and her actions are an indication of intergenerational transfer of the notion that assuming a position of authority and responsibility to those younger comes with the power to use corporal punishment. This critical incident is a classic case of Vygotsky's notion of learning from social interaction or everyday experience.

### **7.3 A stick: one of the teachers' tools in the classroom**

It is in the children's learning and understanding of these everyday nuanced activities that the cultural practices are likely to manifest. With the objective of understanding these practices as they manifest in the classroom on an everyday basis, and how they are understood by children, I engaged with grade 1, 4 and 6 children. Grade 1 children were interviewed as a class in their classrooms, and selected grade 4 and 6 children in focus groups were requested to make drawings and were then interviewed about these drawings, using questions and techniques relevant for this research study.

#### **7.3.1 Grade 1 children's views of everyday classroom tools**

Grade 1 children were requested to name the things that their teachers use in class every day. The exercise took place in their classrooms, so they were able to look around and point out the things that they saw and were used by the teacher in class. Each time they mentioned a tool, I followed up with an enquiry on how the tool is used by the teacher in the classroom. Table 2 presents the tools identified by the grade 1 children, with an explanation (in the second column) of how the teachers use these tools. The nature of the tools stated by the children and the description of their use provide a window into classroom activities.

Table 2: Grade 1 children's explanations of the use of a stick as a classroom tool

Tools	What teachers do with the tool
Imisindo (sounds) – (shouting out the answer)	“Alright, the teachers use sound” (referring to the chart of alphabets on the wall) “She teaches us”
“A chalk”	“She writes with it.” (all the children – shouting)
“It is sums”	“She teaches us”, “She writes”
“It is ball pens”	“She writes with it” (all the children – shouting)
“Life Skills”, “isiZulu”	“She teaches” (meaning she teaches these learning areas)
“It is books”	“She is writing”
“Another thing she uses its registers”	“She calls out our names”
“It’s a duster”	“She cleans the board”
“She carries a stick”	“She hits us”

What is evident about everyday activities in the grade 1 classes of this school is that teachers teach by writing with chalk on the board, they teach sums, sounds, IsiZulu, and life skills, clean the board with a duster, check the attendance register, and hit children with a stick. This gives us the context in which the beating of children occurs.

In response to my probing for an elaboration on the question “what does the teacher use the stick for?” the children named the misdemeanours that can cause a teacher to use a stick. Below is a list of their verbatim responses. The children started these utterances by saying, “The teacher hits us, when we...”

Table 3: Grade 1 children's association of a stick (tool) to class rules

<p>“do not listen  “eat in the classroom”  “make noise”  “we steal from others”  “play in the classroom”  “not break the window [<i>an unconscious switching to class rule</i>]”.  “not write on the furniture (this one follows with a class rule as well... more rules are shouted)”  “and the wall don’t write on it”  “do not write on the door”  “do not tear the book”  “and making noise”  “tearing papers and throwing them on the floor”  “and putting feet on the table”  “and making the house dirty”  (G1C:228, 5-23)</p>
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In the process of explaining, these children automatically switched their utterances to reciting the class rules as they appear on the wall chart (see children's articulations in table 3). This encounter was intriguing as a manifestation of the double stimulation process at play. Here, the children associated the use of the stick (the first auxiliary stimulus), with the rules, rules being another set of tools (a second stimulus) for classroom conduct. Talking about the stick served as a double stimulation process whereby the stick brought the thought of the rules, (the rules being the symbolic tools and second stimulus) to direct thinking and behaviour. This revelation brings to light the contention of the retired teachers, who found it difficult to separate the benefits of their school learning which was effectively constituted of recalling of information, from their experience of classroom corporal punishment by their teachers (RT. 291, 7-12), hence they believed there is still a place for the stick in teaching and learning. In the Foundation Phase teachers' interview, teachers said that when they have the stick in their hands, the child "wakes up", (FP, 26. 21-27. 8) which meant the children focus and participate better in class.

### **7.3.2 Grade 4 children's views of everyday classroom tools**

Grade 4 children were requested to make drawings of tools that teachers use in the classroom every day. Children found it easy to embark on this task, and copies of the actual drawings of the grade 4 focus group appear in Appendix L. Their drawings included tools such as a handbag, a book, a phone, a pen, a duster, a ruler, chalk, a stick, a stalk-sweet [a lollipop], a pipe, a stationery bag and a question paper. The table below shows the tools identified and drawn by the eight children, and their explanation of how their teachers use these tools.

From the data presented in the table 4 below, one might assume that these children were not exposed to the use of a stick in the classroom. Several observations during my early fieldwork call this assumption into question. On one of the days in April, 2014 when I was in the HOD office doing some administrative work, a child from that class (the child is one of the participants) was sent to borrow a stick from the HOD. On another day, while I was in the grade 6 class, the child came in to borrow a stick: "Mam S. asks if you can lend her a stick". I was taken aback for a moment, wondering whether she was asking a stick from me. Then I enquired further: "where is Mam S.?" The child answered she is in grade 4, and then I said to the child, "tell her that you found me here and I said I do not use a stick". I had realised that it is a

norm for teachers who do not have their stick in class to send a child to borrow one from another teacher. All these observations took place before the interview with the children.

*Table 4: Grade 4 children's list of classroom tools*

<b>Tool mentioned and drawn</b>	<b>No. of children (total = 8)</b>	<b>How the tool is used by the teacher</b>
<b>A book</b>	8	With a book, she gives us homework. With a book she reads things that she will teach us in class
<b>Pencil/red pen/black pen</b>	8	She marks our work She uses a black pen to sign when she has to sign A pencil to fill in spaces
<b>A chalk/tin of chalk</b>	8	Is the thing where we keep chalk
<b>A chalkboard</b>	7	She writes on it
<b>Reader</b>	7	She gives them to us so that we can read
<b>A duster</b>	7	Yes, when she makes a mistake she uses a duster to erase
<b>Timetable</b>	1	She looks up when her period is
<b>Tippex</b>	6	When she has made a mistake she erases with it
<b>Stapler</b>	3	She staples paper like this, when she needs to join paper together like this
<b>A ruler</b>	3	She draws a line
<b>A table/desk</b>	3	She uses a desk
<b>Paper</b>	2	She writes on it
<b>A glass of water (drawing)</b>	2	She drinks water
<b>Class rules (from the drawing)</b>	1	She teaches us
<b>A chair</b>	1	She sits on it when she writes

Another notable phenomenon is that during the drawing sessions, one child was reprimanded by another and told to erase what he had drawn. Two of the children erased what looked like a stick in their drawings. Looking closer, I realised that the erased object was indeed a stick. On asking the child why he had erased the object, the child hesitantly responded by saying he felt uncomfortable keeping it in his drawing. I realised that he and the others were uncomfortable about my question. Such discomfort was also apparent during my interview with the grade 4 children. I acknowledged their discomfort and assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity.

In the interview with the grade 4 children, when asked about their experience of discipline, the children said that their teachers only reprimand to them. If they had not done their work, the teacher would tell them to write then, or they would stay after school and complete the work. If they had written incorrectly, the teacher would show them how to write correctly, and when a child did not listen, the teacher would just shout at him.

Unlike the grade 1 and 6 focus groups, this group initially resisted reporting any experience of corporal punishment in their classrooms. However, later on in the interview, these grade 4 children were able to speak about their classroom experience of and how they feel about corporal punishment.

### 7.3.3 Grade 6 children’s views of everyday classroom tools

The grade 6 children were also requested to make drawings of the classroom tools. Although it took them an hour to complete the task, they were however enthusiastic to make their drawings. Unlike the grade 4 children, these children approached the participation in the research with an open and free spirit.

*Table 5: Grade 6 children’s views of their teacher’s everyday classroom tools*

The object	Number of children	What it is use for in the classroom (Verbatim responses)
<b>A handbag</b>	6	“She puts her important things in the bag”
<b>A book</b>	6	“A book, she teaches us with it” “She comes and gives us, and tells us on which page to open” “or a workbook, she tells us which page to open on a book” “She teaches you with it and she tells you what page to open”
<b>Phone</b>	6	“A phone, when it rings she answers it” “Yes, or she goes outside the class and answers the phone”
<b>A pen</b>	6	“She marks with it” “A red pen, she marks with it, and a black one she writes with it, and a blue she writes with it”
<b>*A duster</b>	6	“She hits us with it here (Showing his fingers) (others laughing)” “She cleans the board with it”
<b>* A ruler</b>	5	“She underlines” “Yes if there are important things that need to be underlined, she puts it down and underlines”
<b>Chalk</b>	5	“Chalk, what does the teacher do with chalk?” “All: he writes with it on the board”
<b>*A stick</b>	5	“The teacher hits us” “He points with it at the board”

		<p>“If you didn’t do his work, like home work, he hits you”</p> <p>“Even if when you haven’t finished your work, even if it’s a very small part, like you did not completely write because the word is too long, then he hits you, hey”</p> <p>“He hits us, he hits fours (four strokes) here I am swollen, it cramps all the time”</p> <p>“Hey there is a stick this big, which is called ‘Umqondisi’, it’s this big”</p> <p>“A stick this big (showing) he uses it as a walking stick, teacher Masondo”</p> <p>“He walks with it and he hits us with it (other children giggling)”</p>
<b>Stalk sweets</b>	3	<p>“She brings them to class some of the days, and she sells them to us, when the bell rings for break she sells to us, we suck them and we leave”.</p> <p>“Even in class, she sells to us, then when we are done we eat them in class, because we bought them from her during her period”</p> <p>“They put them in the mouth and suck them in class while they are writing”.</p> <p>“No they are not allowed, in class there are class rules that say ‘don’t eat in the class”</p> <p>“We just get puzzled that they put the sweet in the mouth and they eat, when we are not allowed eating while the teachers is in class”</p>
<b>*A pipe</b>	2	<p><b>Researcher:</b> “mh, I have seen these others (thinking aloud as I am paging through the drawings), even these, the stalk sweets we did talk about them, a pipe, what is a pipe?”</p> <p>“mhh it’s a pipe that they beat us with”</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> “oh is a stick neh?”</p> <p>“it is torn, it is torn here (trying to demonstrate to me), it is torn inside (showing the front part of the stick)”</p> <p>“shoo it so painful mistress”</p> <p>“Other teacher they put a stick inside”</p> <p>“and some teachers, they don’t even lift the stick too high, she lifts it as she hits you”, “akudinde” – (it’s a way of hitting everywhere so there is more pain felt)</p> <p>“it happens that he hits you only to find that her hand is very bad, it causes more pain”</p>
<b>Stationary bag</b>		<p><b>Researcher:</b> “This one has drawn what looks like a bag for ball pens (reading from the labels). What does the teacher do with this? Whose drawing is this?”</p> <p>“It’s Musa’s”</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> “yes Musa? this bag? what does the teacher do with this? I am asking all of you, is that okay?”</p> <p>“It’s for ball pens”</p> <p>“And a phone”</p> <p>“Yes she puts her phone there sometimes”.</p> <p>“And her money”</p> <p>“And all the things”</p>
<b>A question paper1</b>		<p><b>Researcher:</b> “Here is a new thing, a question paper, what does the teacher do with a question paper?”</p> <p>“he calls out the mental (math)”</p>

Tools that are related to corporal punishment are indicated with an asterisk. These include a stick, which was drawn by five of the six children, and a pipe, which was an additional tool drawn by two children. All the children participated in the conversation about the pipe, saying that it is used to hit them. The children’s verbal responses highlight multiple uses of the stick: the teacher points at the board with it, he hits them with it, and one of the teachers hits them with a thick stick that he uses as a

walking stick. A stick can be presented in different physical forms, but continue to be used in the same way. Some children referred to it as a pipe (its structural make up), whose description and function is articulated in the conversation below.

Researcher: even these, the stalk sweets we did talk about them, a pipe, what is a pipe?

Child 1: mhh it's a pipe that they beat us with

Researcher: oh is a stick neh?

Child 2: it's is torn, it is torn here, it is torn inside (showing the front part of the stick)

Child 1: shoo it so painful mistress

Child 3: other teacher they put a stick inside, inside

Child 4: and some teachers, they don't even lift the stick too high, she lifts it as she hits you, "akudinde" [it's a way of hitting all over the body so more pain is felt] (G6C.267, 5-12).

From the list of tools in the drawings and the related interview, it is evident that the grade 6 children experienced corporal punishment as one of the everyday classroom practices. In the above excerpt the children are describing the "pipe" as a tool that the teacher "beats us with". They described a pipe as being particularly painful because it is torn and "the teachers beat you anywhere with it". They further how the teacher uses it in a manner that inflicts severe pain, especially when the teacher has "a very bad hand that causes severe pain" (Appendix U, Excerpts 7.7a-c) From this experience, children seem to have learned hitting techniques that are more painful, an unintended outcome. Their description suggests the internalisation of nuances of techniques involved in inflicting pain.

The engagement with the children on a question phrased from a vignette (see excerpt below) shows the internalisation of the use of corporal punishment as a cultural way of dealing with children's irregular behaviour.

Researcher: Now listen my children, this is the last question. Let us say you are a teacher, or I am the teacher, I come to class and I give children worksheets to work on. And this child takes this paper that I gave you to do work; she takes this paper and plays with it, she takes this paper and crinkled it and plays with it, she does not do work.

Child 1: At home? (One child asking)

Researcher: In the classroom (myself and other children clarifying). I as a teacher what must I do?

All children: You must hit him [all at once and spontaneously]  
[then some few seconds silence - just looking at the children]

Child 1: but not in a way that [Wanting to explain the intensity ...] [voice disappears among other as they are talking at once] [beginning to apply higher psychological processing]

Child 2: reprimand him [now thinking further]

Child 3: you must first reprimand him

Child 1: reprimand him, then maybe when he repeats, like now I am having paper I play with it, I fold it, I make a hat, I make this and that, then you say “hey you what are you doing with that paper?” you reprimand him, thereafter he repeats again, then you see him, you reprimand him again, when he repeats you must hit him.

Child 4: other teachers talk to you, and others they just hit you. [learning from teachers]

(G4C.267,19 – 268, 9).

The children’s response is suggestive of their understanding of the measures used “towards dealing” with discipline problems, and this understanding is based on cultural practice that they are exposed to. Here, without having to think twice, the children responded by saying that the teacher must hit the misbehaving child. This line of reasoning can also be tracked from the previous generation. For example, when the principal was asked what he would do with the children who come late over and over again (see discussion in chapter 6), for reasons emanating from their child-headed home, he too instantaneously responded by saying such children should be punished using two or three strokes of beatings (see Appendix U, 7.3.3).

However, the use of double stimulation technique gave respondents an opportunity for moving from lower to higher psychological function. For example, by introducing silence as a second stimulus (see in the above excerpt), children were able to transcend their current ZPD regarding possible discipline strategies beyond just using corporal punishment, and thought about the use of reprimand as a possible alternative strategy of dealing with the child’s misbehaviour.

#### **7.4 Class rules, communication and the stick as mediation tools**

From all interviews with participants, it was apparent that children and teachers alike considered communication, and particularly communication through rules, an important aspect of child discipline. When the grade 1 children were explaining instances where teachers used the stick, they spontaneously drifted into telling me the class rules such as “obey in the classroom”, “do not break the window”, and “do not write on the furniture.” When I asked the children how they knew all these rules,

they responded by saying their teacher told them the rules. Some of them proceeded to say even on that day the teacher had told them the rules (G1C.229, 8-15). Of course it was the teacher who mounted the chart with the list of rules, and the fact that the children made such convincing reference to the rules means that they had been successfully mediated to the children.

During my field visits, I also observed that children started each day by reading aloud from the wall charts, one of which was a chart with class rules. This means that children were reminded of the class rules every morning as part of the early morning activities. At times when the teacher was not in class and especially at the beginning of the lesson, children engaged in the activity of reading from the charts without being instructed by the teacher. Usually one child would take the stick and point to the chart to direct the whole class to what to read (Observations, February 2014). Some children had already memorised some of the charts – they could recite the phonics and some class rules without looking at the chart, and some did not even pay attention, unless the teacher got involved and picked children randomly to come and read individually. During the literacy time, when the teacher did dictation, I observed some children slowly sounding the words, and others looking at the phonics charts mounted on the wall then writing the dictated word.

I observed that children were better focused in the morning; they knew the routine and exactly what to do whether the teacher was present in class or not. Therefore, while the wall charts are learning and teaching tools, they are also used as discipline tools and a tool for focusing the attention of the children. The stick seemingly has the same function, especially when it is used to point at the content of the chart to read or discuss. Furthermore, it serves as an auxiliary tool that reminds the children of the class rules that appear on the chart. For the teacher it works only when she cannot use charts to control children's behaviour. This was clearly demonstrated by the unanimous response of the grade 1 children to the question of what happens when they break the rules: "she hits you," which they shouted in unison (G1C.229, 16).

It was clear from this conversation with the children that the rules serve as a boundary-setting tool. Reading them every morning is an activity that inculcates the classroom rules and norms. The children know that if they break the rules, the teacher "*uyakushaya*" (she hits you) or "she reprimands you with '*ngoswazi*' (soft

stick)” (G1C.229, 15-25). Therefore, according to these children, the trend is that, when children break the class rules, the teacher beats them as a form of punishment. This sentiment also emerged in the interview testimony of the retired (RT.49, 2-4) and current teachers (IST. 70, 16-26), who said that when children break rules or do not respond positively to their reprimands they resort to corporal punishment. Parents, as presented in the excerpt below, thought the idea that children be beaten after they have been reprimanded is commendable.

Parent 1: with my child, no, if I reprimand, and reprimand, and reprimand, then I put her on the bed and hit her that is the good truth. I hit a lot, even here at school I told them (now vehemently saying these as if rebelling against the idea behind this interview).

Parent 2: yes and me too, at home I hit, I do not want to lie, even here at school, I tell them if the child does not do well, the child must be hit so that he gets on the way. I am a mother as I should and because I went through being beaten (IP.108, 1-6).

It is worth noting that the central theme that emerges here is that the attention of all the actors – teachers, parents and children – is not on the actual direct consequence of the misbehaviour, but on the punishment as a consequence of the misbehaviour. These teachers use class rules and then corporal punishment as an anchor for discipline. Here, rules are used as a first line disciplinary tool that pre-empt the possible use of corporal punishment. The grade 1 children (G1C.228, 1-5) experienced their teachers’ beating them if they broke the rules or did not follow instructions. When these children were asked “What would they as teachers do if the children are given work to do, and then one child plays instead of writing?”, they responded in a chorus, “*Amshaye*”, meaning the teacher would beat the misbehaving child (G1C: 236, 12-16).

By the time the children reach grade 6, they have already internalised the discipline practice that involves rules, reprimands and corporal punishment. This is demonstrated in the grade 6 children’s response to the vignette question about what the teacher should do if a child misbehaves in the classroom. The quoted response below captures the unanimous response of all the grade 6 children in the focus group.

Child: reprimand him, then maybe when he repeats, like now I am having a paper, I play with it, I fold it, I make a hat, I make this and that. Then you say, “hey you, what are you doing with that paper?” You reprimand him, thereafter he repeats again, then

you see him, you reprimand him again. When he repeats you must beat him (G6C.268, 5-8).

The children's response suggests that they believe that teachers should reprimand them several times, at least three times, and then if the children repeat the misbehaviour, the teacher may administer corporal punishment. Clearly, for these children, communication is the first line of correcting a child's behaviour.

This kind of thinking also appears to be in line with Vittrup and Holden's (2010) findings in their study of children's assessment of fairness and effectiveness of corporal punishment (spanking), communication, withdrawal of privileges, and timeout. Although this study is related to the family context, comparisons may be drawn from the perspective of discipline techniques assessed in the study. A South African school-related study by Maree and Cherian (2004) found that children accepted corporal punishment on condition it was used fairly and reasonably. In the Maree and Cherian (2004) study, children rated communication as the most fair discipline technique and spanking as the least fair, while they thought of spanking as the most effective for immediate compliance but not for long term behaviour change. The Vittrup and Holden (2010) study found that younger children rated spanking as fairer. Similarly in my study, I found that grade 1 and 4 children, who are the younger cohort of participant children, thought the use of corporal punishment was fair, especially when the teacher had already communicated with the children what constitutes misbehaviour through rules. In the excerpt below, based on the fact that the grade 4 children did not want to talk about corporal punishment, I asked them how they felt when they were beaten. They responded by saying they felt good about it because they were beaten by the teacher as a consequence of their misbehaviour, and thus it was fair.

Researcher: And you? By the way who are you? M?

Child 1: I feel good because I know that it's me who has started<sup>27</sup> her.

Researcher: you feel good because it's you who started the teacher.

Child 1: Yes

Researcher: Tell me what you do to start your teacher.

Child 1: like when I do not read, when she said we should read or I do not write homework when she said we should write.

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<sup>27</sup> Colloquial language meaning "to provoke someone"

Researcher: in that way you have started the teacher?

Child 1 and others: yes

Researcher: who else feels good because he knows she has started the teacher?  
(all the grade 4 children in the group agreed) (G4C. 244, 4-11)

What emerges from this excerpt is that the children accepted corporal punishment on the basis that they had done something wrong, and their wrongdoing was against the teachers (to be further discussed in section 7.7), thus their receiving of punishment was fair.

Another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is the nature and quality of the communication against the circumstances of the particular disciplinary incident. What I am arguing here is that each incident is unique therefore, even though teachers set rules and reprimand children before punishing them, it is necessary to pay attention to the nature and value of teachers' communication when they reprimand (discussed in more detail in chapter 8) in order to understand why corporal punishment is still necessary even after this communication.

## **7.5 Invalid reasons for corporal punishment**

Children believe that at times they deserve corporal punishment, especially if the rules are clear and the misbehaviour was previously communicated by the teacher. However, they distinguish between valid and invalid reasons for punishment. For example, the grade 6 children argue that "there are those (teachers) who hit for a valid reason and others for a no good reason" (G6C.261,18). I explored with these children what they meant by non-valid reasons. The excerpt in section 5.4 carried the gist of what children consider as invalid reasons for being punished at school.

From the conversation in this excerpt, it appears that the main reasons that children consider to be invalid for the teacher to beat them are centred on the issue of homework. Here, the children claim that teachers say "I do not care" (G6C.263, 4-11) about the reasons children give for not doing homework or completing the classwork. Even though the reasons are beyond the children's control, the teachers simply say they do not care and continue to beat them. For the children who participated in this interview, it seems at their homes they received not support in doing school work. Every day after school, these children are faced with insurmountable domestic

responsibilities over and above the homework that is demanded by the teachers. Even when the children become agentive in solving their problem by trying to write in the morning, they are not successful due to other demands at school. Here, not even the children's developing agency is nourished. What is crucial to note in this conversation with the children is the fact that they accept corporal punishment only for valid reasons, but it appears that they are often beaten for invalid reasons.

In all the teachers' group and individual interviews, homework was seen as an enduring discipline problem within the school and a bone of contention. Commensurate with children's utterances that teachers say they do not care about reasons about children having not completed homework is the grade 3 teacher who expressed that if 50 of her children in her class come having not written homework she cannot get the time to solve each child's domestic problem relating to homework doing (Zw. 200, 1-3). Contrary to the reasons expressed by the children for failing to do homework, some teachers believed it was because children prefer watching TV and playing with their cell phones. One teacher said, "they know these social networks, and I ask them that, then why are they not doing homework? Why are you not using them because you know all these social networks?" (IST.52, 17-24). Teacher N, the retired teacher, was concerned that "the child comes from school, watches Generations (soapy television drama series) and off s/he goes to bed" (RT.114, 16-21).

However, as is evident from the children's interviews, the children cite valid reasons as to why they do not do homework, but they are not given an opportunity to state these reasons to their teachers. Similar sentiments are expressed by the child interviewed in Soneson's (2005) national research project. The child expressed her plight in relation to her homework challenges: "He (teacher) must ask me why I didn't do my homework; then I will explain to him" (Soneson, 2005, p.15). The children interviewed in this study echo similar sentiments.

In an effort to make me understand that teachers have to bear with listening to all sorts of reasons from children for not completing their work, one Monday (in April, 2014) during lunch time the HOD came to me with a grade 6 girl who had not done the homework that was given to them the previous Thursday. She interrogated the

child in my presence as to why she had not done her homework. The child shamefully explained that she had not been able to do any work at home over the weekend because they had had a ceremony for the traditional healers' graduation, where they had to beat drums and dance every night with the initiates as her mother is a traditional healer trainer. The teacher spoke to the parent to verify this information and advised the parent how to assist the child going forward.

From the above, it is clear that children want to be treated with respect at school and to be seen as accountable individuals; they have reasons for not doing certain things, and therefore want to be given an opportunity to explain. This indicates that children want to be agentive about their situations.

## **7.6 “Every child needs to be beaten but not in this way”**

Just as we saw from the teachers' interviews, it prevailed that parents in all the generations supported the use of corporal punishment by teachers. Teachers and parents believed corporal punishment should not be abandoned, but be administered in a controlled manner (see example of teacher interview in Appendix U, Excerpt 6.7b). From the children who were interviewed here, it transpired that corporal punishment at this stage is a contentious issue, and the children view their parents from three different positions.

The first position is that of parents who believe children are raised by a stick, with no reservations ever.

Child 1: Just like me, there is this teacher who hit me, but I will not tell her name, there is this teacher who hit me and my hand was so swollen, it was so swollen until I reached home, and my mother asked what injured you, I told her that I was beaten by the teacher, she asked why was I beaten, I told her then she said “any way a child is raised by?...”

Children: by a stick [others joining in to complete her sentence]

Researcher: ohhh that's what you mom said at home

Child 1: Yes.

Researcher: what you are telling me is important

Child 1: But it is painful when you are beaten

Researcher: what do your parents say about you being beaten at school?

Child 2: They do say that a child is raised by a stick (G6C.272, 7-17).

In essence what these children are saying here is that their parents believe that “a child is raised by a stick”. Even if the child sustains injuries, they stick to that view and do not object (See Appendix U, Excerpt 7.8).

Similar opinions as these children’s about their parents’ standpoint on corporal punishment were picked up in parents’ interviews (PI.90, 23 - 91, 19), where parents themselves testified that they did not believe that children could learn and be raised without a stick. Therefore, in the above excerpt, children were indirectly expressing the views of their own parents, and these views were verified by the views of the SGB parents who were interviewed.

The second position is that of parents who say children need to be beaten, but in a controlled manner, without physically injuring them (See Appendix U, Excerpt 7.8)

Child 2: at home they say its fine but the teacher must not injure you

Researcher: Mhhh, you

Child 6: yes at home they say every child needs to be beaten but not in this way they beat us

Researcher: Mhhh

Child 3: at home they say I must be beaten so that I can be on the line  
(G6C. 273, 9-13)

This position was found to be the most popular among the 22 teachers, with the exception of only two teachers. Children believe that parents in this position consider at least three strokes on the hand to be the maximum measure of corporal punishment to discipline their children. Children themselves also seem to favour this position, but from the perspective of having been the ones who “asked” for the punishment.

## **7.7 Children believing that they deserve the punishment**

One of the surprise elements of the interviews with grade 4 children is that when I requested them to draw classroom tools, they did not draw a stick as one of the tools. I attributed this response to two possible reasons. First, since in grade 4 there were specific subject teachers, the children may have made their drawings with a specific teacher in mind or, second, that they had been warned not to talk about corporal punishment in these interviews. Not knowing whether the children had

strong feelings associated with teachers' use of corporal punishment, I asked the children directly if their teachers used a stick. Although the children said their teachers did not use a stick, I observed that they were tense when responding to this question. On probing further, under the promise of my keeping confidentiality, they confessed that they were not comfortable talking about corporal punishment because if it happened that the teacher beat them, it was because they "started the teacher". As one child expressed himself:

Child 4: I feel good because I know that it's me who has started her.  
Researcher: you feel good because it's you who started the teacher?  
Child 4: Yes (G4C.243, 22-24).

In fact all the children in the grade 4 focus group attested that they felt good about being punished. I took this as their way of expressing their acceptance of corporal punishment (See Appendix U, Excerpt 7.5a). The children believed that when they were beaten, it was because they had called it upon themselves – it was a consequence of their prior behaviour. For instance, by not writing work or doing homework, or by making a noise in the classroom, they were provoking the teacher. Here, while the children are taking responsibility for their actions, their focus is not necessarily on the real consequence of their "not writing work" or of "making noise in class". Rather, it is on the feelings of guilt they have for an offense that pains the teacher. Therefore, they learn more about the pain than about their behaviour and its consequences. This revelation concurs with Straus and Paschall's (2009) argument that corporal punishment interferes with the child's cognitive processing in a situation, as it takes the child's attention away from his unacceptable conduct and directs it to the punishment itself. As a result, the punished child fails to take responsibility for the offense and focuses more on avoiding being caught or, if caught, on tactics to endure the punishment.

Teachers make children believe that they (teachers) have no control over themselves hitting the children and that it is only the children who can control it by behaving desirably. According to the children, this belief emanates from the teachers' articulations during the cause of the punishment.

Child 5: and I also feel good, but in my heart I do think that if didn't do this mistake I wouldn't be beaten

Researcher: so you think that if you didn't do the mistake you did you would not be beaten?

Child 5: yes.

Researcher: In other words... oh K you are still talking, what are you saying?

Child 4: I want to say I also feel good because our teacher tells us that she does not want to hit us but it is us who are starting her

Researcher: oh the teacher tells you; and that it is you who starts her.

Child 6: yes she tells that she does not want noise

Researcher: she also does not want noise? What noise?

Child 3: like when she is gone out, then we make noise

(G4C. 243,2 - 245, 1).

The teacher makes the children believe that they have called the punishment upon themselves. One child specifically stated that their “teacher tells us that she does not want to hit us, but it us who are starting her”. This rhetoric leads to children feeling guilty and ashamed for the teacher’s actions of beating them; in a sense, the children take the blame for being beaten. Children have also internalised that they are causing the teacher some pain by misbehaving, and therefore that they should accept the pain that is transmitted by the teacher by beating them. Their feelings of guilt prevent the children from talking about their experiences of being beaten (See Appendix U, Excerpt 7.5b) because logically, how can they talk about the pain that they themselves are guilty of creating?

This underlying guilt is also propagated by parents’ and society’s rhetorical question to children, “what have you done?”, when they report being beaten at school. Here, the question insinuates that when a child is beaten, they have done something wrong and have therefore caused the teacher to beat them. This results in children staying with the feelings of guilt. This sense of guilt was articulated in contrasting ways by different children. One child said “I feel good” about being beaten because she believed that she deserved it (G4C. 244, 1). Others also said “I feel good” about being beaten, meaning they accepted the punishment because it was justified by their misbehaviour and was administered after the teacher had reprimanded them (G4C, 244, 5 -245, 10).

Extrapolating from my observations and the interviews, I surmise that although the grade 4 children were experiencing corporal punishment in the classroom, it was not an issue that they were open to talking about because being beaten was a negative

reference about the children themselves. Being beaten suggests that the child has a bad character, which is the image they want to avoid. Hence, they were not comfortable talking about their own experiences of being beaten. They regretted being beaten and felt sorry for the teacher because beating children was the teachers' expression of the pain they felt from being started by the children. As one of the children said, "because if we start them, the teachers feel the pain" (See more in Appendix U, Excerpt 7.5a).

Of all the children interviewed, only one child indicated that being beaten made him think about why he did what he did. Here, it sounds like, after being beaten, this child could reflect on his behaviour, concluding that "I also feel good, but in my heart I do think that if I didn't do this mistake, I wouldn't be beaten". In his reflection, he still thought that he should not have done what he did to avoid being beaten, which means he still missed out on the moral lesson from his misbehaviour.

This notion of children feeling that they have provoked the teacher also manifested in the interviews with grade 6 children as a contested issue. In the grade 6 focus group only one child of the seven defended the teacher who beat them saying; "but he (the teacher) does not start you". This child meant the beating was a consequence of their behaviour (See Appendix U, Excerpt 7.5b). However, all the other children in the group vehemently disagreed with him. Although the grade 6 children could cite reasons for being beaten by their teachers, they were still not convinced that they deserved to be beaten.

It is worth noting that the grade 4 children believed that the teachers did not beat them for every misdemeanour. They would reprimand them several times, sometimes for days, and then they would beat them. They also stated that the teachers beat them using one or two strokes.

Child 2: maybe she leaves us for a week, then Wednesday of the next week she beats us.

Child 3: but she does not beat us always,

Child 5 she beats us two or one, she ends there [attempts to defend the teacher] (G4C. 245, 7-9).

Children made these expressions as a way to justify being beaten by showing that the frequency (how often) and the intensity (how many strokes) of the beatings were within the acceptable range. On analysing this data, Bakhtin's ventriloquation (Wertsch, 1991) has become evident here to explain the collectiveness of the internalised notion of corporal punishment, as teachers' and parents' views about the conditions under which they advocate for the use of corporal punishment, are similar to those expressed by the children. These are different participant groups from the same community, but they articulate each other's ideas and meanings, which they have internalised and have found their own meaning in.

### **7.8 Trauma: Physical pain, fear, and anxiety**

Although the grade 4 children were able to talk about their experiences of corporal punishment, there were a few instances that indicated some discomfort and inhibition to talk about these experiences (partly discussed in 7.3). There is a critical incident that may shed some light on the fact that some of them felt inhibited to talk about their experiences of corporal punishment:

From observations during my April 2014 visit, one of the days I was alone in the HOD office, the child from a grade 4 class (the child is one of the participants) was sent to borrow a stick from the HOD. And on another day, while in grade six class, the child came in to borrow a stick she said "Mam Sh. asks if you can lend her a stick" I was dismayed for a moment, wondering if she is actually borrowing a stick from me. Then I enquired further, where is Mam Sh.? What does Mam want to do with it? The child responded: "she wants to beat those who did not do her work, she is in our class, in grade a 4" (February, 2014).

From this incident and numerous others, I realised that it is a norm for teachers to have a stick as a tool in the staffroom or in their classroom, and it is also a normal practice for teachers who do not have their stick at their disposal in class to send a child to borrow one from another class or from a particular teacher. All these observations took place before interviews with the grade 4 children, so the school community had not been conscientised about the detailed content of my interviews, which led me to note the possible incongruence between the observed practice and the interview articulations of participants. A contradictory observation (April, 2014) that shows children's discomfort to talk about their experiences of corporal

punishment occurred during the drawing and interview session of the grade 4 children.

During the drawing sessions of the grade 4 focus group, one child was discreetly reprimanded by another to erase what he had drawn. Later I found that two of the children had erased what looked like a stick in their drawings (Observation, April 2014). On asking the children what the tool was that they had erased, I realised that they were becoming uncomfortable about my question, and could not respond. Yet during the interview, these children, compared to the grade 1 and 6 children, were not comfortable talking about the stick. I acknowledged the children's apparent discomfort and assured them of the confidentiality of the conversation. In subsequent interviews, the children were able to express that their not talking about their experiences of corporal punishment did not necessarily mean its absence, but instead the discomfort in talking about it.

On the other hand, the grade 6 children were able to freely talk about their experiences of corporal punishment without feeling the need to censor themselves. Their general demeanour was that of agency, of wanting to see change. This enabled them to express the feelings of fear and anxiety they experienced when they were in the classroom. They felt anxious knowing that they would be beaten for having not completed their homework, and their anxiety was evident even during the interview as they were talking about their fear (See Appendix U, Excerpt 7.6a). One child got jittery said, "Shhhh shoooh! (jittering) I want to go wee" (G6C.217, 17). Another child said, "It is painful, I get anxious" (G6C.217, 19). In addition, as indicated by the excerpt below, these children also experienced vicarious traumatisation when they witnessed their peers being beaten or injured from being beaten.

Child1: if you haven't written your homework you become anxious because you know that this teacher is always carrying a stick therefore you become anxious that he may hit you again.

Child2: they hit you here again

Child3: you also think they can do it if you have not written

Researcher: Ohhh

Child4: I feel pain when I see another child is beaten and she cries.

Researcher: Oh you feel hurt when you see another child in pain

Child1: Just like those children who got injured, mistress you see these children who got injured....there is this teacher who hits you here, when you rub to take off the pain

he hits you again here and you get swollen here and he does not see (other children were also competing to be heard)  
Child2: and his stick is very painful  
(G6C. 217, 21 - 218, 6)

From this conversation, it is evident that even the children who were not guilty of any wrongdoing got fearful and anxious when others were punished. During the interview, the grade 6 children showed signs of distress and the need to talk about their painful experiences of being beaten for not having done homework. The children also testified about the randomness of being beaten in the classroom, like being beaten on the back of the head while focusing on writing. In class, the children therefore remain anxious with the fear of knowing that the teacher can hit them sporadically as she walks about. This suggests that the presence of the teacher in the classroom may spell fear for the children, as suggested in the conversation below.

Child 1: oh when you are writing, and now you get scared that the teacher is approaching you, you start to shiver (laughing)  
Child 2: yeah you are shivering (laughing – only this child) we laugh.  
Child 3: he hits you and goes du! (exclamation) (laughing –only this child)  
Child 4: yes or when you are facing down busy writing, then he hits at the back of your head and you hit the desk with you face (now all laughing).  
Researcher: Do these things happen in your class?  
Child 5: Yes they do happen – and we laugh  
Child 2: yes it happens, and other children laugh at you  
(G6C.272, 23-31)

What is strange in this conversation, as in other conversations of this nature, is that the children were laughing as they related their experiences of being beaten. They were also conscious of the fact that they laughed when the teacher beat them or their peers in this manner. This is critical as it highlights the process through which corporal punishment is internalised, whereby the children are desensitised to pain and begin to view this kind of interaction with cynicism, which ultimately defeats the object of the activity. Children laugh instead of being afraid (usually the intended goal by teachers) of being beaten. Being sporadically beaten has become a classroom norm, acceptable and internalised, but that still does not take away the anxiety and the fear; laughing may just be a coping mechanism, a way of normalising the ongoing everyday traumatic experience.

## 7.9 Conclusion

Through the views of the children one can appreciate the complexities involved in the phenomenon of corporal punishment as an internalised and normalised phenomenon, which hinders the development of higher psychological functions in children for understanding the consequence of the undesirable behaviour. Children's views on corporal punishment as a discipline tool revealed their evaluation of validity or invalidity of reasons, as well as the underlying views of the fairness as it related to their misbehaviour versus its justification. Children also expressed views on their parents' attitude towards teachers' use of corporal punishment, stating that some of their parents believed the use of a stick was the way to raise a child, some supported it as a regulated activity, and some were against their children being beaten. The children, particularly the older ones in grade 6, demonstrated the capacity for agency through questioning and the need to express their physical and emotional experience of corporal punishment as it stands in the way of communication and healthy mediation relationships with their teachers. This chapter has also revealed the children's experience of complex traumatisation which is related to desensitisation to inflicted physical pain, thus undermining their developing humanity. This revelation is valuable in the sense that it illuminates the nature of and the circumstances under which children's beatings manifest and the effects thereof on their development and learning.

Teaching, learning and corporal punishment are often intertwined and internalised as a single tool within the school's activity system. However, there are indications that teachers also consider and use other disciplinary measures. The next chapter examines, from the perspectives of both teachers and children, some of these other forms of discipline.

## CHAPTER 8: ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

*“Truly I asked myself what will be the other ways to discipline my child, once I have spoken to the child then what is next? As a result I retired still having a stick in my class...” (A retired teacher, April 2014).*

### 8.1 Introduction

Corporal punishment is one approach among a larger repertoire of discipline practices at Fundani. In order to better understand corporal punishment in relation to other discipline features of the school’s activity system and within the wider context of the South African education system, this chapter focuses on alternatives to corporal punishment (ATCP). These comprise discipline methods that are not about the infliction of physical pain on learners. The concept of ATCP was introduced into the schooling system through the Department of Education publication *The Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* (2000) to support schools and teachers to comply with the 1996 legislation abolishing corporal punishment. Though this guide refers to a broad genre of positive discipline methods, in this study I focus more on those referred to by the participants.

Data discussed in this chapter address two of the research questions: What do teachers make of corporal punishment and their current disciplinary strategies? And: What reasons, if any, do teachers give for believing in, or resorting to, corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice? The main data sources were interviews and informal testimonies of teachers, children and their parents, my observations during field visits, and an analysis of selected school documents. In the interviews, I phrased questions around the concept of ATCP, in part because I was interested in the extent to which teachers were aware of the ATCP guide and found it useful for their own practice. By focusing on ATCP, I also aimed to identify some of the contradictions that may account for the tenacity of teachers’ belief in corporal punishment.

The chapter begins, in the next section, with a brief account of the meaning that teachers attach to the official notion of ATCP in relation to the wide range of discipline strategies they actually use. There follows a detailed description of

Fundani's "whole school development" approach, which embeds the school's disciplinary strategies. At the heart of the chapter is an examination of four commonly recommended ATCP, namely, talking to children, detention, time out, listening and support.

## **8.2 ATCP as cultural tools**

To answer the central question of this research study, it is important to ascertain teachers' awareness of its abolition, and what other methods of discipline they use and how these are considered as ATCP. The Code of Conduct of Fundani has discipline strategies that can be branded as ATCP. Teachers at the school use some of these alternatives every day in their classrooms; however, some made claims such as, "I haven't seen it [alternatives]. I've never seen what they were saying. Actually they were never there, we were always told that we must find our own alternatives" (RT.123, 20-21). Teachers, the principal and parents say they know that corporal punishment has been abolished, but they have not been informed or seen any document on ATCP from the Department of Education (DoE) and thus do not use any. This suggests that there is a conceptual misunderstanding in the meaning embedded in ATCP as a concept. A similar statement was uttered by a teachers in Ntuli's (2012, p.94) Limpopo qualitative study; "I don't remember seeing a document which talks about ATCPs"

From these participant's testimonies, it appears that the dominant discourse around corporal punishment is based on warning teachers not to use corporal punishment, with little or no genuine discussion affirming teachers' capacity to discipline without relying on corporal punishment. Furthermore, professional bodies like SADTU and SACE seem not to create opportunities for discussing ATCP with teachers (interviews and Observation, April 2014).

The school principal seems to believe that there are no ATCP (Appendix U, Excerpt 8.4a). Here he is highlighting his awareness of the ATCP debate and his uncertainty in using discipline methods perceived to be in contradiction to the South African constitution. The principal continued to give a picture of ATCP as a shifting illusion; he considered "corporal punishment itself to be an alternative" to the other regular discipline measures, since they use it as a last resort. He further relates the officials'

lack of giving explicit directives on ATCP as a way of circumventing the illusive nature of these alternatives, since according to him, these alternatives are likely to be in contradiction to the constitution (Appendix U, Excerpt 8.4a). Based on these findings, undoubtedly there is still a lot to be done to expose teachers to a variety of ATCPs for effective transformation to be realised.

### **8.3 A whole school development approach**

The internal organisation of the school, its management system, code of conduct, school pledge and classroom rules doubtlessly contribute to its ambiance and ethos, and thus inform the general discipline posture of all stakeholders, including children.

#### **8.3.1 School management system**

Fundani is governed by the School Governing Body (SGB) as per the South African Schools Act (SASA) regulations, and is managed by the School Management Team (SMT), which consists of the principal, the deputy principal and the three heads of department (HoDs). The SMT manages through different committees and teams, such as the Quality Learning and Teaching Management Team, Sports Committee, Welfare Committee, Teaching and Learning Material Committee, and the School Based Support Team. The school operates with a draft policy that has not yet been accepted by the parent body, and a code of conduct (See Appendix P and Q). The SGB has established the vision and mission (see Appendix N) of the school, which are mounted on the wall of the tiny staffroom and in the principal's office.

The SGB was observed to be active in the management of the school; one of the parents in the governing body is at the school every day because she sells food to children during lunch, and another parent is usually available as a volunteer to support children when there is a crisis. The chairperson is readily available to be called for any emergencies and he visits the school every two weeks. For instructional management, one HoD is the academic controller; according to his explanation (IG, 138, 8-15), his portfolio has to do with ensuring that teaching and learning is happening by providing resources to both teachers and children. In the same vein, the deputy principal as a curriculum manager ensures that academic instruction is taking place at the school. She has a curriculum delivery management system whereby all teachers have to submit lesson plans two weeks before the

actual date of the lesson (see Appendix O). In an informal discussion with the deputy principal, she reported that, although teachers try their best to submit their lesson plans on time, it is not always possible (Informal conversation, April, 2014), and the teachers' delivery of these lesson plans reflect in the teachers' performance appraisal tool; the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

These management systems are critical to behaviour management of children, because it is these systems that inform the minute-by-minute activities within the school. These systems also spell out the division of labour for members of the school community. The school policy and code of conduct are also central tools for clarifying the division of labour.

### **8.3.2 School policy and the code of conduct**

Section 8 of SASA, number 84 of 1996 has mandated SGBs to formulate schools' codes of conduct. In fulfilling this mandate, the SGB has to work in consultation with other stakeholders, including children. This is an attempt to inculcate the consultative and democratic processes for collective discipline. One of the key drivers of discipline is a school's statutes and principles that are meant to facilitate and embrace the objectives of the school. Such statutes should further drive the purposive agenda of the school and set behavioural contracts between all stakeholders to facilitate the realisation of the set agenda. The DoE's guide on ATCP (2000) has included the use of the school policy, code of conduct and class rules as discipline measures.

As is the tradition with most schools, the walls of the staffroom/administration office and the principal's office of Fundani are dressed with the vision and mission of the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDE) and of Fundani (see Appendix M and N). The vision of the school is:

The school sees as its vision as that of developing the child academically and socially so that the child could play a meaningful role in the social and economic life of the broader society (Observations, 2014).

The mission of the school is:

The mission of the school is to make the school a conducive place that nurtures the individual talents of the learners so that these learners could be able to face the demands and the challenges of the world outside with relative ease. It is also the

mission of the school to equip [themselves] with contemporary technologies that will make the duty of preparing learners for their future adequate and relevant. (Observations, 2014).

Although these statements do not speak directly to discipline, they provide an outline of the objectives of the school, which should drive behaviour patterns and the nature of the relationship forged by the teachers and the children. These statements do not stipulate “how” to “develop... the child academically and socially”. Therefore, it is difficult to assess if the discipline practices used by the school are in sync with its objectives. However, linked to the vision and mission of the school are some operational tools such as the school policy and code of conduct.

The school’s draft policy, formulated in 2011, has not yet been accepted by the parent body. This delay is caused by the fact that when parents are invited to discuss the school policy, not enough turn up to constitute the quorum. The school officials believe that the parents avoid getting involved because they fear they do not understand (IP.221, 7-9; IG.152, 26-29 and IZ. 191, 18-20). Nevertheless, the document has captured the ethos of the school and has a section on rules for both the educators and children.

The code of conduct was signed by the SGB teacher, the secretary (a parent) of the SGB, and the principal. This document became effective on 17 March 2011. The code of conduct (see Appendix Q) articulates the vision and mission which are founded on the 12 values and principles. While all the values and principles guiding the code of conduct indirectly or directly relate to discipline, the following points relate directly to the issues addressed in this study:

- b) No corporal punishment shall be applied in this school in whatever manner and method
- d) Children have the right to a clean, safe, harassment-free and healthy environment which provides for conducive teaching and learning.
- i) Children have the right to discipline based on respect and dignity and without inhuman treatment, degradation, and inconsideration.
- k) No children shall be locked in isolation and/or solitary detention.

The code of conduct further advances the responsibilities and rights of parents in ensuring that “children adhere to the rules and regulations of the school, and accept the responsibility for their actions”. This document further affords parents the powers “to take legal action against any person who is found to have infringed the right of

the child". Therefore, the code of conduct is a tool to restrain teachers from administering corporal punishment. As a mediation tool, it can be used by teachers, children and parents, and by virtue of its design, if used effectively it can also synchronise the development of the children, parents and teachers.

### **8.3.3 Dealing with misconduct**

The code of conduct has a section with the directives on procedures when dealing with child misconduct. The section resembles the discipline procedures in the DoE's ATCP (2000), as well as those in SASA (1996), which classifies misconduct into five levels according to the degree of seriousness (see Appendix Q for the distinctions between levels). At each level, there are corresponding disciplinary procedures.

The misconduct that teachers at Fundani are mostly concerned about – “failing to complete school work” and “failing to be in class on time” – both fall into the *level 1* category. According to the code of conduct, when dealing with level 1 misconduct, discipline measures ought:

- a) To be carried out by the educator in class, [by means of]
- b) Verbal warning
- c) Demerits
- d) Additional work which is constructive
- e) Small menial tasks like cleaning the classroom
- f) Detention where the child uses the time fruitfully for learning purposes

From observations, these methods of dealing with the level 1 misconduct were used to a minimal extent at Fundani, with verbal warnings being the popular method. Demerits are not used since there is no merit system for child behaviour. Teachers have found that the last three methods on the list are not compatible with the social context of the school and, because using these in the school's socio-economic context is likely to compromise children's right to education.

I also observed that teachers did not consistently adhere to the code of conduct in three instances of *level 2-3 misconduct* (see Appendix Q for the descriptions) where children were found fighting. In adjudicating the disciplinary process here, the

teachers instituted conflict resolution by listening to those who were fighting, soliciting witnesses, and making a fair judgement based on the information they received. In the end, the child who was found guilty was called to the teacher's office for punishment. The conflict resolution process is a higher order disciplinary tool, which involves the collective (the witnesses, teachers and those who were fighting). This process is not stated in the code of conduct of Fundani, but is used effectively to resolve conflict among learners. However, the end part of the process involves the use of corporal punishment, which defeats the whole idea of conflict resolution as an alternative to corporal punishment.

*Level 4* misconduct is classified under very serious violations of the school's code of conduct. During my observations, I did not come across a child committing this level of misconduct. The only *level 5* misconduct that I observed was a group of girls who stole several items, amounting to R350, from the nearby supermarket. In this case, these children were told to attend a disciplinary hearing with their parents as per the stipulations of the code of conduct. At the hearing, the parents unanimously decided that the children should be beaten and the involvement of the police be solicited as stipulated in the school's code of conduct under level 5 misconduct, as a way of showing the children the seriousness of their conduct. Parents had to pay R200 each as compensation to the storekeeper, and the children were taken to the police station in a police van where they were supposedly given some lashes. My observation regarding the handling of this level 5 offense was that processes followed were partly those in the code of conduct (i.e. the invitation of parents to the disciplinary hearing), but others were not (corporal punishment by any agent, even if it by a parent or a police officer, is not included). What is clear from this case is that parents are leveraging on the fact that legislation forbidding parents from administering corporal punishment has not yet been passed in South Africa.

#### **8.3.4 The school pledge**

Over and above the strategic documents, the school has a pledge, which the children recite with enthusiasm every morning at the assembly. The notion of this pledge is borne out of the national schools' pledge (See Appendix V), which, according to former President Mbeki, aimed at instilling values and norms imbued in

the constitution. The pledge seeks to influence the thinking and conduct of the children within and outside the school. The Fundani pledge is:

*“A pledge. A pledge. I am the Fundani child.  
I believe in respect of the environment, creation and natural resources.  
To obey all authority and carry out my tasks with faithfulness, honesty and diligence.  
Most of all, I believe in the rights of individuals, equality, free speech and association.  
I pledge myself to the betterment of my country and all its people.  
So help me God” (Observations, February, April, September 2014).*

The pledge gives the child the identity of a citizen, in this case of the school, as in the national schools’ pledge, which starts with the phrase “We the youth of South Africa”. While the content of the pledge seems noble at face value, some elements of this pledge seem to be contradictory to the real life experiences of the children in this school. For instance, in the pledge, they purport to carry out all their tasks with faithfulness, honesty and diligence; this proves to be difficult in situations where they are expected to do more than they are able to manage. The mere act of ‘reciting’ the pledge without consistent reflection and questioning that is exercised in free speech – the kind that was displayed by the children during interviews – is in contradiction to the notions of honesty and free speech, and does not necessarily develop critical thinking. The classroom practice and general school culture seem to emphasise the notions of ‘respect’ and ‘obedience of all authority’ more. The pledge is silent about the mental and social processes that would answer the questions of ‘what’ and ‘why’ about respect and obedience.

In the school, whenever an adult walks into a classroom, be it a stranger or a teacher from another class, the children stop what they are doing, stand and greet the adult. Here, greeting is used as a tool to convey respect, to convey the message that “I see you, I notice you, I respect you as another human being”. In April 2014, at an assembly, Teacher Kw taught children to respect adults and other human beings, making reference to the idiomatic expression “*Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu,*” which means one cannot exist without the existence of others. The respect narrative also appears in the song they sing after assembly as they march to their classrooms:

*Ngicela ukuhlakanipha (May I have wisdom)  
Uvuse’ ingqondo yami (please open my mind)  
Ngicela ukuphumelela (May I have success)*

*Oh bese ungipha nenhlonipho (then may you grant me some respect)  
(Observations, Assembly, February, April, September 2014)*

The notion of freedom of speech and natural conversation is allowed at the school, even though it is regulated.

For instance in the classrooms, children are encouraged to raise their hands and wait for their turn to talk. However, children, especially in grade 1 classes, have a tendency to give the answer whenever they feel ready, and teachers allow them to ask questions (Observations, April 2014). This freedom of speech depends on the personality of the teacher, the activity and the context. I observed a life skills lesson in grade 7 where the teacher shouted most of the time and used harsh language. In such a classroom, freedom of expression, an important discipline measure that enhances the development of cognitive skills dependent on expressive language, is suppressed (Observation, April 2014).

### **8.3.5 Class rules as alternatives to corporal punishment**

While the school has the code of conduct for both children and teachers (Appendix Q), teachers have brought it to the classroom level in the form of class rules. The majority of the classes, especially at the Foundation Phase, have class rules, and these are presented on charts mounted on the classroom walls (see in Appendix R). According to the DoE's ATCP guide, class rules are essential for boundary setting, which is important for the development of self-regulation. From interviews with grade 1 children, it appeared that teachers rely on class rules to manage children's behaviour:

Researcher: There is nothing else she uses?

Child 1: She writes on the paper, and puts them on the wall

Child 2: She puts them on the wall like times table.

Child 3: She writes rules

Researcher: she also writes what?

Child 4: class rules?

Researcher: yes, what do you do with class rules?

Child 2: she writes for us

Researcher: She writes? What does she say with class rules?

Children: she says do not eat in the class, do not make noise, do not come to school late, do not fight at the class, do not make noise, make sure your furniture is clean (all these rules are recited in English) (G4L. 240, 25-241, 12).

Every morning the grade 1 teachers instruct children to recite the contents of wall charts with a variety of learning content like the days of the week, months of the year, the alphabet, multiplication table, as well as the chart with class rules. When children start acting according to their free will, when they appear rowdy and out of control, the teacher tells them either to sleep on their desks or to read the class rules (Observations, April, 2014). In grade 1, children take class rules seriously as their behaviour regulator in the classroom. They also use class rules to evaluate the behaviour of their peers. When classmates break a rule, other children tell the teacher. This is where the teacher has to model consistency in administering the consequences of breaking the rules.

The challenge with the class rules is that teachers do not view class rules as an ATCP; rather, they are used in tandem with corporal punishment. Furthermore, Fundani as an organisation has not formulated common classroom rules, over and above the code of conduct, or penalties for offenses. Therefore, teachers respond to similar offenses in different and inconsistent manners. I saw a child stand up to report the misconduct of peers, and the teacher shouted at him to return to his seat (Observations, April and September 2014).

### **8.3.6 Parental involvement in school discipline**

Through legislation (SASA) and school policy, parents are important stakeholders in shaping and implementing school disciplinary procedures. Their involvement in and support for school policy is thus part of the whole school approach. However, all the teachers who were interviewed expressed their concern over the ailing parental involvement.

Teachers expect more than just parents allowing them to use corporal punishment to discipline children; they expect parents to take some responsibility by talking to and teaching the child school-related values, which teachers believe parents are not doing. Teachers also expect parents to contribute to formulating the code of conduct and school policy, as stipulated by SASA. Here is what an HOD (Tw) had to say about her observations of parental involvement in the school:

Teacher Kw: you see these alternatives, if we had parental involvement; we have a challenge, parents do not come and do not involve themselves, whatever alternative, we need to put it down as a school policy so we make this code of conduct and we

want them to come and involve themselves and adopt it. They are not there. They do not want to involve themselves, they walk far from the school (IST. 71, 23-27).

The school principal and the SGB part of the parent body, expressed the same frustration in their interviews: parents have still not accepted the school policy, resulting in numerous challenges as it becomes difficult to enforce uniform rules.

The problem of the deficiency of parental involvement is not a concern of the SGB only; teachers also need support and confidence in the mutual understanding they have with the parents. I asked the teachers' focus group what their understanding was of parents not involving them at this level (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.5a).

It seems parents and teachers have different understandings and expectations of the objective of schooling and the role of parents in this process. As is apparent in the case of a parent whose child had a problematic hairstyle, the parent expected the teacher to focus on children in her own class, not all the children in the school. Hence, the parent sent a message to the teacher asking "what was [her] business" with the hair of a child who she does not even teach. While this pertains to the school community, it also indicates the changing cultural dynamics of child-rearing. When they were discussing their own childhoods, the teachers said that any parent in the community could reprimand and beat them for their misbehaviour because of the cultural contract in the community that "it takes a village to raise a child". The essence of this expression is that the wellbeing and development of an individual is by and for the society.

In the same conversation, teachers raised another concern, that of children who seem to be negatively influenced by their parents. This concern is also captured in the hairstyle case, where the parent sent a message questioning a teacher's involvement and authority over the child as she was not the child's teacher. Some parents make disapproving comments of teachers to their child, even threatening to beat the teachers (IST.72, 8-10). Therefore, teachers conclude that some children's behaviour have "a negative influence" that is based in what the parents say about the teachers at home.

This lack of parental involvement observed by some teachers in some discipline and school governance issues also manifests in issues of teaching and learning, where parents display negative attitudes towards the teachers' expectation of parents to

assist their children with school work at home. The Foundation Phase teachers expressed this concern, which is similar to the Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers' concerns (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.5a and b).

This excerpt from the Foundation Phase teachers' interview reflects a bone of contention between the school and the community regarding the roles of the school and the parents, where there are conflicting ideas that emerged with the post-apartheid dispensation. The transformative and democratic governance processes of SASA 84 of 1996 place parents in the centre of education provision and support. With the introduction of the democratic curriculum system, Outcomes Based Education (OBE), in 1996, it became necessary for parents to be involved in their children's learning. OBE placed demands on parents to support the curriculum and further play a significant role in the teaching and learning of their children at a depth that parents in this context are not ready for.

#### **8.4 Talking to the child as a disciplinary strategy**

Talking to the child about his or her misbehaviour seems to be the most natural process in dealing with children and is an effective method for creating an understanding for children about why things should or should not be done. As already mentioned, "verbal warnings" are part of the disciplinary action for level 1 misconducts, recommended in the DoE's ATCP guide.

I observed that at Fundani teachers always talk to children about their behaviour; approving or disapproving children's behaviour. With minor offenses, like when one child takes another's pen, the teacher would simply intervene and say, "Themba, it's you again, give her pen back" (Grade 4 class observation, April, 2014). In other situations, teachers use tactics like starring at a child, or uttering certain words that carry messages understood by the class. In the grade 4 class, when the classroom would buzz with children talking, the teacher simply uttered, "*hey you children, Niyangishela angithi [are you proposing me?] Niyangishela? Are you proposing me? Ngizoniqoma [I will accept your proposal]*" (Observations, February 2014). To an outsider, these metaphoric statements do not make sense, but clearly the children and the teacher understand the statements, as the teacher's utterance resulted in

the class quietening down. This is where language evidently serves as a discipline tool.

#### **8.4.1 The value and history of talk as a cultural tool for discipline**

Teachers and parents at Fundani believe that the notion of talking to children as a discipline measure need not be made a big deal, since it is an obvious and natural method that was used by their own parents. The principal of the school believes in talking to the child, as his own father used to:

Principal: My father would sit down and talk to you, but there are stages where you find that talking to you doesn't assist, then he must catch you. My father will catch you only once and you'll never wish to do wrong, you see, he will catch you once you'll never wish to offend (IP.98, 17-22).

A similar childhood experience was shared by one of the parents:

Parent 3: I, my father used to beat me: but he wouldn't beat you having not spoken to you. If I have done something wrong, he would let me sit down and he will talk to me, he will say "you see that this and this and that" which is wrong and then he will beat you, then he will ask you again "why am I beating you?" then you say "I have done this and that and that", it is you who answer, and he asks you "do you realise that you are wrong?" You see that thing made me know, I never hated (PI. 98, 17-22).

This suggests that there has been a history of talking to children as a disciplinary measure, and there seems to be a pattern as observed by both the principal and the parents – a pattern of talking to the child first and only then using corporal punishment. Looking closely into the parent's utterances, one sees that the talking aspect is goal-oriented, with the purpose of involving and teaching the child, where the child's understanding of the reasons for being beaten is sought, building this into his/her conscience. Again, in the above excerpts there is a form of listening to the child, but here the parent forces the child to say what the adult is expecting. The child should say "[I understand why you are beating me], I have done this, that and that". This seems coercive and manipulative, in the sense that the child is made to accept this form of punishment and take responsibility for the pain inflicted upon him/her. Here, it seems the focus is not on the act of beating, but on explaining why the child is beaten, a way of justifying why it is good that the child is beaten.

The SGB chairperson believes that beating a child while not having explained to him the reason for beating him will confuse the child "because he will not understand why you are beating him because he will not know why you are beating him." From the

parents, as well as the principal, it transpired that parents see talking to the child as the first and the cultural form of disciplining that adults use before resorting to corporal punishment. Both the principal and the parents were strongly against beating a child for an offense without having first spoken to the child several times. The adult has to make the child understand the wrong they have done, which means mediation through language is seen as an integral part in disciplining children. This is where the essence of language as a cultural tool to develop higher psychological functions is made evident by participants. Even though corporal punishment is used to deter children from the forbidden behaviour, it is not until the parents have spoken to the child that the child can make sense of the punishment. On the other hand, parents and teachers are of the view that the use of language to communicate to children is not adequate, therefore that it should be accompanied by corporal punishment. For them, corporal punishment and talking to the child are simply the two sides of the same coin.

It is not only the current generation of teachers who see the value of talking to children; the retired teachers also relied on this method, using it in combination with corporal punishment.

Researcher: and you Ma? And you Ma how did you feel when you heard CP was abolished?

Teacher K: Truly I asked myself what will be the other ways to discipline my child, once I have spoken to the child then what is next? As a result I retired still having a stick in my class... (RT. 123, 9-11).

The question “once I have spoken to the child, then what is next?” is indicative of first talking to the child, followed by corporal punishment should the child repeat the misconduct. K’s rhetorical question “what is next?” suggests that it is a cultural norm that talking to the child is followed by corporal punishment when talking is found to be ineffective.

While another teachers’ focus group confessed that they do practice other forms of discipline, including talking, where they involve parents as well as referring the child to another teacher to talk to, they do not seem to have considered why children do not respond to their reprimands. They do not consider if children have reasons for their behaviour that are sound to them, or if they do not understand what they are or are not supposed to do. Therefore, it is clear that the participants are arguing that

they talk before they administer corporal punishment, but there is no focus on the mediation effect of the ‘talking’.

In the interviews, talking was never analysed as a corrective measure of children’s behaviour. In the light of corporal punishment being abolished and ATCP being given more emphasis, conversations with parents and teachers revealed their conviction in talking to children (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.6), but they did not differentiate between positive and negative talking, and they seemed to view corporal punishment as the next level of punishment after a series of reprimands. While teachers and parents who were interviewed in this study simply regarded “talking to the child” as another method of correcting the child’s behaviour, it appeared from interviews with children and from observations that some of the “talking to the child” constituted verbal abuse, shouting, humiliation and not trusting children’s expressions of their family related problems causing their irregular behaviour at school.

#### **8.4.2 Humiliation through talk**

When talking to children to deal with misbehaviour and breaking of class rules, teachers sometimes also advise them on how to correct the wrong behaviour. However there are times when the talking is experienced as shouting, sarcasm and humiliation to punish, thus making the child feel ashamed and stupid. For instance, when a child is caught eating in the classroom, the teacher instructs the child to spit out the food, drop it on the floor, step on it, and then eat it again. The extract below is the testimony of the grade 4 children:

Researcher: if you eat in class what does she say?

Child 1: she says, spit this thing out.

Child 2: or she say spit it out to the floor and then eat it

Child 3: or she says you must listen to the rules or if you eat something she says you must go out and throw it away

Child 1: or she says you must drop it and step on it with your shoe and then she say eat it.

Child 5: she says we must take it and step on it with the shoe and then eat it (G4L.241, 25; 242, 1-6).

In the extract above, children informed me about what the teachers do when they catch a child eating in class as an example of a punishment for breaking the class rules. Eating something that has been spat out is disgusting, let alone something that

has been spat onto the floor. This can be humiliating for the child and also hazardous for health.

Teachers also use shouting alongside humiliating utterances. The grade 6 children indicated that when they had not written homework, a teacher would say:

Child 1: We do not beg you, we did not go and dig you from your home and bring you here

[another child exploding with laughter].

Child 2: others they shout and say, they say “you are like this because of these “izihluthu” [ugly and ungroomed hair], they call us jakkalas [jackals].

Child 3: “it’s because of your ugly hair,” [imitating the teacher]. They call us “izidwedwe” [rags], and mad people (G6L.275, 3-7).

Children state this not as something that happened once, but rather as something that happens often, escalating it to a practice that they are so familiar with that they laugh about it. This emotionally unsettling discipline is presented in numerous forms, like the teacher writing new work on the board over the previous work by another teacher as a way of punishing the class for not having cleaned the board before she came to class. The use of “they” in children’s statements could be suggestive of the plurality of teachers who use humiliation, just like in this utterance of a grade 6 child:

“When you annoy her, some teachers they hate you for the whole month (emphatically), until you want to leave the class, they say, ‘You get out of here! You get out of here!’” (G6C.275, 1-2).

Another one lamented:

“...even if you ran out of electricity at home, and you come having not written, you write in the morning they shout you or they hit you” (G6C.263, 9-10).

Here, for the child to feel hated for a month indicates the extent of the emotional punishment that the child endures, including the verbal humiliation of being chased out of the class and being shouted at. In addition, teachers do not take into consideration what is not within the child’s control. For instance, if a child attempts to write his homework early in the morning because he could not do it at home due to lack of electricity, he is shouted at or hit.

From observations, I found that shaming and humiliation are also used even in bigger public fora like at the assembly and sports field. Such a humiliating incident

occurred when a teacher made a point to the children about hygiene, cleanliness and self-grooming. She first called two girls to come to the front of the assembly and used them as examples of how girls' hair should look. Then she made an example of another girl with unkempt hair and clothes saying she had "dirty hair that looks scruffy like she woke up from the trenches to come to school" (Observations, 15 April 2014). The girl stood shamefully in front of the whole school as the teacher humiliated her about the state of her appearance.

Teachers too, have indicated that they shout at children. One teacher talked about how she used ignoring as a method of not giving attention to minor misbehaviour, while another teacher used this method to replace shouting when shouting was not working.

#### **8.4.3 Talk without trust**

Effective communication occurs where there is a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Talking to children as a disciplinary measure does not necessarily include listening to them or trusting what they say. Teachers at Fundani have instances where they do consider listening to the child's reasoning about their irregular behaviour. However, communication usually happens when the teacher has asked questions and children respond. The dominating ethos in the school is that of not trusting what children say, believing that children

"lie to us, they tell us stories, different stories, some of the stories you see that 'here, no he is lying to me' but you just smile and you tell yourself that after all you cannot dispute what he is saying though you see that he is telling a lie because we've been in that situation ourselves as scholars we know what is a lie" (IST.51, 17-20).

"Well another child might come late to school when you ask him when he is coming from, then he tells you 'hey my granny had sent me' when you look at him you can only see that he is lying. He just comes from his own place" (IST.51, 21-22).

This lack of trust in children and the apparent obliviousness to the children's socio-economic needs come a long way in the line of development of teachers. They themselves have confessed that they were often beaten at school for not having textbooks, school uniforms, and stationery.

## 8.5 Detention as an alternative

The DoE (2000) guide on ATCP suggests detention as a disciplinary method to be “used constructively within the confines of the classroom”. All the teacher participants at Fundani indicated that they had considered and, in some cases, attempted to use detention. Some of the teachers used it without consciously considering it as a disciplinary method. The general attitude of the teachers to detention is that it is not a practical disciplinary method for children in rural and township settings.

From the discussions with the teachers, I teased out three major reasons why they dislike this method. These are a ‘racialised’ understanding of the practice, parents’ disapproval of detention, and the perception that detention punishes teachers as much as it does children.

### 8.5.1 A racialised understanding of detention

The Foundation Phase teachers had considered the use of detention, as they believed it was one of the recommended discipline strategies. However, they did not believe this discipline method was suitable for “us Black people”, as stated by Teacher K :

Teacher K: ...they actually told us that we should detain them. And this detention thing, for *us Black people*, we cannot manage it. Maybe you want to punishment the child, you keep him after school, when he comes late at home he gets beaten at home for coming late, sometimes you hold the child during lunch, and the child does not eat, the child was hungry, and this child is from a poor family, this is the meal he gets for the day. And you end up not knowing what the suitable detention is?

Teacher Z: and some children walk in groups, if the child is left behind the child may be in danger because he may be caught up there in the forest and you’ll be in trouble you as a teacher

Teacher D: Even during break, it is the child’s right is go and play and eat, so you cannot punish a child in such a way that can be effective enough for the child to realise that she has done wrong (Fl.18, 6-19).

Firstly, the use of “us” denotes a self-identity that signifies the person as belonging to the collective or community. Furthermore, the community itself has an identity: “Black people”. Here, the meaning of “Black people” refers to a group of people with a specific socio-political and economic history that informs their cultural practices. The

participants are singling out those characteristics that are peculiar to Black people as a result of their history. For example, Black rural children walk long distances between school and home, are exposed to possible danger when walking alone, and are not always fetched by parents; parents expect their children to come home soon after school to do household chores, failing which their parents may punish them. These children mostly come from poverty-laden homes where the feeding scheme at school provides the only decent meal the child has for the day, and where parents are unavailable to attend to school matters because they work far away, are sick or late. Teachers think that, due to all these socio-economic factors, parents are unable to support the school and the children, and hence the school will face challenges in implementing detention.

All the teachers who expressed themselves on the issue of detention argued that, under the above circumstances, detention is not the best ATCP. The deputy principal, in her individual interview, also iterated Teacher K's sentiment on detention being an unsuitable discipline method for Black people. However, she referred to "former Model C" and "White people" (Appendix U, Excerpt 8.7.1) to draw direct comparison in order to highlight what she means by detention not working in her school context. She believes parental involvement is the key driver in implementing ATCP such as detention. The deputy principal mentioned economic resources such as transport and time as enablers of the effective implementation of the detention strategy, and hence they view detention as a discipline mode belonging to 'White people'. These findings concur with the study conducted in Sekhukhune District, Limpopo by Ntuli (2012), where a Principal lamented "our attitude as Blacks towards this form of discipline, it is very awkward. In case of White learners, they are already disciplined and you won't even encounter such problems that we are encountering at our schools" (p. 95-96).

From these findings, it appears that detention as a discipline method is associated with race and class culture, highlighting the complexity and depth of the impact of inequalities in South Africa.

### **8.5.2 Parents' disapproval of detention**

While the few parents interviewed supported the use of detention as a disciplinary strategy, they were concerned about the safety of children who stay behind to serve detention. However, incidences experienced by teachers were contrary to this view, as the Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers also lamented that “parents also question the use of detention, especially after school.” That view is supported by the Foundation Phase teachers. One explained an incident where she kept her children behind for detention, and released them with the older children an hour later; their parents were shouting outside the school premises, asking why the children were held back after school.

Teacher D: ...for instance yesterday I kept some children back after school, to release them when the bell rings for the older ones. And when I go out to, the women out here tell me “why were you holding children, parents were here to fetch their children and they were busy asking “why are they held because it is after school?” then I asked “where are they now?”, then they said “that they have left”. You see now, I am in trouble whereas I was helping.

Teacher Z: and even detention is not allowed...

Researcher: those parents that came looking for their children, was it possible to talk to them and explain to them what happened for the children to be kept behind?

Teacher D: they did not come to me and I wish they had come to me (FP.82,23-29; 83,4-6).

In this case, one may argue that the administration of detention undermined parental involvement, considering that the children were younger and some of them are fetched from school by their mothers. For detention to be introduced and to allow it to emerge and be evaluated as a success or failure, it should be given an opportunity through appropriate processes that adequately recognise the involvement of all stake holders. It seems this teacher, in this particular instance, implemented detention individually, without consulting the parents.

### **8.5.3 “You detain yourself, if you detain children”**

The principal of Fundani raised similar concerns about detention to those of the teachers and the deputy principal. He further illuminated a critical point about what could make detention an unpopular discipline method for the teachers. Although teachers did not mention this, he seemed to believe that teachers are not in favour of detention because they have to be involved in supervising it (See Appendix U,

Excerpt 8.7.3). If they conduct detention during lunch time, teachers themselves will not have lunch. It also goes for after-school detention, where teachers have to stay with the children and supervise them, and in this way teachers feel that they too get detained.

Furthermore, children are perceived to enjoy being detained because they find it amusing to be with the teacher who is supervising them, who they see as being detained along with them. This could cause the teacher to feel humiliated by having to supervise detention.

Teacher Kw: perhaps detention was going to work for us if we had sufficient classes because he would realise that they have all left me behind, and on another occasion he would stay behind alone...

Researcher: so detention does not work ...

Teacher Kw: because classes are not enough, it is because classes are occupied by ABET. ABET classes start when we knock off. (This group interview was held in one of the grade 5 classes where ABET classes are conducted. While this interview was in process, ABET learners came and it was suggested to move to other classes) (IST.65, 5-12)

Here, teachers are arguing that space is the factor hindering detention. However, one may argue that detention does not necessarily have to take place in a classroom *per se*, and the Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers may utilise one of the Foundation Phase classes for this purpose.

## **8.6 Time out as an alternative to corporal punishment**

Teachers, over and above their concern about detention, also reflected on the effects of the use of time out, which they refer to as sending the child out, whereby the child is sent out of the class with no particular activity to do, to stand outside. This discipline method is one of the methods recommended in the DoE guidelines (2000), defined as “the removal of the child from the situation from which he or she is unable to exercise self-discipline to a cooling down place” (2000, p.17). Teachers at Fundani hold the opinion that this method is not effective in deterring children’s misbehaviour as “children become happy [and] tomorrow most don’t write homework because they want to be sent outside” (IST.64, 21-22). These teachers think that the

children consider being sent out of the classroom as “just playing”, meaning the result the time out is designed for will not be achieved.

The principal also believes that this method is not effective as children, especially the “younger ones, they do not see anything wrong”, because being outside while others are learning simply affords them the time to play.

Principal: whatever way you might decide upon. But that one of detaining them from class while the class is going on, the older one will feel sorry, but these very small ones they do not see anything wrong

Researcher: okay those who are older they feel the pinch, so then it means it is effective?

Principal: the older and committed,

Researcher: Mh mh mh

Principal: because there are those who are old enough but still they are not committed, so they do not feel the pinch.

Researcher: so it's good that they are out anyway

Principal: it's good that they are outside anyway, you see. There is that group that you find that when they are outside they will have the feeling that I am outside and I am missing. But the others will say “awu I'm out, therefore I'll see tomorrow” (imitating how young boys speak). You see, you see (IP.217, 18-218, 4).

The principal's experience shows that issues of discipline are not simply the applications of methods suggested by the DoE. He used time out as a disciplinary measure as an example of a practice that is in contradiction with the constitution. He argued that the constitution articulates every child's right to education, which can only be operationalised by the children engaging in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Therefore, according to him, alternatives like time out are in contradiction to this constitutional right of a child.

While these ATCP methods have restored the child's right to dignity and bodily integrity, according to the principal the application of these methods may be in contravention to the child's rights to education. This is the crucial aspect of policy transformation, because its implementation depends highly on its interpretation by those who are implementing it.

The principal's insights on how the children respond to time out can be demonstrated in this critical incident that I came across, while doing observations:

I encountered a 14 year old grade 7 boy, Songezo whom I met during my first visit in October 2013. I was visiting a grade 1 class, at 9h30 they have a toilet break time. Since the school has one tap, which is connected to the water pump, the tap is opened and closed by pulling a lever. It is difficult for the children, especially the younger ones to control the flow of water by this lever, as it is only natural for children to pull it once and the water gushes out uncontrollably, making the little ones wet as they drink, leaving them with wet clothes and shoes. As the children were approaching the tap after the toilet visit, I saw this tall boy assisting the children at the tap, opening and closing the tap, controlling flow of water to enable the grade 1 children to wash their hands and drink without having water splash on themselves, and he also created order as the little ones were standing orderly in a queue to use the tap. At first I thought he was a prefect on duty for junior classes. On conversing with him, he was expelled by his teacher for not having brought his homework book. I asked him why he didn't bring his homework book, he said he forgot it at home. And asked him, now that he is outside what does he think about this situation? He became tearful, and said he realises that he is missing out on learning and he regrets, and he said he wished the teacher could have rather gave him some strokes and he would feel the pain at that point and it would be over by now, without having to miss out on learning.

The above scenario demonstrates the principal's conviction that older children are the ones who feel the punishment when sent out of the class. Here, Songezo was indeed feeling sad about being out of the classroom because he was missing out on the lesson, and he indicated that he would have preferred corporal punishment. Nevertheless, in the end, Songezo found something constructive to do, i.e. assisting the grade 1s to control the tap. Contrary to Songezo's discontentment about time out, Teacher Mk, the Foundation Phase teacher has observed that time out has no impact on her little children, who simply enjoy playing when sent outside the class. They even forget why they were sent out and lose track of when they have to return to class.

Teacher Mk: and another child, if you take him out of the class to write, he enjoys it outside, he plays, if you do not call him back to class, and another period starts he continues to play even when the next teacher is in class, and when you send them outside in numbers, they just enjoy playing (Fl. 83, 1-3).

With time out, it seems teachers consider it to be about sending the child out of the classroom, without any plan or activity for the child to do, hence they comment that children simply enjoy playing during the time out session, most probably the younger ones eventually losing the connection between the time out and their offense. These concerns may be indicative of the limitations of time out that are related to process.

Other forms of punishment like locking late-coming children outside the school gates, which the principal says is sometimes done, are also viewed as a time out disciplinary method. This often results in children loitering around the village, and being left vulnerable to other social ills.

## **8.7 Listening and support as an alternative to corporal punishment**

Some of what is perceived as behaviour problems with children is just a symptom of social challenges. The children at Fundani grow up in an environment that does not meet children's developmental needs, such as the need for caring, acceptance, belonging and feeling valuable to their families and society. Such unfulfilled developmental needs may be expressed in inappropriate and perhaps attention seeking ways in the classroom.

During my stay at the school, I happened to have an informal interview with four grade 7 children and I asked them about their family backgrounds as a way of getting a sense of where the children at the school come from. Songezo happened to be one of these children that I interviewed. I found out that Songezo lives with his father. His parents separated before he started school. He lived with his maternal family in Kwa-Ndebele until 2014 when his father took ill in Piet-Retief, and he came to live with and care for his father as there was no one to do it. In short, he attends school, cares for some of his father's cattle, and cares for his sick father.

The SGB parents expressed sensitivity to the fact that some children need more than just discipline. They reckoned that some children's conduct is suggestive of difficulties children experience at home. They have the view that teachers are central to giving that support in the form of listening to the children, and forging a chain relationship between the child, the teacher and the parent. The quotations below are the continuation of an interview discussion where parents were explaining why the idea of parental involvement as a discipline procedure (especially where the child cannot be included in learning until the parents have availed themselves) is not effective given the context of the parents not being available due to work commitments or for other reasons like, "the parent did not receive the letter" (PI.99, 22). For parents, this process seems laborious compared to just using corporal

punishment, that would “solve the problem quick, quick and then it would be over” (PI.99, 22).

The responses of these parents show the complexities of disciplining children in a remote South African village. What is contained in the opinions of these parents is their belief that children’s discipline problems emanate from parental and family related difficulties, most of which are poverty related and about misperceptions of schooling, like parents not accommodating homework activities at home. Those parents who have not been to school find it difficult to assist children with school related work. The principal is of the opinion that parents are not available to come to school when invited to. When a child does not do homework or comes late, the school invites the parents to the school; however due to the fact that the parent is employed where they cannot get time off, they cannot attend. The SGB thinks that teachers must consider thoroughly investigating the child’s needs that may be associated with the child not meeting the school’s behavioural expectations.

The principal gives an account (Appendix U, Excerpt 8.9) of the nature of behavioural problems identified in children who come from child-headed families. These are children who have to fight poverty on their own with no support from an adult. In some cases adults are abusive and exploitative to these children. According to the principal, these children fall into the trap of having to fend for themselves and having the huge responsibility of making decisions for themselves, even serious life decisions that are beyond their developmental capability.

The above interview excerpts highlight the importance of parent or family support in children’s schooling lives and their general behaviour. It is also interesting to see the principal’s attitude toward parents’ unavailability to attend to school matters, saying he tends to understand why parents are not available. It is this understanding that should form the foundation of the teachers’ support towards children and the challenges they face.

Although parents believe that teachers are well positioned to determine whether a child is presenting with a support need or behavioural problem (Appendix U, Excerpt 8.9a) this does not necessarily translate to teachers and the school management viewing children’s behaviour in that light. Sometimes teachers’ preconceived ideas

about children, as well as the right and wrong binary, cloud their capacity to see beyond the presented behaviour, where they judge the behaviour of the child without the mindfulness of the particular child's socio-economic life. The case in point is when the principal suggested that even if a child comes late to school over and over again, and even if this late-coming child is an orphan from a child-headed family, the only justified way to deal with that situation would be to punish the child, just like other children.

## **8.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have studied and interrogated the range of discipline practices of the teachers at Fundani within the context of abolished corporal punishment, the ATCP recruited by the teachers, and the ATCP prescribed or suggested by the DoE.

This chapter has captured the use of the school policy and the code of conduct for the children, teachers and parents, and found that classroom rules are effectively used at the school compared to other discipline regimens, even though they are used together with corporal punishment. While both teachers and parents claim that they have not been trained or informed about ATCP, they make reference to talking to the child, detention and time out. Due to the embedded contextual disconnect between schooling culture and activities and social activities, teachers experienced the use of these methods to be ineffective, and as a result, continue to use other physically painful methods like "chair in the air" and emotionally degrading methods like "shaming".

## CHAPTER 9: CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE ACTIVITY SYSTEMS

*“...as you know that the government has abolished corporal punishment as you have already said, having been abolished, what is your advice on the other ways to discipline children? Which are these other ways?” (Teacher, September 2014).*

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the incongruities and tensions teachers experience in using, or continuing to believe in corporal punishment against the backdrop of it being legislatively abolished. From the evidence gathered from this study, it is apparent that some social shifts have occurred, leading to some considerable denunciation of this practice by critical stakeholders in education and other pockets of society. Such a shift can also be experienced by teachers, especially when they genuinely seek to psychologically engage to identify contradictions and tensions existing within and between the activity systems that influence their use of corporal punishment. Once identified, these contradictions can be leveraged on as budding point for transformation.

### 9.2 Contradictions and possibilities for transformation

It is evident from this case study that teachers continue to believe in, and on occasion use, corporal punishment to discipline children. However, it is undeniable that since its abolition, and as part of historical evolution, there have been transformations, one of which is that the object for using corporal punishment in different activity systems has changed over the different historical periods. Understanding the nature of these transformations is important, as they illuminate the depth of corporal punishment as a child discipline practice in South African schools. Some transformations are observable, like the increased media coverage denouncing the practice and the increasing scholarly interest in the subject. Teachers, parents and children reported hearing about both abolished corporal punishment and some gruesome cases of corporal punishment on the radio.

Engeström (2010) argues that contradictions are a point of significance for understanding the current nature of a practice and its possibilities for transformation.

According to Engeström, contradictions “are like seeds for change”, “they are like budding shoots, even if change is in the positive distance” (Y. Engeström, personal communication, March 11, 2015). In as much as contradictions appear to be points of conflict that impede or disrupt the realisation of the objects of the activity systems (Engeström, 1999), they are important germ cells for change and can therefore be leveraged as sources and points of departure for transformation.

For the purposes of this study, I will identify contradictions that impact the development of higher psychological functions as they manifest in three activity systems (See Figure 9):

- 1) socio-political and DoE,
- 2) the school and its stakeholders,
- 3) the family and the community.

Contradictions within these activity systems are analysed and delineated in accordance to their common object. Their object is to mediate the child’s development to full potential of functioning, which in this study is understood against the background of Vygotsky’s central theoretical position articulated in the sociogenetic law of development (Vygotsky, 1987, 1997). Although my analysis of the three activity systems may seem to focus more on contradictions that surface as cultural-historical contradictions, these contradictions are understood as dynamically intertwined with the ontogenetic transformations that are presented as part of intrapsychological development in individuals and ultimately in the collective.

### **9.2.1 The socio-political and DoE activity system: activity system 1**

The socio-political activity system (activity system 1) represents the government or the political system as the subject. The community in this activity system is represented by the different pockets of the general South African public. Specific to this research project are the different stakeholders in education. The government, in this case the DoE, implements policies as tools to mediate social culture and social change. The post-apartheid government, in its agenda to root out violence and abuse against children, has passed a number of laws that protect children’s constitutional rights. One of these laws is the South African Schools’ Act (SASA) of 1996 that abolished the use of corporal punishment in schools (Veriava, 2014). When this policy was enacted, perhaps there was an assumption that teachers

would welcome and therefore comply with it, especially as South Africa was coming out of the intense pre-democratic period of violence and all means to restore and maintain peace were to be appreciated. Added to this assumption is the fact that this generation of teachers had themselves suffered harsh corporal punishment at the hands of their teachers in schools under the apartheid education systems. The contradiction here is that the generation of teachers who suffered from the apartheid violence and corporal punishment find it difficult to accept the abolition of corporal punishment.

***Contradiction 1: The DoE and lack of empowerment for teachers***

An evident secondary contradiction (Engeström, 1987) occurs between the subject, the DoE, and the teachers (contradiction 1 in figure 9) as the process of assimilating the ATCP brings about conflict within the participants. In order to effectively abolish corporal punishment in schools, the DoE instituted teacher workshops on ATCP, through the school safety project and SACE, and made available the teacher's guide for ATCP. On the one hand, teachers in some schools (like the research school) claim that they were never trained on ATCP; on the other hand, members of the SGB and some teacher cohorts acknowledge that they have attended workshops on this subject. This apparent discrepancy is a result of the DoE's use of a "train the trainer model"<sup>28</sup> in which they trained the SGBs in order to cascade skills on ATCP. For two reasons, this model was limited in its effectiveness. Firstly, SGB members were usually not equipped to train teachers on this complex subject and, secondly, some SGB members (as is evident in this study) perceive this policy as infringing on teachers' and parents' rights to discipline children and on parents' rights to determine the discipline methods they want the school to adopt. In addition, teachers swore they had never seen the teacher's guide to ATCP.

Another contradiction is embedded in the tension that is created by the social distance between the government and teachers (contradiction 1), as well as between the teachers and the children they teach. While the DoE has criminalised teachers' use of corporal punishment and teachers fear litigation, the government has not sufficiently involved and supported teachers in modelling the discipline processes it

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<sup>28</sup> The DoE, through the Safe Schools project, instituted workshops for SGBs with the intention that the SGBs would train all other stakeholders in schools.

would like them to emulate when dealing with children's misbehaviour. Teachers' struggle not to use corporal punishment is a complex issue that is linked to a number of factors, such as the teachers' own poor education and training where the curriculum did little to enable teachers to understand child development, as well as to teachers' psychologically entrenched belief in the effectiveness of corporal punishment. Together, these call for well thought out intervention strategies to support teachers to internalise new discipline methods. Within the contradiction between DoE and teachers is the performance pressure in terms of Annual National Assessments, the completion of the curriculum and the final assessments thereof.

***Contradiction 2: Disconnect between the DoE, teachers and the social context***

Teachers at Fundani are aware of the family and social challenges (activity system 3) and the need for social support for the children, many of whom are living in difficult circumstances, under economically strenuous conditions. Some children come from households where there is a gross disconnect with the culture of schooling, households where children are not given opportunities to learn, study and do homework, and are expected to do household work every day. Sometimes children miss school due to the weight of family related responsibilities, such as taking younger siblings to the clinic. Some of these family conditions are in contradiction with the culture and, to a certain extent, the object of schooling (contradiction 2). This is a quaternary contradiction, and the necessary transformation directive needs to be in strengthening support for these children.

A related contradiction, which is more secondary in nature, is the social distance between teachers and school culture on the one hand, and the children and the society they come from on the other. Such social distance is evident in the expressions of children who lament teachers saying "I don't care" about the children's plea for understanding when the teachers demand school work or homework. Here teachers find it hard to show empathy towards children. It appears that the demands of the school are above the children's socio-cultural capacity. This contradiction is traceable to the DoE, which is perceived to be distant in terms of curriculum and performance demands and out of reach for teacher support as they work within difficult social contexts, where children's underperformance reflects negatively on the teacher and is not accepted by the DoE.

### ***Contradiction 3: SADTU and SACE communication about corporal punishment***

All teachers at the school are active members of the SADTU, which is therefore an important community within the school's activity system. Although interview statements from the teachers provide some evidence that SADTU does communicate with teachers on the prohibited use of corporal punishment, the focus of communication is on SADTU's function as a representative of teachers in cases of disciplinary hearing. SADTU merely warns teachers against corporal punishment, emphasising that it would not represent teachers who are charged with this offense. In other words, SADTU's focus is on the punitive measures for teachers who use corporal punishment (contradiction 3 in figure 9), but it does not assist teachers to explore the reasons why the use of corporal punishment is prohibited. In line with Veriava's (2014) observations that SACE gives little attention to teacher's use of corporal punishment as misconduct, similar observations were encountered in this study, at the teacher's code of conduct meeting, SACE had an opportunity to engage with teachers on the use of corporal punishment meeting and ATCP; it failed to meet this need. Therefore both SADTU and SACE do not create spaces for dialogical engagement with teachers on ATCP that teachers are currently using, with the purpose of creating a guide that is contextually relevant for schools in different communities. I believe that there is an existing and unidentified ZPD regarding reasons for the abolition of corporal punishment, as the appeal to human rights, and especially children's rights are not yet a persuasive argument for teachers. In their development, teachers have been perpetually exposed to corporal punishment and have internalised it as their culture of developing discipline.

#### **9.2.2 The school as an activity system: Activity system 2**

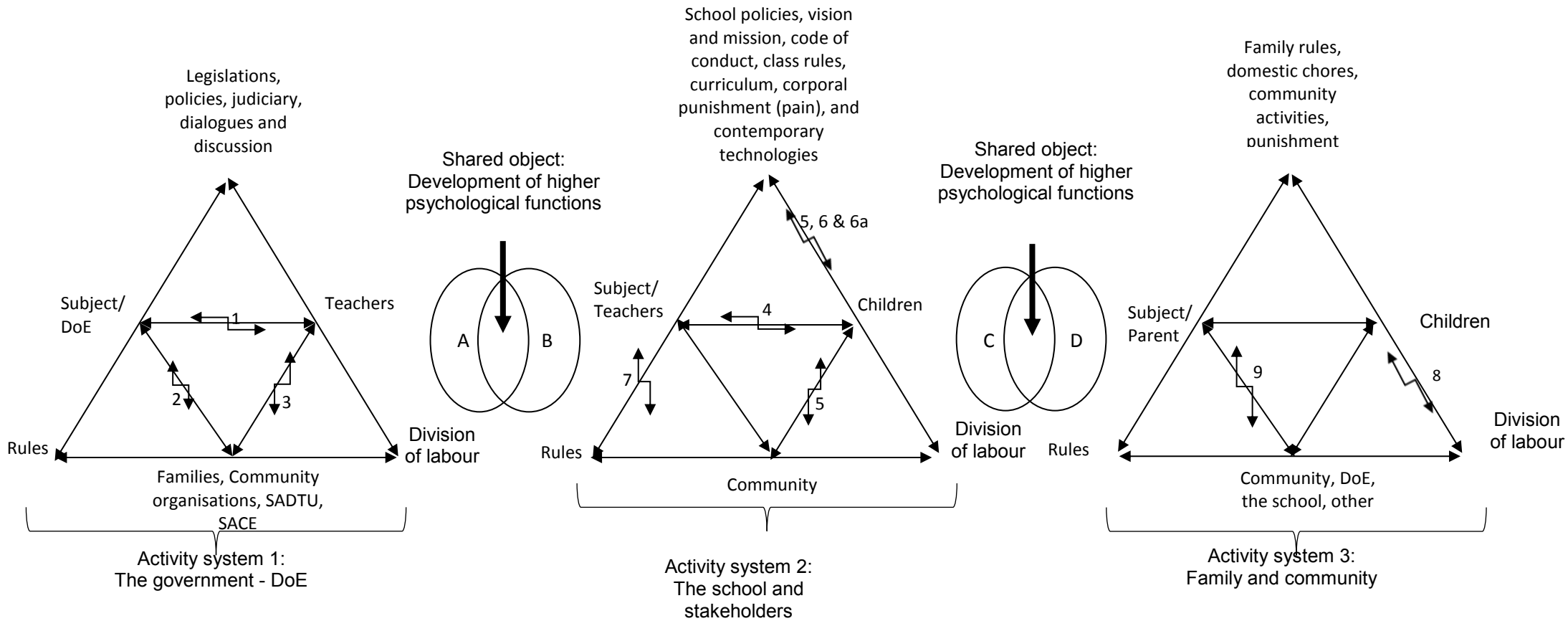
Schools are an activity system within the community (Activity system 2 in figure 9). As an arm of government, they are also the activity system of the government, where teachers find themselves in the interface between government subjects and members of the community.

The general object of schooling is the mediation of cultural tools for the purpose of developing higher psychological functions through goal-oriented social interaction of teachers and children. School mediation is different from the child's home and community mediation in the sense that school mediation focuses on the development of a particular set of cultural knowledge, skills and scientific knowledge,

all of which develop specific kinds of higher psychological functions, and the mastery of specific cultural tools or signs (Kozulin, 1996). For effective mediation, the school community uses particular mediation tools, has rules, norms and values, and engages in different forms of labour in order to deliver the expected outcomes. South African schools, as institutions of a democratic government, are expected to use democratic tools such as school policies, codes of conduct and class rules, together with school ethos to create an effective but democratic learning environment. The assumption is; cultural tools such as the content of the curriculum, the ethos of the school and the object-oriented interactions of the school community develop higher psychological functions like self-regulation, problem-solving, memory, agency and other cognitive skills which should contribute to the mediation of modelled discipline.

Figure 9: Multiple activity systems analysis, adapted from Engeström (2015).

- A: Object of activity system 1
- B and C: Object of activity system 2
- D: Object of activity system 3



***Contradiction 4: Corporal punishment as a teaching tool and a source of trauma***

Teachers have expressed their childhood traumatic experiences of corporal punishment by their teachers. Yet, regardless of the pain they have been through, they persist in seeing corporal punishment as an effective discipline tool. Therefore this dysfunctional transgenerational culture of schooling is a kind of secondary contradiction: teachers find it hard to assimilate the non-violent discipline in pursuit of their mediation object. As torturous as their own experiences may have been, the individuals involved perceive the activity of corporal punishment as normal and of value as a child-rearing tool. Here, what began as external experience from the society during childhood is now acted out by teachers to children as their own culture (contradiction 4 in figure 9).

Teachers in general seem to believe that the very symptoms of trauma, pain and fear are what make the child learn and remember what they have been taught. Teachers seem to misinterpret fight or flight traumatic symptoms as being “awake” and learning. This contradiction calls for the transformation directive that involves mediation through teachers’ self-reflective process, the damaging and counter-productive nature of trauma to learning. Traumatic symptoms include the physiological activity of the sympathetic nervous system, where the child under threat of being beaten has a traumatic reaction, becoming hypervigilant with heightened senses and increase in heartbeat (Lewis, 1999). In this traumatised state, the child may be grasping information but with the objective of the avoidance of pain, rather than for the acquisition of knowledge. The meaning the child attaches to the learning material is that it is a tool for escaping a beating. In this way, the child learns cognitive strategies for how to escape being beaten. Copying another child’s homework, without any cognitive engagement with the learning material, is just one of many examples that came out of this research.

Teachers seem to have learned to look beyond the physical pain (contradiction 4), i.e. ensuring the undesired conduct is not repeated. Similarly, the retired teachers avoided talking about corporal punishment and the pain thereof, and insisted on talking about the success in learning achieved alongside corporal punishment. There seems to be an avoidance pattern emerging here, the avoidance that keeps teachers not in touch with the real meaning of the stick thrashing the flesh.

### ***Contradiction 5: The school's vision and mission***

Fundani has expressed its vision and mission (Appendix N) as a tool encapsulating the common purpose of the everyday interactions of stakeholders. The vision of the school is to develop the child *academically* and *socially* to enable them to be functional and be able to make *meaningful contribution* to the economic life of the country. The mission is "...to equip [teachers] with contemporary technologies that would make the duty of preparing the child for their future adequate and relevant." According to this mission statement, the school has to work towards finding 'contemporary technologies' that are the appropriate tools to develop the child academically and socially. There seems to be some contradiction in the use of corporal punishment as a teaching and learning tool, as it is contrary to the vision of the school as corporal punishment as a mediation tool inhibits effective learning and development (contradiction 5 on figure 9). As a seed for transformation, it would be worthwhile to explore with the teachers and broader school community their interpretation of their school's vision and mission statements in relation to the use of contemporary technologies versus the use of corporal punishment with the aim of highlighting the embedded contradictions between the current tools and the imagined outcomes.

### ***Contradiction 6: The code of conduct***

While the school articulated the operationalisation of its vision and mission in the school policy and code of conduct, these documents are not consistently referred to (contradiction 6 in figure 9) when adjudicating on disciplinary matters where more often than not, cultural tools like corporal punishment are used without reference to the code of conduct. The school's code of conduct states that corporal punishment is prohibited. Moreover, children and parents do not have copies of the code of conduct. Of these operational tools, only the class rules are made accessible and communicated to the children. Unlike the code of conduct which children do not have access to, charts with class rules are mounted on classroom walls for children to see. A primary contradiction presented in this situation is that teachers and parents still, to a large extent, prefer corporal punishment as their disciplinary tool. The transformation directive lies in bringing this misalignment of the value systems to the surface and in engaging with the school community on how these can fulfil the objects of schooling articulated in the vision and mission of the school.

### ***Contradiction 6a: Alternatives to corporal punishment***

Tertiary contradiction occurred here when teachers found conflict in the use of the recommended new system, ATCP in this case. While teachers claim that ATCP like a dialogue with the child, time out and detention do not work, it does not appear as though the school has effectively invested in these methods (contradiction 6a). For example, what do teachers mean when they say they are talking to the child, or are reprimanding the child? From observations, teachers' utterances when reprimanding a child did not always sound goal-explicit and goal-directed. As presented by the teachers during interviews, it did not sound like the school had a plan for time out activities for children, even though the school does not have facilities for a safe and constructive time out and detention. Thinking of what could be a transformative action to resolve this contradiction, there is no evidence of the school systematically trying it out with parents and children to assess the school community's response to these disciplinary methods. While class rules are used by almost every teacher, and children respond appropriately to class rules, there is still room for improving the formulation process and synchronising the consequences of adhering to and breaking the rules.

In addition, another noted primary contradiction is found in the teachers' instilling discipline through rules, while sabotaging the very discipline tool system by failing to model the discipline of adhering to these rules. This builds resentment among the children, which does not show because they remain silent and subordinated, with lack of agency to express their thoughts and feelings due to fear of harassment by teachers.

### ***Contradiction 7: Misconduct and need for learner support***

Branding a child's behaviour as misconduct is still a contentious issue. It seems there is primary contradiction in the conceptualisation of 'misconduct', especially in a school setting. Although misconducts are described in the code of conduct, their description does not take into consideration possible causal factors. A child's offense is often informed by a script from the teachers' past experiences and the social distance to children's family backgrounds (contradiction 7, in activity system 3). The socio-economic and cultural barriers, which the majority of the children at Fundani experience, lead to some of the children coming to school with physiological and

psychological challenges like childhood deprivation stress and lack of motivation caused by poverty. However, some children present with difficulties that need empowerment through the mediation of life skills which can be addressed through a slight modification of the curriculum rather than punishment. The current school has the feeding scheme and School Based Support Team, which attempt to assist children with needs, but these are insufficient to address the wide range of children's challenges without the involvement of the DoE's District Support Team.

### **9.2.3 Family as an activity system in education: Activity system 3**

Parents send children to school, and their object is to provide education for the children and raise functioning individuals. Although this object is shared with the object of the school (See activity systems 1 and 2), there is a difference in the kind of knowledge transmitted, set of rules, and division of labour within these activity systems. School learning puts some unexpected demands on the home activity system and encroaches on the territory of the cultural knowledge to be imparted and transmitted to the next generation by parents and the community. The rural context of Fundani is not yet ready to conform to the rapid education transformation that is characterised by fusing home and school boundaries, with the schooling activities beginning to dominate over the home and cultural activities.

#### ***Contradiction 8: Domestic work and schooling***

The evident quaternary contradiction is presented as contradiction 8 in the activity system 3 (see figure 9). Children learn at school and are also given homework, which parents are expected to guide and support their children in completing it. The tension occurs when parents want their children to perform well academically but not do homework. Another aspect of the conflict is that parents in this rural context want their children to assist them with domestic work like cleaning, cooking, looking after younger siblings and herding cattle. Some children also find themselves caring for sickly parents, while others serve as breadwinners for the household. Therefore, children are not able to do homework. This quaternary relationship is in relation to the divisions of labour, which were previously clear cut. However, with the democratisation of education – which calls for increased parental involvement in the education of children through participation in school governance and children's learning – the home and parental roles begin to be dominated by the school and scientific knowledge.

According to teachers, one of the key punishable behaviours of children is not doing homework, while some parents see homework activities as belonging to the classroom, not to the home. This has become a source of strain in teacher-parent relations and has had a negative impact on teacher-child relations as children are located in the middle of the tension between teachers and parents, and are the recipients of punishment for uncompleted homework. The school community, including the DoE, may need to review the value of homework in this socio-economic context.

### ***Contradiction 9: Parent involvement***

For democracy to be realised, there needs to be maximum participation of key stakeholders. It is in that spirit that parental participation in school-related processes, like the formulation of the school policy and code of conduct, is important (DoE, 2000). While the SGB is hands-on at Fundani, the general parent body is not involved, which causes hiccups in the school's attempts to implement democratic disciplinary processes. Parental non-involvement renders the promulgation of the school policy and thus of the ATCP undemocratic in this particular school, which subsequently impacts on the discipline system and tools adopted by the school. Teachers find it difficult to confidently decide on alternatives without the involvement of parents. The contradiction is between the DoE's continued expectation of parental involvement, in keeping with SASA, and the fact that over the two decades since SASA was passed, schools have struggled to achieve parental involvement. In other words, there has been ineffective implementation of clauses in SASA which mandate parental involvement. A possible transformation directive to resolve this conflict lies in understanding the context in which the parents exist, and allowing them to be involved within their capacity.

### **9.3 Transformation: interpsychological first, then intrapsychological**

Transformation encapsulates the intrapsychological change that occurs in individuals, culminating in the change of the collective whereby the tools used and object of the activity is redefined (Sannino, Daniels and Gutierrez, 2009). Such a change would impact on the environment, the people's relations, and subsequently

result in a collective change of the community (Stetsenko and Arieivitch, 2004). In this study the transformative trail is evident from the engagement with the teachers, the children and the parents. My thesis regarding this transformative trail as it appears in this study can be summarised into three stages.

### **9.3.1 External transformation**

The first stage is only observable as external transformation that occurs between people, or people and their environment, or that is experienced by a person within the environment. This form of transformation is on the outside. Teachers demonstrated awareness of the policy change about corporal punishment, a transformation initiated from the outside by the DoE, an activity system that is connected to teachers and their school activity. This external transformation has a bearing on individual teachers and on teachers as a collective in particular social context. Teachers at Fundani experienced internal conflict that started as resistance to the policy change, and then by creating new tools to find alternatives or to circumvent the new policy.

One of the tools that teachers resorted to during research was pretence about not using corporal punishment. Once they had gained trust in me, they then started using codes that they assumed I would be able to interpret and understand without them having to articulate the concept; “corporal punishment”. These codes were used as inter-subjective meaning making, while in the process the teachers and I gained new forms of meaning, thus transforming. Codes are used to communicate, and share deep understanding, meaning and a sense of belonging to this community, thus creating a transforming collective psyche. It is transform[ing] because the process is still on-going, not yet complete, because the abolished corporal punishment is still a notion that is out there, on the government gazette, with encounters of discourses and activities that affirm this abolition of corporal punishment.

The most common code used by teachers, as well as parents, is that of “ukutshontsha”, which means “to steal” when referring to hitting a child. Teachers at all levels (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase) and the principal used this code. Using “to steal” in this context connotes an awareness of illegality of the practice and suggests a cultural understanding among teachers and parents that hitting a child

implies an illegal agreement or a risk taken by the teacher. However, teachers continue to use corporal punishment, not to break the law but because they believe it is the most effective way to instil discipline (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.10). Furthermore, their use of corporal punishment is without bad intentions – they do not hate the child – yet they feel the need to conceal the fact that the child was beaten. They do this by ensuring that, after beating the child, they make the child “happy” (IST.47,26-27;48.1-2) by restoring the relations with the child to normality, thus ensuring that the child does not leave school and talk about being beaten at school. Since the abolition of corporal punishment, teachers are conscious of the fact that beating a child is a risk- should it be known outside the school.

Some teachers and parents prefer to say that they “scare the child”, when they actually mean that they hit the child. The use of the word “scare” is engendered in the way they equate fear to the development of the conscience and self-regulation. Thus teachers perceive the actual beating as a way to scare a child, while this process is actually conditioning the child to act in certain ways without the activity of the child’s conscience.

Remaining on teachers’ awareness of the abolition of corporal punishment as external transformation, there is evidence of mindfulness among the teachers that corporal punishment is illegal. Teacher Z said, “I am not meant to hit them. I know it is wrong” (IZ.194, 12-16). This teacher knows that corporal punishment is legally “wrong” but does not know that corporal punishment itself is wrong. For her, it is about the policy articulation, not what she knows to be correct. This external transformation was also brought to the surface during the conversation with the principal, when I asked him what punishment he would give a child from a child-headed family who came late to school due to certain home circumstances.

Principal: that of three strokes, if it was allowed

Researcher, yes it was allowed, you would give them three lashes?

Principal: yeah, if it was allowed (IP.215, 23-26).

Here the principal’s conscious phrase “if it was allowed”, which he repeated, suggests that, although he is in favour of corporal punishment, he is not allowed to use it on children. This suggests that the principal is not convinced about why corporal punishment is abolished. Although he accepts that it is due to the fact that it

is abusive, he, like all the teachers at Fundani, is not convinced that all corporal punishment is abusive, especially if the child is hit two or three strokes on the hand and the offense warrants such a punishment. However, by implication, the principal will not use corporal punishment as it is legally “not allowed”. In relation to having to manage the abolition of corporal punishment, he is merely doing his duty of discouraging teachers to use corporal punishment as a principal and the custodian of the legislation in the school. However, he confessed the internal contradiction he experiences:

“You see there are things that you say that you do not believe in, but you must look comfortable as you say them. I must pretend beating them is unacceptable” (P.223, 16-17).

This is classical evidence for external or surface transformation, where there is not yet internal transformation. In this situation, it seems the principal accepts the law as is, despite the fact that he does not understand the value of the legislation. In such a situation, where teachers are not internally transformed, there is likelihood they will practice what they have internalised or believe in, which at this stage takes precedence over the legislation.

The principal also highlighted that at parents’ meetings, parents as an activity system support the use of corporal punishment by teachers. Parents themselves give teachers permission to hit children, suggesting that they have the final authority over their children as parents. The principal struggled to convince parents but would emphasise that the DoE has the sovereign power and the ultimate authority over this matter. He said he often challenged parents and asked them, “‘how do you afford to confer the right that you yourselves do not have?’ and when I ask parents this question, they get stuck” (informal conversation, April 2014). This kind of an engagement with parents shows that the principal is ready for transformation, but the problem is that he still believes corporal punishment is beneficial and that there are no effective alternatives yet.

### **9.3.2 Contradictions and disruptive transformation**

While it is evident that teachers still rely on corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool, they feel the need to be exposed to alternatives, and they experience a growing discomfort directly associated with the use of the abolished corporal punishment. This discomfort is caused by the contradictions that emerge within the different pockets and rules of the community. The DoE, SACE's code of conduct for teachers, and teacher union leaders (who repeatedly articulate that "we will just accompany you to court if you have beaten a child, but we will not fight for you" (FTI.22, 10)) all put pressure on teachers to reconsider their disciplinary methods. This leaves teachers only with some parents to support their use of corporal punishment. Even though parents advise teachers to use corporal punishment to discipline children (Observations, parents' meeting, 24 April, 2014), teachers have reservations in trusting parents. They think parents may turn around and accuse them, thus teachers feel vulnerable in the midst of possible litigation (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.11a).

All these social and community conflictual dispositions to child discipline disrupt what used to be intersubjective and shared knowledge by the collective. It appears that the teachers' concerns and scepticism around parents allowing them to administer corporal punishment on their children has a basis in reality. In an interview, the HoD who also heads the school's disciplinary committee cited examples to demonstrate the tension or contradiction that is emerging between parents and teachers where the disruption of corporal punishment as a disciplinary norm is evident (See Appendix U, Excerpt, 8.11b).

The second level of disruptive transformation involves the disruption of the notion that corporal punishment is a good child-rearing tool. This disruption is experienced by the community as a collective, because parents also feel that not using corporal punishment is rendering children "vulnerable". Teachers at Fundani still defend and see value in the use of corporal punishment; however, the conversation with Teacher G revealed that teachers in the school have already had a brush with the negative side of the law regarding corporal punishment (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.11d) – some parents laid charges against a teacher for hitting children. There is therefore an emerging tension in the views of parents and teachers on how to discipline

children, which is stimulated by the media and the legislated abolition of corporal punishment.

This is causing a serious psychological disruption in the minds of teachers, as embedded in the utterance of Teacher Z, who said in tone signifying a loss, “you see, you think you do good [in using corporal punishment] whereas you do wrong” (FTI.20, 10). This is indicative of disruption of the common knowledge or internalised “good” discipline tool of physical punishment. What is even more disarming and anxiety provoking for the teachers is that the community is beginning to ask questions and be agentive against physical punishment of children. Teachers cited a case where the “the doctor [who was attending to an injured child at the hospital] kept asking ‘didn’t the teacher hit you?’”. A similar incident was experienced and cited by Teacher Mk (See Appendix U, Excerpt, 8.11b).

From this data, it is evident that the broader community, more so people with social capital, with specific reference of those in the health department, are beginning to challenge child abuse by teachers seriously. In the light of corporal punishment resulting in physical injuries, health personnel do not take it for granted and are on the lookout for the teachers’ hand in injuries of children under their care. It sounds like health personnel are adamant to extract from children evidence suggesting a teacher’s involvement in their being injured. The agency of the health personnel is such that they do not hesitate to ask damning questions about the teachers’ involvement in the child’s injury right in the presence of the teacher, which may at another level appear confrontational, therefore causing tension within teachers.

In the same conversation above, teachers have attested to their experiences of the risk of using corporal punishment, which they generalise as a risk within their teaching career and the changes in policies. Such risk is associated with parents’ threats and utterances of their urge to sue teachers for injuries that children sustain while they are at school or even outside the school premises. Here, it is evident that parents not only threaten to sue teachers, but they also demand reparations for the injuries of their children, while some are prepared to physically fight teachers. This reflects a deepening and heightened sensitivity of the community in general of the injustice and illegality of corporal punishment. This extends into the demands for

greater accountability by teachers for the safety of children under their care, and an urgent change of disciplinary strategies.

#### **9.3.4 The ZPD towards ATCP**

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the gap between what the individual or the collective can and cannot do without the support of the knowledgeable other. In this research process, the ZPD of teachers regarding corporal punishment ATCP emerged during engagements and interrogations with the teachers and the community. The emerging tensions and contradictions signify the collective ZPD or the rupture, giving rise to the need for teachers to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills on ATCP. This is indicative of natural human interactions, activities and the use of cultural tools within the activity systems. One aspect of the system triggers a domino effect on other aspects of the system, which serves as a precursor for gradual transformation of the whole system (Stetsenko, 2011). Here, the change in the corporal punishment legislation has triggered tensions and contradictions that spurn the dialogue and discourse in the sub-systems that ultimately result in some transformation in the activity system. But such transformation comes as a result of multiple ZPDs and the creation of new objects, where the participants in the systems feel the urge to accomplish something. Here, teachers declared their state of not knowing what to do; they kept asking for solutions, identified gaps in their ZPD which were anxiety provoking, and they all asked me to assist them in filling in the ZPD gap experienced by teachers in relation to child discipline.

While teachers at Fundani continue to use corporal punishment, there have been some slow and gradual changes in their conscience since they found out about the abolition of corporal punishment. Although there hasn't been much formal talk among teachers and within the community about the ATCP, from my interviews with this community it transpired that there has been what I would call a silent discourse about the forbidden use of corporal punishment. I identified some indicators suggesting the confusion about corporal punishment as a discipline method. One of the confusions lies in the conceptual misunderstanding of the abusive nature of corporal punishment, where teachers seem to believe that corporal punishment is acceptable firstly, after s/he has been reprimanded at least two or three times, and

secondly, when no marks or bruises are left on the child from the beatings. In short, physical pain that is not visible in the form of an abrasion or scar is not regarded as abusive. This belief is popular in this community. Parents and some teachers differentiate between abusive corporal punishment and acceptable physical punishment, based on the belief that punishment should not be done to injure the child; hence, teachers resort to other forms of physical punishment. The use of “chair in the air”, whereby a child is forced to squat for an uncomfortably long period to induce pain in the leg muscles of the child, is one of the physical punishments used as an ATCP (See Appendix U, Excerpt 8.11c/8.12).

The highlight and turning point of this research process and engagement with teachers was in moments when teachers and parents asked me [the researcher] to enlighten them on ATCP (IST. 71, 21; IST. 73, 7-8). The Intermediate and Senior Phase group of teachers asked twice, mentioning their request during the course of and at the end of the interview, which lasted two and half hours. They asked me to present ATCP, with the expectation of an immediate response.

An Intermediate and Senior Phase teacher asked me about ATCP at the end of the interview:

Kw: What are the alternatives? Can you tell us one that we can decide to follow? [sincerely concerned] (IST. 71, 21)

In the same vein, Foundation Phase teachers asked:

Teacher Kh: and you, since you are doing the research, what do you see is the best way to discipline child in such a way that they do not repeat the same mistake? Because in the classroom there are 30 children and that those who are not doing work do not contaminate others (FI, 82, 11-13).

At the end of the interview with the Intermediate and Senior Phase teachers, they desperately hung onto their earlier request, as expressed in the words of this teacher:

“but I think I can be more than happy to get the documents on the ATCP and other documents that you spoke about” (IST.73, 3-8).

Needless to say, this is indicative of their sense of sheer desperation and readiness in their need to know alternative discipline methods. Furthermore, the teachers' enquiry on ATCP was genuine as they seem not to have grasped the concept of corporal punishment and they genuinely have a knowledge gap (or rather a potential ZPD) regarding the detriments of corporal punishment and ATCP.

It is not only teachers who are in this state of readiness to engage about the different ways of disciplining children. Here, the SGB chairperson makes an enquiry from me on this matter:

“...as you know that the government has abolished corporal punishment as you have already said, having been abolished, what is your advice on the other ways to discipline children? Which are these other ways?” (PI.94, 21-23).

Interviews with all the teachers have given them the opportunity to think deeply about their child disciplining practices. In the process of interviews, I observed shifts in thoughts about corporal punishment. The shifts were characterised by instances of

- continuing belief on the effectiveness of corporal punishment, and the support for controlled use of it,
- the declaration of not knowing what to do in the absence of corporal punishment,
- thoughts about alternatives, how much they know of the alternatives and how effectively they use the ones they are aware of, like detention and time-out,
- and, finally, their enquiry about the alternatives, stemming from the sense of acceptance and helplessness of the abolition of corporal punishment.

The sequence may not have been the same with all the teachers and parents, but their shift is characterised by the above elements. This process culminated in the illumination of this community's ZPD, highlighting the necessity for goal-oriented mediated activity that would transform the collective's higher psychological function regarding the use of corporal punishment.

## **9.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I provided a synopsis of emerging patterns of paradigm shifts and continuities related to the use of corporal punishment which are characterised by tensions and contradictions from different disposition of the society. While teachers continue to use corporal punishment, they are not oblivious of the fact it is legally abolished. SADTU and SACE also denounce its use. Parents are ambivalent and therefore cannot be trusted as allies in the use of corporal punishment. These psychological shifts are a source of anxiety for teachers concerning the discipline methods they are using. Teachers therefore acknowledge a transformation need in their disciplinary practice; hence, they expressed their need to understand ATCPs that can be appropriate for their school context, a position signifying a collective ZPD, and therefore readiness for transformative interventions.

## CHAPTER 10: DISCUSSION

*“Vygotsky viewed three possible paths for the historical investigation of the formation of the higher mental functions: the phylogenetic and ontogenetic path, plus pathology (tracing the loss of these functions...)” (Leont’ev, 1997, p.20)*

### 10.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, subsidiary questions that feed the answer to the main question; what cultural-historical and socio-cultural processes account for the use of corporal punishment in South African schooling in the post-apartheid era? This chapter discusses the study’s main findings and identified from the use of CHAT concepts and contradictions as an analytical tool contradictions that impact on the development of higher psychological functions as they manifest in relation to the use of corporal punishment in the three activity systems, namely the socio-political system as presented in the form of the Department of Education (DoE), the school, and the family and community. On this basis and with reference to relevant theoretical considerations, Chapter 10 illuminates the contradictions embedded the critical claims that address the main research question:

### 10.2 Discussion of the findings

I proceed by revisiting the subsidiary research questions and extracting the findings from the presented data, theory and literature. The list below shows each subsidiary question together with the chapter(s) that contain(s) data relevant to the question:

- What are teachers’ childhood experiences of corporal punishment and their present understanding of the practice? (Chapters 5 and 6)
- What do teachers make of corporal punishment and their own current disciplinary strategies? (Chapters 7 and 8)
- What reasons, if any, do teachers give for believing in, or resorting to, corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice? (Chapter 8)
- How do children and parents respond to the practice of corporal punishment? (Chapter 6 and 7)

### **10.2.1 Teachers' childhood experiences of corporal punishment**

If teachers do use corporal punishment, the question is why they continue with this practice when it has been abolished. Do teachers' childhood disciplinary experiences have any influence on how they understand discipline and corporal punishment? An answer to this question is embedded in Vygotsky's sociogenetic law of development, regarding the dynamic interlacing of cultural and psychological lines of development (Vygotsky, 1987). Vygotsky further contended that understanding psychological development without the historicity of the phenomenon under study would be an incomplete task. The nature of tools and their appropriation is historically bound (Engeström, 1999; Vygotsky, 1997). Thus the historical background of teachers, as it pertains to their childhood experiences of corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool, is pertinent to the psychological processes that inform their appropriation of corporal punishment in the current context.

Linked to childhood experiences of teachers is the transmission of disciplinary tools and practices from one generation to the next. The participants in this research represent three generations of education development in the rural community in which the field school is located, namely, retired teachers, current teachers, and the current primary school children. There is also a fourth generation – the retired teachers' teachers – who were not participants in the study. They were referred to by the retired teachers as "*our teachers...*". Parents and other community members mentioned in this study, together with teachers and children, comprise a community system from a cultural perspective.

From an ontological perspective, historicity cannot be divorced from current manifestations of corporal punishment because all the primary research participants (the teachers) experienced corporal punishment as a dominant and cultural form of discipline in their childhood, both at school and at home. As children, teachers were beaten at school for a variety of offenses, including late arrival, absenteeism, not completing homework, not having stationery and text books, not wearing appropriate school uniform, talking in class, or not following the teacher's instructions. On academic grounds, they were beaten for not being able to recall previously taught rote knowledge, such as times tables and recitations, as well as for failing tests or even getting below 100%. "Disrespectful" behaviour, like back chatting or not greeting their elders, could also earn them a beating. Therefore, for teachers,

corporal punishment as a tool was socially imbibed and internalised through the natural line of development in the course of their individual maturation and development process. However, the nature of the internalisation and transformation was intertwined with what appeared first as social, and that which is social was transferred from the previous generations of teachers within a collective way of life – the culture (Leont'ev, 1997).

Teachers' memories of corporal punishment are similar to those forms of physical punishment of slaves (old and young) in Mpumalanga in the early 1950s. Teachers remembered that, as children, they were beaten on the hands or buttocks. Sometimes they would be suspended in the air by four other children each holding one of the four limbs as the teacher beat the offender on the buttocks. Beatings were often so severe, some teachers recalled, that they sustained physical injuries to the point of being hospitalised. Corporal punishment was a community practice; parents supported teachers who used corporal punishment and revered them as good teachers. The Education Department rated such teachers highly, thus indicating the moral code that informed teachers' practice in the education system of the period. This oral historical testimony of teachers' experiences is important for understanding the current spirit depicted in the continued use of corporal punishment, because it reflects the national and cultural representation of corporal punishment as a South African child-rearing tool influenced by colonial and apartheid history.

A common childhood experience over the three generations is that when a child came home with injuries from beatings, parents blamed the child, asking the child "what have you done for the teacher to beat you like this?" Inferring from the historical background gathered in this study, it is evident that these parents have a history with the generation that was exposed to corporal punishment in their context as farm labourers, where being beaten by farmers was a norm. For these parents, the beating of children at school was seen as a norm. This evident phylogenetic pathway embedded in the historicity of this community reveals how the teachers – as part of the human tool-making collective engaged in object-oriented, tool-mediated activities (Leont'ev, 1978) – have come to use corporal punishment as a practice aimed at raising disciplined children. The acquisition of discipline is the goal for the adult engaging corporal punishment, where the concept of discipline is also based on the historically oppressive culture.

### **10.2.2 Teachers' current disciplinary practices**

Teachers find themselves in the apparently contradictory position of being legally obligated to abandon the traditional disciplinary method they believe is most effective. Teachers find it difficult to abandon corporal punishment and have double messages about alternatives. At one level, they claim they are helpless because they have not been instructed on what other methods to recruit to discipline children; at another level they have been using corporal punishment in conjunction with other traditional methods, which they are using successfully.

As the post-apartheid transformative process has instituted democratic school governance systems, so Fundani has become agentive in formulating and adopting a school policy and code of conduct and revitalising the use of class rules, all of which are fundamental positive modes of disciplining children in a school context. However, although teachers have engaged in this transformative process, they are experiencing psychological tension and a lack of confidence in the process, culminating in an expectation "to be told" how to discipline children or, at least, to be assured of the appropriateness of their traditional positive discipline regimen. This expectation is characteristic of the internalised apartheid education system where teachers were educated to be subservient, to take instructions and perform them, with little encouragement for critical thinking and reflection. Thus, when they are encouraged to "find your own alternative" by the education officials and SADTU, they are not comfortable with such a democratic initiative.

To adequately answer the question on the teachers' current discipline measures, I used both observable and non-observable sources. What was observable was the ubiquitous presence of a stick within the school and that its use could not be pinned down to a single function. Part of its multiple classroom parade was to point at something like a word on a chart that the teacher or child wants others to see. A stick, like any other teaching and learning tool, is part of everyday teaching and learning systems. The use of a stick is so regular that its absence makes the teacher send a child on an errand to find one, suggesting that at times teaching cannot go on without it. The stick is present early in the morning at the school gate. Late arrivals see a teacher carrying a stick and they run faster to be in by the time the teacher decides to hold late-comers back for punishment. At assembly, one or two teachers, with a stick in hand, walk or stand among the lines of children. The overarching

presence of the stick creates a strong association between the school and the stick. In this case, the stick is a cultural tool with multiple uses, depending on the goal of the teacher's activity.

From the interviews, it was evident that teachers use a range of disciplinary methods which depended on the context and personality of the teacher. A common method is making class rules and inculcating them through children's reading and recital of the rules as part of the morning ritual. Beyond that, teachers reprimand, engage in dialogue, shout, threaten, beat, make children stand in a squatting position, call on another teacher to talk to the offending child, and invite parents to discuss the disciplinary matter. Besides random, out-of-the-ordinary misconduct, regular disciplinary matters include late-coming, not writing homework, being disruptive in the classroom (include talking and not writing in class), not having homework or appropriate books, losing things, and stealing. In cases of stealing and fighting, teachers usually conduct a hearing where the complainant and accused make their statements in the presence of a witness. On this basis, the teacher makes a judgement and punishes the guilty party. Alongside these punishment regimen used by teachers use, corporal punishment is often used as a last resort.

What teachers make of their current disciplinary practices emerges most clearly in the reasons they give for their continued belief in the efficacy of corporal punishment.

### **10.2.3 Teachers' reasons for believing in or resorting to corporal punishment**

Some teachers still lament the abolition of corporal punishment. They do not think it a sincere motion by the government and believe it may have been a ploy to lure the youth to vote for the African National Congress<sup>29</sup> (ANC). They still hope the government will reinstate corporal punishment. The teachers in this study offered four main reasons for believing in corporal punishment. Whether their arguments are valid or not, the point of each of the reasons discussed below is that teachers struggle to accept that a child can learn and develop effectively in the absence of corporal punishment.

Firstly, teachers find it strange that government officials, who themselves were raised by corporal punishment, have abandoned the cultural practice that made them

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<sup>29</sup> The movement that led the anti-apartheid struggle since 1912 and fought for the right for the Black majority to vote. It won the first democratic elections in 1994

who they are. All the current teachers in the study asserted their belief that corporal punishment was successful in raising them and enabling them to discern right from wrong, and helped them to develop the ability to concentrate and recall what they had learned. They observed that their own children, too, learn better with corporal punishment, and do homework because they fear the pain of being beaten. The practice of using corporal punishment in teaching and learning is a complex one, which I have described as the enmeshment of violence, teaching and learning. It appears that the use of corporal punishment is internalised with an inseparable association between corporal punishment and other positive child-rearing and caring strategies. This is evident from the retired teachers, who could not separate their own learning process from corporal punishment and perceived the two as one activity. In short, taking corporal punishment away from teachers is tantamount to removing their teaching tool, as well as their child-rearing responsibility. The idea is so foreign to some teachers that they feel immobilised and deskilled even to teach without corporal punishment. In their mental schema, they find it difficult to assimilate the possibility for success in teaching without a stick.

Secondly, teachers are expected to produce good results in the Annual National Assessments and parents expect their children to pass. When children are not passing, parents may try to move their children to schools where, supposedly, they will make academic progress. Despite parents' expectation of good results, teachers comment that there is a lack of parental involvement in children's learning through supervision of homework and further learning at home. Teachers thus feel they must resort to corporal punishment (or at least to its threat) in order to put more pressure on children to perform and so to meet the academic performance expectations of the DoE and parents.

Thirdly, the notion that the language that a Black person understands is physical violence has been internalised by the current generation of teachers. The racial use of corporal punishment, where it was initially used to subdue Africans into serving as industrial human machinery, later emerged in school settings where the schooling system prepared the ground for mass labour production during the colonial and apartheid dispensations. This notion that Black people only work or cooperate when beaten is deeply entrenched in the generation of teachers who lived through apartheid South Africa. My interviews with current teachers revealed a belief that

Black children understand better when they are beaten. This finding serves indirectly to substantiate studies that have found that more Black children experience corporal punishment than their White, Coloured and Indian counterparts.

Fourthly, although teachers had experienced physical injuries and trauma from corporal punishment, they believe since they did not die from it and since they had become teachers, corporal punishment could not be bad. Rather, it enabled them to succeed. This reasoning indicates that these teachers have undergone psychological transformation and, from their social interactions with their own teachers, have internalised that which is harmful and psychologically damaging. This concurs with Wells' (2000) assertion that "change may not always be in the direction that is either socially acceptable or empowering for the child. Negative experience with others can also be identity forming..." (p.76). I view this as Vygotsky's third path of historical investigation of higher psychological function, the pathological path. This path of investigation may lead us to understand how corporal punishment contributes to pathological psychological development.

Language and particularly concepts are central psychological tools that are social mediational means or tools. Concepts are also historically embedded and the meaning imbued in them is object-oriented. Teachers' understanding of ATCP also came into play in their arguments. In this study, the concept "alternatives to corporal punishment" as used by the DoE has a different object and agenda to that of the teachers. Although both teachers and the DoE have exposure to specific discipline tools like school policy, the code of conduct, time out, detention and parental involvement, these tools have a different meaning to teachers. Tools are as good as how they are used to fulfil the goals conceived in the mind of the user. The teachers initially denied any awareness of ATCP. Later, when it transpired that they do practice some of the alternatives recommended by the DoE, they still did not view these tools as ATCP. Also, where teachers had attempted to use some of the ATCP, it appeared that they used them unsystematically and in a manner that is unsynchronised with their mediation goals, and thus they found the tools to be ineffective. Instead, they view corporal punishment as an effective alternative to the ATCP.

## **10.4 Conclusion**

To summarise the central findings, teachers still prefer corporal punishment to government recommended alternatives to corporal punishment, because teachers, and the whole school community as a collective, have internalised corporal punishment from their childhood discipline experiences. An analysis of three activity systems, using the concept of contradictions revealed the tensions that explain the true nature of the prevailing and continuing use of corporal punishment in a rural Mpumalanga primary school context. I consider the prevalence of contradictions to be due to a lack of function of the psychological tool at hand, whereby the way the tool is used is misaligned to the object of the activity. In Vygotsky's terms this may be viewed as a dysfunction or 'pathology' in the activity system. Contradictions are also budding points for transformation or mediation.

## CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

*“Thus we might say [conclude] that through others we become ourselves [Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu]...The individual becomes for himself what he is in himself through what he manifests for others.” (Vygotsky, 1997b, p.105)*

### 11.1 Introduction

What cultural-historical and socio-cultural processes account for the use of corporal punishment in South African teachers' disciplinary and teaching practices in the post-apartheid era? This is the central question I set out to answer in this study. Recruiting CHAT as a theoretical framework and methodology for the enquiry, I conducted a purposively selected case study of Fundani, a primary school in rural Mpumalanga. To understand the cultural-historical and socio-cultural practices of teachers in the school, observable and unobservable set of data was used. Observable ontological material included behaviour, actions and tools. In interpreting these observables, I took account of the context (time, place and activity), the subjects (community), the object of the activities, and the division of labour of the various pockets of the community. What Vygotsky (1978, 1994) calls “unobservable reflexes” include psychological processes, which can be inferred from research participants' utterances in response to the researcher's stimuli. I used double stimulation, vignettes and clinical interview as techniques to illuminate internal or intrapsychological processes (Sannino, 2015a; 2015b) pertaining to the use of corporal punishment.

Chapter 10 presented the findings in response to each of this thesis. I draw from these findings to advance a set of four critical claims in response to the main research question. I then consider the significance and limitations of the study. Finally, based on the contradictions identified in chapter 10, I make recommendations for further transformative intervention and future research.

### 11.2 What cultural-historical and socio-cultural processes account for the teachers' use of corporal punishment?

The claims I advance in response to the research question are theoretically located within the cultural-historical terrain underpinned by CHAT (Engeström, 1987;

Wertsch, 1991; Sannino, et al., 2009). In particular, the claims rest on the Vygotskian epistemological assumption that human action and psychological functions are socially derived: children acquire higher psychological functions from intersubjective activities within cultural practices like schooling.

Using Vygotsky's (1978) socio-genetic law of cultural development to interpret the findings, I construct four interconnected claims on the socio-cultural processes that account for teachers' continuing use of corporal punishment. Together, these claims constitute the main conclusion, namely, that corporal punishment is an historical, socio-political and intergenerational cultural tool, embedded in interpersonal mediation in a school culture and practiced within an object-oriented activity, in a way that compromises higher psychological development. The following subsections establish and discuss each of the four claims, and the relationships among them.

### **11.2.1 Corporal punishment is a historical, socio-political and inter-generational cultural tool**

Cultural tools are conceived by a collective, and are transferrable from one generation to another. Located within a macro-historical context, corporal punishment as a tool has its roots in practices of slavery, colonialism and apartheid, where oppressive forms of governance were legitimised. The recorded use of corporal punishment in South Africa dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century (as elucidated in chapter 5). The surge of commercial farming and industrialisation in South Africa normalised the use of corporal punishment. In this study, the transfer and internalisation of corporal punishment as a cultural tool was evident among participants of three generations: the retired teachers, the current teachers, and the children.

The study has yielded evidence to support the inference that participating teachers have internalised oppressive practices from the farm labour and slavery system which their families were subjected to, where individuals' conscious processes were subdued in order to acquire forced and subservient labour from the native people. Teachers' internalisation of oppressive practices is manifested in a variety of behaviours, thought patterns and processes. Examples include the current teachers' idealisation of their own teachers who had used corporal punishment (chapter 6),

teachers' focus on behavioural outcomes rather than on children's intrapsychological and psychosocial processes that lead to 'misbehaviour' (chapter 6) teachers' discounting the physical pain induced by corporal punishment, and parental guilt associated with not using corporal punishment when children misbehave (chapter 6) as well as teachers not recognising their accessible cultural resources as ATCP (chapter 8).

Language is an essential cultural-historical and socio-cultural mediation and interpsychological tool which characterises humans. As a tool, language has a functional quality of transforming and developing intrapsychological functions. The practice of punishment is internalised through language as well as through observations of corporal punishment at home and in schools. Articulations of, and dialogue about, the collectively shared meaning of punishment both bring about and reveal its internalisation. In this study, ventriloquation during interviews revealed the nature of collective internalisations of corporal punishment. Children accepted being beaten based on the articulations of their teachers and parents. Teachers and parents in different groups reiterated the same ideas. For example, the entrenched idea that children cannot learn or behave well without corporal punishment emerged in all interviews with adult participants and across all three generations (chapter 6).

Through the dominant South African history of racial stratification, Black communities endured comparatively greater exposure to corporal punishment and other forms of violence than did other population groups. Teachers, systematically and culturally, internalised corporal punishment through its extensive use in their racially segregated schools, which had limited or no provision of alternative tools for disciplined teaching and learning. Such internalisation, bound to racial identity, was revealed in the way teachers collectively appear to own corporal punishment as a cultural tool, believing it to be a "Black people's cultural way to raise children" (chapter 6). Commensurate with this position was the teachers' view of the DoE-recommended alternatives to corporal punishment (ATCP) – such as detention, time out and parental involvement – as "White people's way of raising a child" (chapter 8). In terms of Leont'ev's (1978) notion of a three-level hierarchical activity system (actions, operations and activities), the ATCPs as operations appear to be misaligned to the school's socio-cultural conditions and the community's

intrapyschological processes. A lack of understanding of in-depth cultural and psychological processes, and the seemingly cut-and-paste nature of the proposed alternatives (founded on little appreciation for the historical, socio-economic and contextual challenges) work against the successful implementation of the ATCPs in the research school.

Beyond racial identity, this study corroborates Holdstock's (1990) observations of a popular professional identity that entrenches the use of a stick as a symbol (of power) for an ideal teacher. Teachers who used corporal punishment were the most revered in the community. Retired teachers in the study still expressed adoration of the teachers who taught using corporal punishment (chapter 6). They idealised the teachers who beat them. This is a situation of a victim or the oppressed (the child) who grows to identify with the perpetrator or the oppressor (the teacher) (Freire, 1993).

Coupled with professional identity is the teachers' belief that corporal punishment breeds success and discipline. Firstly, teachers view themselves as successful people and believe their success can be attributed to the corporal punishment they received during their upbringing and schooling. Secondly, they believe discipline is the ability to persevere through the hardship of schooling that shaped them. In other words, teachers see themselves as transformed by the cultural tool and, as "good teachers", they are inspired to continue to 'transform' the children they teach to be "successful". Here we see the interaction of labour and transformation at play, as described in Stetsenko (2011), where humans created and used a tool (corporal punishment, in this case) to change their world and others', while in this very process they themselves are transformed in a fundamental way.

Religion is an indirect yet fundamental activity system of schooling. With formal education having emerged through Christian missionaries, just as the school in this study was founded, there has been a close colonial link between education and Christianity in South Africa. Like other cultural practices, religion in itself is a transforming tool, with a set of value systems that are practiced as a collective and transferred from generation to generation. The majority of teachers in the research school have adopted Christianity and argued in favour of corporal punishment as a

biblically justifiable tool for raising children (chapter 6). Teachers collectively participate in religious activities that subscribe to the interpretation of certain biblical scriptures (some mentioned in chapter 2) as principles on which corporal punishment as a cultural tool to discipline a child is centred.

### **11.2.2 Corporal punishment is embedded in interpersonal mediation**

Corporal punishment emerged among human communities as part of tool-mediated and collective activities. In this study, I analyse corporal punishment as a tool used within the activities of teaching and disciplining. The complexity of the process of mediation can be elucidated by Vygotsky's assertion of the dynamic interlacing of cultural and natural lines of development, where what is external becomes internal, and the internal is that which is non-manifest or non-observable (Vygotsky, 1987). Compelling evidence from this study suggests that the teachers' historicity, collective practices, cultural tools and the socio-historical context of their childhood experiences of corporal punishment were all mediated and internalised or interlaced with intrapsychological structures and processes that inform the current manifestation of corporal punishment.

The starting point for the interlacing of the external and internal processes lies in the notion that all participants in this study experienced corporal punishment at the formative developmental stage: in primary school. This stage is when psychological functions such as attention, memory, and thinking are present, but being refined. At this stage of development the child is not yet conscious of these functions and thus cannot master them as their psychological tools (Miller, 2011). It can be inferred from the findings in this study that corporal punishment is internalised as a tool and the symbol that controls these psychological functions from outside without the child learning to master them. For example, through the mediation of rhymes, young children in the reception year (grade R) internalised and accepted that teachers (the knowing adult) beat children (chapters 6 and 7). Children also displayed that they expected to be beaten instead of consciously engaging to solve the problem related to their misconduct (chapter 7). Where children were beaten for content knowledge, children memorised information without understanding how to manipulate their psychological functions that would enable them to acquire meaning out of the

classroom content knowledge. Teachers who testified to these childhood experiences currently continue to beat children without having to interpersonally engage them to address the child's need presented by the irregular manifestations in the children's behaviour (chapters 6, 7 and 8). This is in line with Vygotsky's (1987) thesis that with interpersonal mediation and internalisation of cultural tools (such as corporal punishment), "the individual begins to apply to himself the same forms of cultural tools that [were] initially applied to him by others" (p.21).

### **11.2.3 Corporal punishment is used within an object-oriented activity**

Teachers and parents at Fundani School are a rule-making community that has a psychological predisposition to use corporal punishment as a tool to advance cultural development through disciplining children. The very practice of using a particular tool to advance the said object is socially mediated and the repertoire itself gets internalised. Commensurate with Vygotsky's subject-mediation-object assertion, and further development of this idea by Leont'ev's (1978) goal-driven action and motive-driven activity and Engeström's (1987) activity systems' social roles (division of labour), rules it appears that a tool is object oriented. From this current study, the object of corporal punishment as a tool is to deter children from misbehaving and coerce them into adhering to social rules, an object it instantaneously achieves.

The main object of the user (the teacher) is not focused on the physical pain and the long term psychological damage it causes, but on the immediate outcome: the desired behaviour. The very psychosocial predisposition of teachers and the nuanced social expectations of children to follow instructions with no or little psychological engagement is the source of the mediated psychological compromise. For example, at the research school, the observed teacher-child relations, as well as the teachers' and parents' utterances, assumed a posture of an adult as being always right, knowing better and having unquestionable power over the child. In this study it appeared that teachers, parents and children, whose collective practice represent the mind of the society, have internalised that the child must have done something wrong as per the social rules for a teacher to beat him; the "wrong-doing" of the child is believed to be the justified object of corporal punishment. In line with Vygotsky's subject-tool-object framework, it appears that it is the social order of roles and rules that justifies the use of a particular tool for the related object.

Notwithstanding, the object of the social rules that were punishable, if broken, by corporal punishment during the colonial and apartheid era was to subjugate the natives into human industrial machinery that could be manipulated at the master's will. Consequently, this social order penetrated even the school setting.

This study revealed that teaching, learning and corporal punishment are internalised as a single intertwined activity. In classroom, a stick seems to have psychological function for teachers and children, whereby the lifting of a stick by the teacher, is associated with an instruction to pay attention, and when asked a question regurgitate or repeat the information previously given by the teacher. Therefore, teachers and even parents believe that, with a stick at hand children concentrate better in class, respond to teacher's instructions and reproduce taught material as expected (chapter 6). In short, a stick being associated with physical pain, induces fear, and with fear alertness is elicited, which is interpreted by teachers as concentration and being awake in class. This shows that teachers in this study have a short-circuit view of how children process information and knowledge, whereby the child's consciousness is overlooked; a typical behaviourist view of learning.

In general terms, teachers and parents believe children do not have the intrapsychological capacity to engage psychologically to question and engage in self-reflection with the aim of problem-solving, and therefore to learn to be disciplined without corporal punishment (chapter 6). As the object of schooling is to teach and learn, it emerges here that the meaning of 'learning' for teachers is questionable. The tools used by teachers to ensure learning suggest that the object of learning is about children adhering to rules, without necessarily linking it to the developing consciousness, a notion Vygotsky (1987) vehemently criticised in Behaviourist theories.

#### **11.2.4 Corporal punishment compromises the development of higher psychological functions.**

The above three claims culminate in a single broad claim, namely that corporal punishment compromises the development of higher psychological functions. Adherence to its use emanates from compromised socio-cultural processes in which the object was a deliberate intention to suppress the development of higher psychological processes of those who were repeatedly subjected to it.

Whatever its intended purpose, corporal punishment is nothing but the inducing of physical pain in a child. Its logic rests on the notion of stimulus-response activity, where learning is by association, habitual and without meaning-making. Fear of physical pain is the driver that extinguishes undesired behaviour or produces the wanted conduct. In all the group interviews, teachers and parents mentioned instillation of fear of misbehaving as the primary reason for using corporal punishment. What appear as the symptoms of trauma, such as intense fear and avoidance of punishable behaviour, are interpreted by teachers as developmental milestones to be achieved by the child. In this complex context of teaching, punishment and learning, fear becomes the psychological sign for self-regulation and recalling information, which counteracts learning as meaning-making and development of consciousness. In this way, the development of higher psychological functions is compromised. An illustrative example is the child who writes his homework in the morning referring to his peers' work. Here the child has lost an opportunity to consciously engage with reasons that prevented him from doing the homework. The very notion that fear and learning are intertwined in teachers' minds is indicative of a ZPD regarding child psychological development on the part of teachers and parents.

Teachers have expressed their fear of being prosecuted by the DoE, parents and members of the community for using corporal punishment (chapter 6). As yet, there has not been convincing mediation for teachers to understand the need to abandon corporal punishment. Those who refrain from using corporal punishment do so because they fear litigation and loss of employment, just like children not misbehaving due to fear of corporal punishment. This kind of superficial change that does not impact intrapsychological shift entrenches the already existing contradictions located in teacher's teaching objectives and the DoE's objectives for abolishing corporal punishment. The punitive approach of the DoE seems unsympathetic to teachers' ZPD needs in relation to child discipline, and it constitutes the mirror reflection of the punitive approach teachers exude towards children.

Rules are also cultural tools, which should be appropriately object-oriented, thus developing higher psychological functions. When rules are not adhered to by

children, a dialectical process of engaging consciously should be initiated – Why is this child not adhering to the rule? What does this rule mean to this child? What intervention or alternative tool is necessary for this child? What does this alternative tool mean for the whole class, and the school in this context? This process calls for Vygotsky’s semiotic interaction and mediation, a tool he advocated to be essential for development of higher psychological functions. Vygotsky maintains that through speech, children begin the process of understanding the problems they are presented with and through speech they can start creating the logic of their actions towards problem-solving. Therefore, when they integrate semiotic action in their activities, they can redirect their actions or tool-use towards a planned purpose (van der Veer and Valsiner, 1994) into object-oriented actions like, for example, sequencing morning activities that encourage early arrival at school. The utterances of teachers, formal or informal, are a mediation tool for children through which they develop the necessary intrapsychological tools. Children were not given the opportunity to engage in mediated activity for problem-solving, like, what to do to prevent late coming.

The teachers’ notion of children’s good behaviour is subsumed in honouring school rules, instructions and orders regardless of developmental and practical life circumstances of the children. This straight-jacketed relational condition appears to have hindered the development of higher psychological functions like decision-making, self-regulation, problem-solving, self-reflection and agency, as shown by the participants’ responses to double stimulation and vignette questions (chapters 6 and 7).

Giving support to a child involves the recruitment and transference of higher psychological functions in a teacher. The teacher has to show executive thinking skills of mediating the child’s learning to solve his problems and later address social challenges, while the curriculum-based teaching and learning continue. Teachers in this research seem to falter on the former, they have internalised corporal punishment as a tool for caring, protection and problem-solving, thus they tend to be anxious that things may go wrong without corporal punishment. They believe not using corporal punishment is a form of “child abuse” and it renders the child “vulnerable”, while hitting a child in a way that does not cause physical injury is the

acceptable way to administer corporal punishment (chapters 6 and 7). It is this belief that hinders exercising conscious thought of suitable ATCP. Even though they evidently use some of the good ATCP, like conflict resolution strategies, care and support, they have not internalised these practices as child discipline strategies. This finding concurs with Payet and Franchi's (2008) study which describes this situation as the "enmeshment of violence and care" in corporal punishment, evident in the absence of sufficient parental resources or cultural tools to contain and guide children's behaviour.

### **11.3 Significance and limitations of the study**

There are numerous South African studies on corporal punishment, as shown in Chapter 2, and more continue to be generated. So far, none of these studies used CHAT to advance understanding of the nature and persistence of corporal punishment. A central contribution of this study, therefore, is the illumination of corporal punishment as a cultural tool used in South African schooling, on the understanding that cultural tools are not merely technical or material tools but, importantly, are intrapsychological tools. The study deployed CHAT's notion of historicity to illuminate the transgenerational construction and transference of corporal punishment and its manifestation across three generations existing in a Mpumalanga village, against the pre- and post-democratic South African cultural backdrop. Thus the study has drawn some crucial links between corporal punishment, colonialism, slavery, apartheid and the advent of schooling in South Africa. The transgenerational nature of corporal punishment revealed in this study provides a new perspective for understanding psychological processes involved in the internalisation of corporal punishment as it prevails in South Africa. Such understanding of intrapsychological processes is significant for designing appropriate intervention for transformation.

More important to note, while this is the only study employing CHAT to understand corporal punishment as a phenomenon in South African schools, it however affirmed the findings of numerous South African studies. Findings from these studies which were generally evident in this study are: 1) Teachers continue to use corporal punishment and believe that it is an effective mode of disciplining children (Noang, 2007; Morrell, 2001; Wa Kivilu and Wandai. 2009), 2) teachers claim that they

were not informed or even trained on what ATCP to use, therefore corporal punishment remains the only tool they know (Morrell, 2001; Maphosa and Shumba, 2010), 3) the ATCPs suggested by the DoE are time-consuming, elaborate and therefore inappropriate to effect discipline in their school contexts (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010), 4) the DoE, SACE and SADTU communication to teachers on this matter is inconsistent and not clear enough to support teachers on adopting new discipline tools, (Veriava, 2014), 5) Teachers and parents support the use of corporal punishment in a non-abusive manner, (HSRC, 1997; Payet and Franchi, 2008), 6) children support being punished with corporal punishment, but such punishment should be moderate and fair (Payet and Franchi, 2008), and 7) corporal punishment induced traumatic symptoms (Soneson, 2005).

The research questions of this study changed over the course of the research process. One of the initial questions purported to examine how the use of corporal punishment affects learning and development. This question was eliminated based on the criticism that this research is not experimental enough to yield such evidence. Sannino's (2015a) conceptual paper on double stimulation demystified the view that such a question is to be reserved for classical experimental research as the narrow view. Underlying Sannino's assertion is the methodology used in this study that took cognisance of Vygotsky's conviction that, in striving to understand human intrapsychological functioning and practices, it is essential to access consciousness or non-observable reflexes through methods like interrogation (Vygotsky, 1987). However, the use of double stimulation (Vygotsky, 1999; Sannino, 2015a, 2015b), together with vignettes, illuminated glaring evidence of how the use of corporal punishment stands to compromise the development of higher psychological functions. Such evidence could not be ignored as it appears in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, and is therefore linked to all other findings.

This research has deviated from most of Vygotsky's proponents' focus onto Vygotskian education principles painting a utopian picture of "the role of the social other [like the] teacher, more capable peer, parent" as a knowledgeable adult in an always helpful adult-child relationship (van der Veer and Valsiner, 1994). Most of Vygotsky's research in Soviet education of his time highlighted the reality of that which could go wrong, be harmful or detrimental for the child's development of higher psychological functions in a child-adult relation. This study has gone against

the grain to show that not all cultural tools are good for psychological development. The significance of this study thus lies in the view that, if not excavated, such educational contradictions will persist to offset the efforts of the sound cultural tools and interventions.

The present study has excavated the nature of corporal punishment as it happens within the primary school context by employing Engeström's activity systems and contradictions as analytical tools (chapter 9). Contradictions emanating within these systems provided a budding point for transformation. Such transformation towards new disciplinary tools is linked to the development of higher psychological functions, developed through cultural mediation necessary for the transformation of psychological processes for mediating discipline and learning. As stated in the rationale for this study, the long-standing interpsychological activities and extensive dialogue among participants spawned by this research yielded opportunities for transformation. The need for such transformation manifested through parents and teachers' conscious expressions of their need to understand ATCP. The underlying significance here is that this study has stimulated engagement and self-reflection within the school community making the ground fertile for the necessary intervention and transformation.

The limitations of this study are embedded in its nature as a case study. While a case study depends on minimal sampling, it provides an in-depth synopsis of the phenomenon within a particular context. Even though the pilot study for this research was done in an urban primary school, the actual study was a single case study that focused on the rural primary school. This makes it improper to generalise the results of this study to the broader South African context, especially where there are significant cultural and historical differences. However, since the research tools were tried in different contexts where they were found to adequately serve the purpose for the research design, the limitation is nullified because the study can be replicated in other settings to produce contextually-relevant findings answering the same research questions, while using the same research tools.

Critiques of this study, casted some doubt on the possibility of yielding ethically credible findings on teacher's use of corporal punishment since corporal punishment is legislatively illegal. This study had shown that the use of qualitative methods like

ethnographic observations, in combination with interview methods that are clinical in nature are able to tap into the cultural nuances that inform intrapsychological functions. Even though the participants in this study were in full awareness of the fact that this research is about corporal punishment, which is an illegal practice, the research tools designed for this study were appropriate to tap on the cultural thinking tools teachers use for disciplining children. These critiques have assisted me to clarify that the purpose of this study was not to count the number of beatings unleashed by teachers on children, which can easily be suspended in my presence, but sought to understand the teachers' thinking about corporal punishment. As Muthivhi would say; "How can one hide his cultural way of thinking? If you, as a researcher use appropriate tools like ethnographic observation and clinical interviews you can access the thinking that informs their preference for corporal punishment" (personal communication during supervision, A. E. Muthivhi, September, 2012)

In the early proposal stage of this research I intended to incorporate what I called Change Laboratory simulation. Along the research journey, I realised that the proposal was too ambitious. Thus I see this study as an exploratory study for possible future intervention studies using specific research-based designs.

#### **11.4 Recommendations for further research**

The contradictions recorded in chapter 9 are germ cells for transformation, creating conditions for ascending from the abstract to the concrete (Engeström and Sannino, 2010). These contradictions may be considered as new fields for researching alternative tools and interventions and to propel transformation in schools. Further research to illuminate the numerous dialectical tools used by teachers that are associated with discipline is needed. For instance, it is difficult to judge the mediation goal of teachers and parents when it is not clear what is meant by concepts such as "children must be scared" to do wrong. It sounds like they either mean "conscience" or "a positive form of anxiety" which is usually the precursor of volition and agency. However, juxtaposed against the colonial and apartheid historical backdrop, the notion of instilling fear and making children scared, that has been repeatedly uttered by all the participants as the object of corporal punishment, is questionable.

At a macro-level, this study has drawn from some literature and information from teachers to illuminate South Africa's historical and cultural genesis of violence that has come a long way within the education system. Since teachers are a pocket of the society, the far-reaching impact of the violence is reflected in the way they interact with the children. The government is spearheading transformation through legislative changes; however, this generation of teachers has an enormous task of dealing with their own internalised forms of violence entrenched by the historical and existing realities of the social, economic and cultural challenges in an underprivileged rural school setting. As Enslin and Pendlebury (1998) argue, formal changes in policies may be anti-transformative if they pay little regard to the context and agents of implementation of these policies. It is evident from this study that such surface efforts based on announcing new policies and sending circulars to school cannot be effective without transforming the already existing intrapsychological structures that perpetuate corporal punishment.

From this study I have struggled to find forms of behaviour that I would confidently label as classroom misbehaviour, except for an insignificant number of cases. My question is: does child-like conduct, which is embedded in the interweaving of child cognitive development and cultural exposure, against the cultural demands and inadequacies of schooling that are beyond the child developmental capacity, warrant the use of punishment of any form? I propose that further studies from a CHAT perspective, with the purpose of understanding South African teachers' and parents' notion of a 'child' and 'childhood' in relation to ZPD-appropriate behaviour patterns and learning needs, be undertaken.

It would be sensible if children were not punished for not writing homework; rather, those who have done homework and completed their work should be rewarded and parents notified about their children's performance on the basis of the work done at home and at school. In the same vein, late-coming shouldn't necessarily amount to a punishable offense; rather, the school should support children in mitigating the causes of late-coming. This means the school's School Based Support Team has an opportunity to identify children's support needs and address these according to each child's family circumstances. This is where the White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (DoE, 2000) would be effective, where the DoE's intervention in collaboration with the Department of Social Development should provide children

with the necessary support for effective learning and development. Therefore, research addressing school discipline, in relation to learner support needs from a South African perspective, is necessary. Findings from this study indicate that the continuing manifestation of corporal punishment arises from the cultural-psychological processes that are connected to the mind of the person and of the society. It appears that some of the current definitions of corporal punishment reviewed in the literature of this study have lost relevance. Therefore, research culminating in a definition that takes into consideration the cultural and psychological processes involved in the practice needs to be undertaken. Such a definition may stand to add value in guiding the formulation of appropriate intervention strategies to alleviate the persisting prevalence of corporal punishment in schools.

## **11.5 Conclusion**

Through its ratification of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and related international laws, South Africa has joined the global community in abolishing corporal punishment and protecting children's rights. While policies abolishing corporal punishment are essential and necessary, they are not sufficient to effect intrapsychological transformation in teachers as individuals and as a collective. Employing Vygotsky's foundational socio-genetic law of development within a CHAT conceptual framework, this study has illuminated the cultural-historical and socio-cultural processes that have resulted in the internalisation of corporal punishment. In so doing, the study has addressed the question of why corporal punishment still persists in South African schools.

The findings of this study suggest that the continuing use of corporal punishment in South African schools is perpetuated by the nature of corporal punishment as a cultural-historical and socio-cultural tool that emerged from a history of decades of interracial and interpersonal oppressive relations. As a cultural tool, corporal punishment is entrenched in the mind of the society as an object-oriented tool that, on the surface, appears to fulfil its teaching and learning object. Corporal punishment, by its nature thrives on interpersonal and power relations that suppress psychological development of those involved with it; teachers and children. Furthermore its use is suggestive of compromised psychological functions of the user and illuminates the ZPD for mediation and intervention.

Historically, inadequate teacher education has failed to equip teachers with cultural tools for democratic and positive disciplinary strategies, leaving teachers to rely on socially-mediated corporal punishment for classroom discipline. While the current expectation that teachers carve their own positive discipline regime is an appreciable and restorative approach, teachers without cultural exposure to non-punitive mediation and learning support strategies are likely to impede the transformation process.

The legislative changes on corporal punishment have laid the socio-historical foundation that lead to the current teachers' sense of disequilibrium in child discipline or the ZPD, raising the need to explore alternative means to discipline. The ZPD presents an opportunity for expansive learning within the education activity systems – where the DoE, SACE, and associated teacher professional bodies, parents and teacher unions need to interrogate the meaning of learning and discipline through dialectical methods. What is required are in-depth transformative social mediation strategies that stimulate higher psychological functions and interrogate the contradictions existing in teachers' understanding of the schooling, children's development and socio-economic needs, and of the meaning of the policy abolishing corporal punishment. Addressing the teacher's ZPD on child development promises to be an important step in pursuit of transformation towards the ideal of a democratic and non-violent society espoused in the current South African Constitution.

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## **Appendix A: Letter of permission-Mpumalanga Department of Education**

S'mangele Gladys Mayisela

P. O. Box 25, Ntuthuko, + 27 2383, Driefontein, Piet Retief, South Africa  
e-mail:myssim002@myuct.ac.za

Tel: +27 83 3...

10 April 2013

Mpumalanga Department of Education  
The Head of the Department  
Private Bag x11341  
Nelspruit, 1200

### **APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR DEPARTMENT**

Dear Mr A. H. ....

My name is Simangele Mayisela, a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town. As a requirement towards this qualification, I am required to conduct and write a research report. I am therefore requesting to do my research in your department.

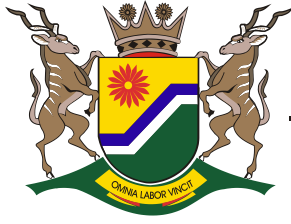
As an educational psychologist by profession, I have an interest on issues of violence, particularly corporal punishment in education. I am interested to find out how cultural experiences of corporal punishment of the current teachers have impacted their current discipline practice under the prevailing legislative prohibition of corporal punishment. And further, I am interested in finding out the impact of corporal punishment on learning and development, and lastly I intend to establish a culturally negotiated possible alternative to the practice.

I intend to conduct the research at Fundani Primary School, in Driefontein, should the school and the community grant me access and consent by participants. I will be using observation and interviews as my research methods, hence I intend to be at the school as an observer for more than a month during the third term.

Together with this application, I am attaching my proposal which fulfills all the requirements as stated in your research application manual. Included also, is a confirmation of registration with the University of Cape Town from my supervisor.

Yours sincerely

S'mangele Mayisela



# education

DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Private Bag X 11341

Nelspruit 1200

Government Boulevard

Riverside Park

**Litiko leTemfundvo      Umnyango weFundo      Departement van Onderwys  
Umnyango wezeMfundo**

**Ms Simangele Gladys Mayisela**

**P.O. BOX 25**

**Driefontein**

**PIET RETIEF**

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN .....PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

Your application (dated 10 March 2013) to conduct qualitative research in the selected schools of Gert District of Piet Retief circuit was received on the 11 April 2013.

Your request is approved subject to you observing the content of the departmental research manual which was sent to you earlier. You are also requested to adhere to your University's ethics as spelt out in your research ethics document.

In terms of the attached manual (2.2. bullet number 4 and 6) data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment, however, your research method will require you to be at school during working hours, therefore you should request the principal of the school to make arrangements which will not disrupt the smooth running of the school. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may implement your findings if that will be in the best interest of department.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or [a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za](mailto:a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za).



**S'mangele Gladys Mayisela**

P. O. Box ... N...o, + 27 2383, ..., Piet Retief, South Africa

e-mail:myssim002@myuct.ac.za

Tel: +27 83 3...

Date: 30 May 2013

Fundani Primary School  
Driefontein

Dear Principal

My name is S'mangele Mayisela and I am currently studying for a Doctoral qualification Education at the University of Cape Town. As a requirement towards the fulfillment of this qualification, I need to conduct a research at a school where I will do observations and interviews. My research is on socio-cultural factors related to corporal punishment in schools.

With this letter, I am writing to request permission to conduct my research at your school. My research will be conducted in the form of observations and interviews. I will visit your school for a month where I will do general observations in the schools and in the classrooms. And, I will interview teachers, children and parents individually and in groups. And I will also make a 1 week follow up visit within six months from initial visit to verify some of my analysis and initial findings.

Confidentiality is essential and safeguards will be put in place to protect privacy and dignity of all participants. The name of your school will not be revealed in my research report. I will give you a copy of my draft proposal if you wish to see it.

Your school's participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any point during the research and there will be no penalties.

I am requesting you to give the consent for your school to be part of my research.

Yours sincerely  
S'mangele Mayisela

**Fundani PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Enquiries: M.G Principal**

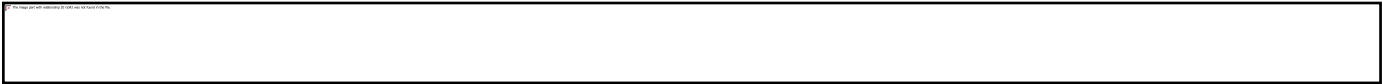
**Cell No: 079 ...**



**P.O BOX ....**

**I.....**

**2...3**



**To:**

**S'mangele**

**Mayisela**

**Dear Student**

**The above mentioned school wish to acknowledge receipt of your request (Date: 18 June 2013) on behalf of the SGB, SMT and STAFF, we hereby accept your request to do research with our school.**

**It is worth noting that the school has taken note of the conditions you mentioned for your research (i.e. Confidentially, safeguards and protection of privacy and dignity of participants) the school hopes to learn some new things during your presence while you will also be learning from us.**

**We anticipate a pleasant stay during your research period**

**Hope you find this correspondence in-order**

**Yours in Education**

\_\_\_\_\_

**M.G ... (Principal)**



## **Appendix C: Information and consent letter for teachers**

### **Letter to the Teacher**

**Re: Consent to participate in a research.**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is S'mangele Mayisela and I am currently studying towards a Doctoral qualification in Education at the University of Cape Town. As a requirement for obtaining this qualification I need to conduct a research at a school where I will do observations and interviews. My research is on socio-cultural processes related to the use of corporal punishment in schools.

**Socio-cultural practice means:** things that we do as our way of life to exist and survive on a day to day basis, some of which are transferred from the previous generations. These practices are not static, they change over time.

**Corporal punishment means:** applying physical pain on a person with the purpose of deter them from making what is considered to be an offence.

I therefore invite you to participate in this research. Your participation will involve group engagement in two sessions of interviews. You may also be requested to participate in individual interviews. The interview sessions may be audio recorded with your permission. Note that I will be present in your school premises doing observations, and I may also approach you to do observations in your class as well.

The observations and interviews will help me to understand socio-cultural factors related to the use of corporal punishment in a primary school. Note that your participation in the research is voluntary, you may choose not to participate in the study and may withdraw from the research at any time during the process of the research without prejudice. The result of the research will be presented to you and then be written in a report, and may also be presented at a conference or published in any form however the identity of the school, teachers, parents and the children will be kept confidential. Though the researcher will do her outmost best to conceal names by using codes during data collection, this confidentiality may have limitations. Just like in any other social situation, the researcher maybe subpoenaed by the court of law to reveal the details of the data. All research notes and audio

recording will be kept safely under lock and key during the research and will be disposed by burning them after five years of the research.

In instances of observations of unethical behaviour on the part of the school, the researcher will be discuss such observations with the parties involved, and then with the principal.

Student's signature

---

Supervisor's signature

---

## **Informed consent from teacher to participate in the research**

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby willingly give consent to participate in the research conducted by S'mangele Mayisela from the University of Cape Town.

I have read the information letter inviting me to participate and I understand that:

- my participation is voluntary,
- I may refuse to participate in the study, and there would be no penalty for refusing to partake
- my identity will be kept confidential and anonymous, with exception in a case of a subpoena.
- that I may withdraw from the research should I need to and that would bear no penalties on my part.
- though the contents of the research will be published in a thesis, journal publication and be quoted by other people, my name and identity will be kept confidential. However, this confidentiality may have limitations in certain circumstances.

I understand that my participation involves S'mangele Mayisela doing observations at the school and possibly in my class, and participating in interviews, individual and group interviews.

I understand that interviews may be audio recorded, and I may refuse to be recorded should I wish to.

Research notes and audio recording will be kept under lock and key, and will be destroyed after five years.

Should the researcher note any unethical behaviour on the part of school, the researcher will discuss these with the parties involved, and as the need arise discuss this with the principal of the school.

Note: See participant information sheet on the reverse of this consent form.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D: Information and consent letter for parents

### Letter to the parents

#### Re: Consent to participate in a research study

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is S'mangele Mayisela and I am currently studying towards a Doctoral qualification in Education at the University of Cape Town. As a requirement for obtaining this qualification I need to conduct a research at a school where I will do observations and interviews. My research is on socio-cultural processes related to the use of corporal punishment in schools

**Socio-cultural practice means:** things that we do as our way of life to exist and survive on a day to day basis, some of which are transferred from the previous generations. These practices are not static, they change over time.

**Corporal punishment means:** applying physical pain on a person with the purpose of deterring them from making what is considered to be an offence.

I therefore invite you to participate in this research. Your participation will involve group engagement in a session of group interviews. You may also be requested to participate in individual interviews. The interview sessions may be audio recorded with your permission.

The observations and interviews will help me to understand socio-cultural factors related to the use of corporal punishment in a primary school.

Note that your participation in the research is voluntary, you may choose not to participate in the study and may withdraw from the research at any time during the process of the research without prejudice. The result of the research will be presented to you first and then be written in a report, and may also be presented at a conference or published in any form, however the identity of the school, teachers, parents and the children will be kept confidential. Though the researcher will do her utmost best to conceal names by using codes during data collection, this confidentiality may have limitations. Just like in any other social situation, the researcher may be subpoenaed by the court of law to reveal the details of the data. All research notes and audio recording will be kept safely under lock and key during the research and will be disposed of by burning them after five years of the research.

Student's signature

Supervisor's

signature

## **Informed consent from a parent to participate in the research**

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby willingly give consent to participate in the research conducted by S'mangele Mayisela from the University of Cape Town.

I have read the information letter inviting me to participate and I understand that:

- my participation is voluntary,
- I may refuse to participate in the study, and there would be no penalty for refusing to partake
- my identity will be kept confidential and anonymous, with exception in a case of a subpoena.
- that I may withdraw from the research should I need to and that would bear no penalties on my part.
- though the contents of the research will be published in a thesis, journal publication and be quoted by other people, my name and identity will be kept confidential. However, this confidentiality may have limitations in certain circumstances.

I understand that my participation involves S'mangele Mayisela doing observations at the school and possibly in my class, and participating in interviews, individual and group interviews.

I understand that interviews may be audio recorded, and I may refuse to be recorded should I wish to.

Research notes and audio recording will be kept under lock and key, and will be destroyed after five years.

In instances of observations of unethical behaviour on the part of the school, the researcher will discuss such observations with the parties involved, and then with the principal.

Note: See participant information sheet on the reverse of this consent form.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Information and consent letter for the parents to give permission for the child to participate in the research

### Letter to the parents

Re: Consent for your child to participate in a research.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is S'mangele Mayisela and I am currently studying towards a Doctoral qualification in Education at the University of Cape Town. As a requirement for obtaining this qualification I need to conduct a research at a school where your child is attending. I will do observations and interviews. My research is on socio-cultural processes related to the use of corporal punishment in schools.

**Socio-cultural practice means:** things that we do as our way of life to exist and survive on a day to day basis, some of which are transferred from the previous generations. These practices are not static, but they may change over time.

**Corporal punishment means:** applying physical pain on a person with the purpose of deter them from making what is considered to be an offence.

I therefore request permission for your child to participate in this research. Your child's participation will involve taking part in a group interview session. The interview sessions with the children may be audio recorded with your permission and the child's permission

The observations and interviews at the school will help me to understand socio-cultural factors related to the use of corporal punishment in a primary school.

Note that your child's participation in the research is voluntary. You and the child may choose not to participate in the study and may withdraw your child from the research at any time without prejudice should you wish to do so. The result of the research will be presented to you first, and then be written in a report, and may also be presented at a conference or published in any form, however the identity of the school, teachers, your child will be kept confidential. Though the researcher will do her utmost best to conceal names by using codes during data collection, this confidentiality may have limitations. Just like in any social situation, the researcher may be subpoenaed by the court of law to reveal the details of the data.

All research notes and audio recording will be kept safely under lock and key during the research and will be disposed of by burning them after five years of the research.

**Student's signature**

**Supervisor's signature**



## Consent from parent for the child to participate in the research

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby willingly give consent for my child to participate in the research conducted by S'mangele Mayisela from the University of Cape Town. I have read the information letter inviting the participation of my child and I understand that;

- my child's participation is voluntary,
- I may refuse or my child may refuse to participate in the study, and there would be no penalty for refusing to partake
- my child's identity will be kept confidential and anonymous, with exception in a case of a subpoena.
- that I may withdraw my child or my child may withdraw from the research should I need to and that would bear no penalties on my part.
- though the contents of the research will be published in a thesis, journal publication and be quoted by other people, my name and identity will be kept confidential. However, this confidentiality may have limitations in certain circumstances.

I understand that my participation involves S'mangele Mayisela doing observations at the school and possibly in my child's class, and my child participating in interviews, individual and group interviews.

I understand that interviews may be audio recorded, and I may refuse my child from being recorded should I wish to.

Research notes and audio recording will be kept under lock and key, and will be destroyed after five years.

Note: See participant information sheet on the reverse of this consent form.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Child information and consent form

**Re: Consent to give you a questionnaire and interview you in a group interview should you be requested to participate in the research.**

Dear Learner

My name is S'mangele Mayisela. Like you I am also a child. My school is a university and its name is the University of Cape Town. As a child I also have homework and assignments. Sometimes for my homework I have to go to the place I am learning about and talk to the people I want to learn about.

I am learning about culture and corporal punishment in schools, and I have chosen your school to learn from.

**Culture means:** things that we do as our way of life to, things we do to survive like talking to each other, going to the assembly every morning, we create some of these and we learn others from our parents and elders. Some of these things can change with time.

**Corporal punishment means:** applying physical pain on a person so that they do not repeat offence.

So I will be talking to you in a group to get your ideas about corporal punishment. I will audio record our interview so that I can listen to it after the interview. But before I do that you must give me consent (you must agree) to work with me and be interviewed by me.

But remember:

- You will work with me because you like to, not because you are forced.
- You can refuse to work with me and you will not be punished for that.
- Once you started working with me and you do not want to go on, you can tell me so that you can be excused.
- What you say maybe written I a book to give to my university, but I will not tell your name and where you stay, so no one will know what you said.
- Like in any other situation, it may also happen that the court forces me to tell it what me and you were talking about, in such a situation I will be forced to say what we talked about.
- my notes and the audio tape will be kept safely under lock and key and will be disposed by burning them after five years.
- if I happen to observe any unacceptable conduct at your school, I will discuss it with those involved, and then to the principal when necessary.

S'mangele Mayisela

**Informed Consent from child to participate in the study**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

YES: I agree to participate in in the interview with S'mangele Mayisela

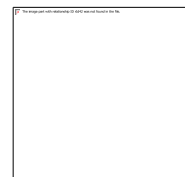
No: I do not agree to participate in the interviews with S'mangele Mayisela

I also agree for her to use what I say in the interview for her research.

- I will work with her because I like to, not because I am forced to.
- I can refuse to work with her and I will not be punished for that.
- Once I started working with her and I do not want to go on, I can tell her so that she can excuse me.
- I understand that interviews maybe audio recorded, and I may refuse to be recorded should I wish to.
- What I say to her maybe written in a book to that she will give to her university, but she will not tell my name, the name my school, so no one will know that it is me who she is talking about in the book.
- But if the court of law forces S'mangele Mayisela to tell what we discussed she not refuse.
- If S'mangele Mayisela happen to observe any unacceptable conduct at the school, she will talk to those involved in the behaviour and then later inform the principal where necessary.

This is my signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix G: Observation checklist

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEMS	OBSERVATIONS
School building, number of classes, grades, sports resources, number of children, number of teachers, teacher child ratio. essential resources like toilets, water, food supply, transport, etc. teacher support resources, work conditions.	
Management resources: Management staff, Support staff, school time table, regular management meetings, SGB meetings, computers, printers, photocopying machines.	
Daily routines: School morning, starting time, assembly, short break, lunch, after school, cultural activities, etc	
Teaching and learning material, methods, etc	
General ethos of the schools, welcoming,	
Any other	

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Classrooms visited: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITIES	SCHOOL OBSERVATION and CRITICAL INCIDENTS	CLASS OBSERVATION and CRITICAL INCIDENTS
Before school activities		
School starts		
Morning Activities		
Short break		
Mid-morning activities		
Lunch		
Afternoon Activities		
Afterschool		
After school activities		
Socio-cultural conditions		

## Appendix H: School Resources and key snippets of key observations

Currently the school has fifteen brick and cement classrooms, four of which were donated by the local coal mine operating in the area. All classrooms are painted, have a ceiling (though it is falling in other classrooms), a chalkboard and are electrified, and some classes electricity is not available. The school has a total of 640 children, with grade R, grade 2 and grade 7 classes populated with 55, 54 and 66 respectively. Other classrooms have an average of 45 children.

The staff compliment of the school is 20 teachers, including three Head of Departments (HOD), and a Deputy Principal and the Principal and two administrative officers. Work space is a serious problem for all in the school. The school has a make-shift administrative facility as there is no space for an office or even a staffroom. They have improvised by partitioning a classroom into three to create the principal's office, an HOD office and the administration office. The principal and deputy principal share an office while the two HODs share the other office space. The two offices also serve as storage with boxes of books and bags of sports equipment piled on the sides of the offices (see Appendix T). The Foundation phase HOD uses her classroom as an office where she holds her foundation phase meetings. The administration space is used as the reception hall, the staffroom and the administration office, where two administration officers are always working from.

Every morning the school start with 15minutes staff meeting, where morning-prayers are performed and briefings on new updates are given. This meeting takes place at tiny administration office where close to 15 teachers squeeze in, where others stand at the door, just to capture very little of what is being announced in the meeting. However, staff meetings which are longer and involve consultation on drastic transformations in the school are held in a classroom after school, where all teachers can be seated.

The school has reading material, workbooks and exercise books for children and teachers, however there was still a shortage of text books by February and teachers were still ordering from the Department of Education. Teachers reported that in some cases the delay is due to the fact that incorrect books were delivered, like the grade R workbooks were written in SiSwati. The school lends text books to children who return them back to the school at the end of the year. The school does have basics like classrooms which are tiled, have ceiling and chalkboards. My observation suggests that there is inadequate maintenance of these resources; in one of the grade classes, as in most of the class the door-handle is broken. Children have a way of opening the door using the ruler. In that case the door does not open from the outside, so the children sitting in the front part of the class and closer to the door, jump to open door when there is a knock.

There school has no library, fortunately for this school the community library is situated about 500m near the school (a community library was launched in September 2014 during my fieldwork visit), the school has no laboratory, and no conventional teaching aids. Teachers improvise, for example I observed a science teacher doing an experiment in the classroom, and he has requested children to bring experimental materials from home, and the experiments were performed in the classroom. Besides a radio that only work with a battery, there are no audio and video or any other electronic teaching and learning support materials available at the school.

A grade R class of 60 children only has 4 pre-school tables. Blankets and mats are brought from home by the generous grade R teacher, while some are brought by parents (see Appendix T). No other necessary furniture for a grade R class is available besides a jar full of broken wax crayons and chalk. The little available material is broken or unusable, for example there are bags of paint powder, but there are no brushes and mixers. There are no coloring books, and the teacher cannot make copies as much as she needs to. If she managed to do copies, they just enough for three or even four children to work on one copy. The administrative resources available in the office space occupied by the administrators are the two workstations each with a computer and printer connected to it, one

photocopying machine, a fax machine and a chalkboard which is turned into a notice board, on it there are announcements and official information about the school that teachers and administrators need to readily access. The principal's office also has one computer and printer set with internet access, and e-mails only reach the school through this office.

The school has a backyard shelter used both as a feeding scheme kitchen and the storage for tools. In the shelter there is no stove, no water supply and dish washing sink and tables. The feeding scheme moms improvise by using tables from the classrooms and they cook on the wood fire made on the ground outside the shack. In principle all children are fed from the feeding scheme. There are two ladies employed by the school to work in the feeding scheme and a grounds-man to clean and do maintenance of the premises. There are three Community Works Programme (CWP) volunteers from the city council, who are working as volunteers at the school as part of the government project. They are supposed to assist in cooking, feeding the children, cleaning the school and the toilets and provide the necessary support for the staff. While their main activity is the food garden, they also support staff to do cleaning the offices, the foyer of the classrooms and teachers' toilets. However, their assistance does not sufficiently benefit children because children are cleaning their classrooms every after school, even those in grade R and children's toilets which are pit-toilets also do not look like they are ever cleaned. Since the school is situated in a grassland region, most parts of the school premises is covered in grass, except for the area between the classrooms, which is used as the school's assembly area. This area is just an uncovered ground, with loose soil that makes dust as children run around playing. Usually dust can be seen rising among the children as they gather at the assembly, some coughing probably from inhaling the dust as they sing (see Appendix T). And, more of the dust is produced at they routinely march in a military "left right, left right" rhythm to their classrooms at the end of the assembly.

The school does not provide any after school care or homework supervision because most children live far and have to walk through the Sappi plantation from their home to school and back. Other children use the Department of Education's bus transport services hence they cannot remain at school for afterschool homework supervision or any other activities. Teachers are only able to provide homework supervision and support to only those children who stay near the school, however even those children have household chores that demand their punctual return from school. Teachers reported that there are children with learning difficulties linked to visual and auditory problems who do not receive any support to alleviate the impact of these barriers on learning. When parents are invited to discuss the child's difficulties, they do not come, and they do not take the child to the health care centre for assessment even at the teacher's advice. Teachers, the Deputy Principal and the Principal also reported that their attempts to invite the District Based Support Team (SBST) to visit the school to assess the nature of support required by the children have been unsuccessful. (FT, 31, 24-29, 32,1-27; P, 205, 8-10, TQ, 163, 34-35). Though the teachers and the principal's plight on getting assistance was verbally stated, there was no evidence of written requests to the parents or even the district office.

## Appendix I: Interview Questions

### Teacher profile

1. Experience (no. of years teaching the grade): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Qualifications (state the type of a certificate, diploma, degree or any other qualification you have in education): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Current position: (put a cross)

teacher	HOD	Deputy principal	principal	SGB member
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### Interview Questions

#### I will ask you a few questions about your experiences and practice of discipline

1. At primary school how were you disciplined?
2. Was it a normal thing or it was unusual?
  3. Did all teachers discipline like that?
  4. What misbehaviour were you disciplined for?
  5. Describe how was punishment meted and on what circumstances?
  6. Do you remember how you felt when you disciplined in this way?
  7. How would you describe a child? What is a child? How should children behave in the classroom?
8. Are you trained in alternative to corporal punishment? If the answer is "yes", state the year and the place of your training.
9. Have you ever seen a book from the DoE on alternative to corporal punishment?
10. Have you read a book on alternatives to corporal punishment?
11. As a child how were you disciplined at home?
12. How were children generally disciplined in the neighborhood?
13. What methods do you use to discipline children?
13. Do these methods work? Please explain? When is corporal punishment used, give me examples?
14. Is corporal punishment commonly used in schools in this area including this school?
15. What are the misdemeanours that you use corporal punishment for?
16. Why are these children displaying these behaviours?
17. What is it that you intend to achieve when you use corporal punishment?
  18. What happens if you do not use corporal punishment?
19. If not corporal punishment, what other method can you use to control the behaviour of children?
20. When corporal punishment was used on you as a child. Did that method work, how did it affect you or change you?
  21. How did you respond to it then?

22. Corporal punishment is abolished now, do you know about that?
23. How did you know about that?
24. Corporal punishment has been abolished, why is that so if it is working?
25. Why are you continuing to use it?
26. Do you agree with the abolition of corporal punishment?
27. Why do you agree or disagree with the abolition of corporal punishment?

**c Vignette:**

**For Children:**

If your teacher comes to your class, and gives all of you in class a worksheet, and she instructs you to do some work on it. And your class mate plays with the worksheet, and does not do the work, and the worksheet eventually gets crinkled and he does not finish work despite being told what to do. What should the teacher do?

**For parents:**

If your child's teacher comes to their class, and gives all the children in class a worksheet, and she instructs children to do some work on it. And one child just plays with the worksheet, and does not do the work, and the worksheet eventually gets crinkled and he eventually does not finish the given task despite being told what to do. What should the teacher do?

**For teachers:**

The same version, but modified based on the critical incidences emerging in the interview process.

## Appendix J: Data analysis – Themes in relation to research questions

<b>Themes</b>	Childhood experiences of discipline		Traditional use of corporal punishment by retired teachers and current use		Current Preference discipline method and its description		Current belief on effectiveness of corporal punishment		Alternatives to corporal punishment used and belief their effectiveness		Abolition of corporal punishment	
<b>Sub-themes</b>	Trauma and internalisation, induced sense of helplessness. Idealisation of the punisher	Reasons for corporal punishment – scholastic performance, behaviour in the classroom	Parents support the use of corporal punishment	For scholastic performance, late-coming and not doing homework	Perceptions on good and bad corporal punishment	Continuities and transformations	belief that fear of CP enhances performances Children work, children lie, and children need to be made strong and awake,	Continuities and transformations	Some alternatives not working within the context  School policies and other artefacts	Continuities and transformations	Perceptions on reasons for the abolition of CP Teaching career a perpetual risk	Continuities and transformations
<b>Research Question focus</b>	What do teachers make of corporal punishment, and their childhood experiences of it in their present accounts of the practice?		What discipline practices are teachers currently using?		What discipline practices are teachers currently using?		What reasons, if any, do teachers give for believing in, or resorting to, corporal punishment?		What reasons, if any, do teachers give for believing in, or resorting to, corporal punishment?		What do teachers make of corporal punishment, and their childhood experiences of it in their present accounts of the practice?	
	How do children (and parents) respond to the practice of corporal punishment?				How do children (and parents) respond to the practice of corporal punishment?		What are the teachers' notions of children				How do children (and parents) respond to the practice of corporal punishment?	

## Appendix K: Teacher profiles

Age range	Number
56-65	1
50-55	1
49-40	10
39-30	7
29-25	1

Table 1. Age profile

Qualifications	Number
Grade 12	1
Diploma in Education	7
ACE	5
B. Ed	3
B. Ed (Hons)	3
Masters	0
ECD level 5	1

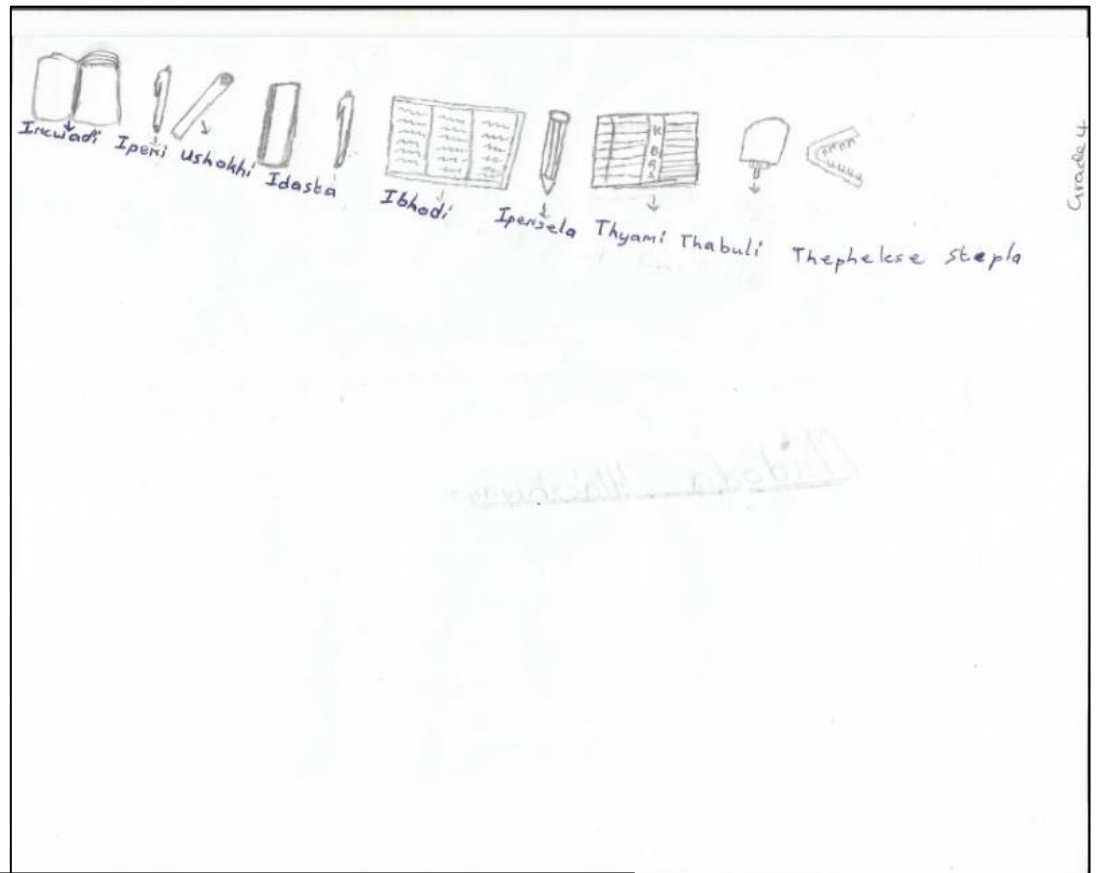
Table 2. Qualification profile

Teaching experience in years	Number
0-5	3
6-10	8
11-15	4
16-20	4
21-25	1

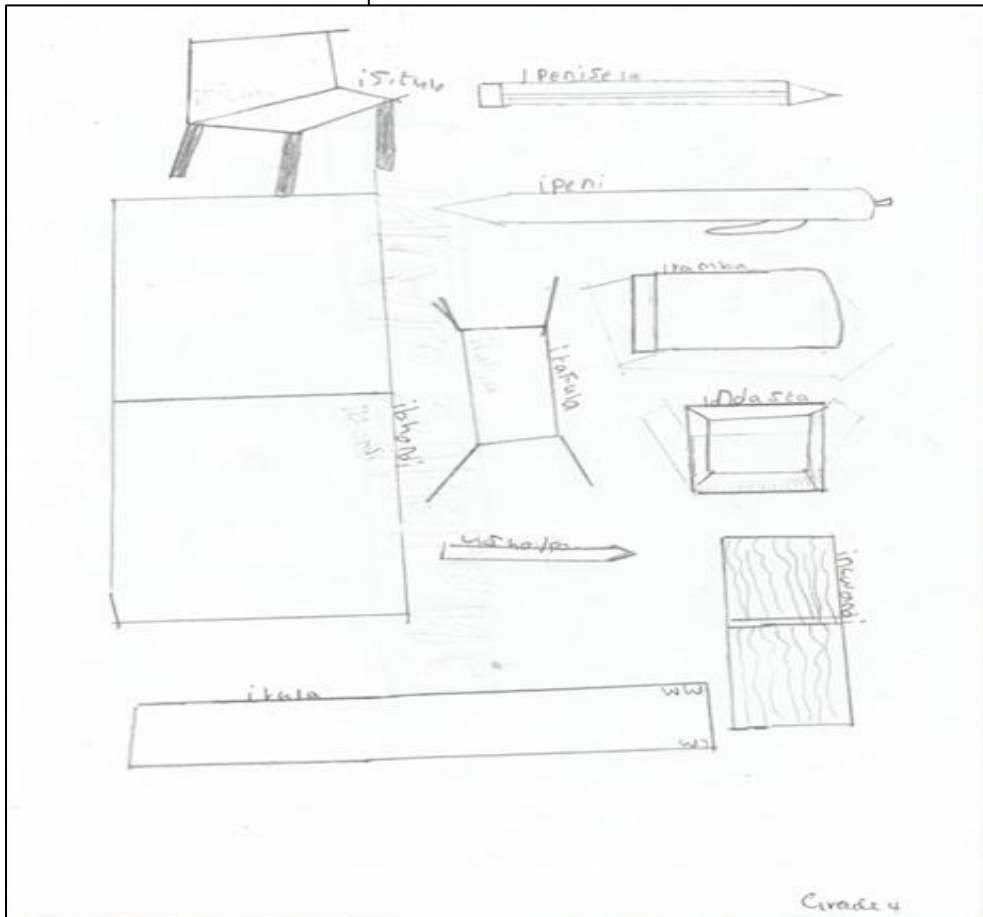
Table 3. Teaching experience profile

# Appendix L: Children's Drawings

## Grade 4 Children's Drawings



Grade 4



Grade 4







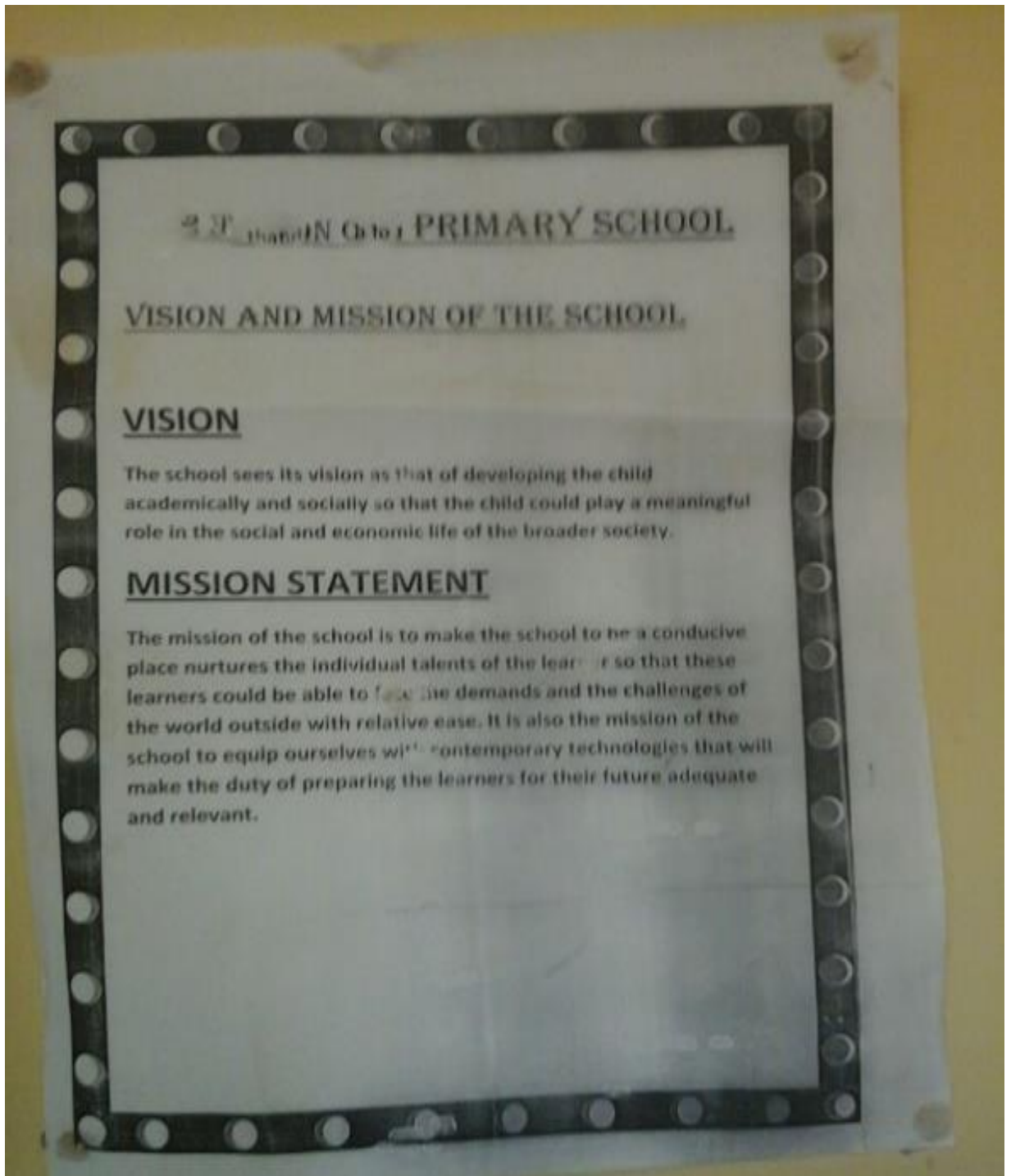




## Appendix M: Vision and mission statement of the district office



## Appendix N: Vision and mission statement of Fundani Primary School



## Appendix O: Curriculum delivery management tool

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**WAKKERSTROOM CIRCUIT**

### **PROGRAMME FOR SUBMISSION OF LESSON PLANS/LEARNERS BOOKS/WORKBOOKS**

#### **TERM 2**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>10/04/2014</b>	<b>Submission Lesson plans cycle ending (17/04/2014)</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>17/04/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>08/05/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>22/05/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>05/06/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>19/06/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>26/06/2014</b>	<b>Submission Lesson plans cycle ending(25/07/2014)</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>TERM3</b>		
<b>31/07/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>14/08/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>28/08/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>11/09/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>25/09/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>02/10/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans cycle ending 17/10/2014</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>TERM 4</b>		
<b>23/10/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>06/11/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>
<b>20/11/2014</b>	<b>Submission of lesson plans/learners books/workbooks</b>	<b>Subject educator</b>

## **Appendix P: School Policy of Fundani Primary School**

### **MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **FUNDANI PRIMARY SCHOOL DRAFT OF THE SCHOOL POLICY**

#### **PREAMBLE:**

#### **VISSION**

The school sees its vision as that of developing the child academically and socially so that the child could play a meaningful role in the social and economic life of the broader society.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the school is to make the school to be a conducive place nurtures the individual talents of the learners so that these leaners could be able to face demands and the challenges of the world outside with relative ease. It is also the mission of the school to equip themselves with contemporary technologies that will make the duty of preparing leaners for their future adequate and relevant.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

- I. The school policy shall mean a document that shall be used as a guide in the day running of the school activities.
- II. The department shall man both the National and Provincial Department of Education.
- III. The School Governing Body, hitherto and referred as the SGB, shall mean a democratically elected body comprised of parents, educators that governs the school.

#### **AIMS**

#### **THE SCHOOL AIMS**

- I. To encourage all parents involved in the running of the school to have a common working framework and base.
- II. To help educator, parents and leaners to realise the mission of the school.
- III. To allow the education of the leaners to be more productive and free of any disturbance.
- IV. To create an atmosphere conducive for the leaners to develop their different capabilities and talents.
- V. To create a situation for leaners to realise the importance of education in life as children and hence as future adults.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- I. After completing grade 7 the learners should be fully equipped with the necessary writing, reading, comprehension and other relevant skills.
- II. After completing grade 7 the learners should be able to solve problems they come across in life using the education attained at school.

#### **LANGUAGE POLICY**

The school shall use English and Zulu as its medium of instruction. The school shall, however, recognise all eleven official languages as prescribed in the Constitution of the country, i.e. chapter 1. Zulu is recognised as the only home language of learners in school.

### **MORNING DEVOTION AND ASSEMBLY**

- I. The school shall follow Christian principles and beliefs in its conduct but will tolerate and acknowledge other religious beliefs and principles other than Christian.
- II. The school shall hold morning devotion every morning at 8h00 for fifteen minutes charge of this devotion shall prepare and educate the school population on spiritual development.

### **OPERATING AND KNOCKING OFF TIME**

- I. The school shall operate on six forty five period daily.
- II. The school shall start at 8h15 to 13h30 daily, unless otherwise stated.
- III. There shall be three periods before break and three periods after break.
- IV. Educators shall be required to report for duty at 7h45 for a morning briefing at the staff room/office every morning.

### **LINES OF COMMUNICATION (ORGANOGRAM)**

- I. The school shall always function as an organisation
- II. The principal as the head of the school shall therefore be accountable to the circuit manager and the Department.
- III. The following shall be the line function structure of the school shall be adhered to by each and every member of the school community.

### **Finance committee**

- I. The finance committee shall be comprised of the chairperson (principal), the secretary, treasurer and additional member.
- II. The committee shall control all finances of the school.
- III. The committee shall keep all records of purchase or payments made on behalf of the school.
- IV. The committee shall draw up an annual budget for the school in consolidation with the various committees and the SGB.
- V. The committee shall liaise with the private sector and companies with the view to seeking assistance in the provision of funds for the school.
- VI. The SGB shall appoint a financial controller who must be one of the administration clerks.

### **DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

- I. The committee shall be comprised of the principal, the deputy and educators democratically elected by the staff and two (2) parents the committee shall be responsible for the maintenance members of the SGB one of whom shall be the chairperson of the committee.
- II. The committee shall be responsible for the maintenance of the discipline among staff members and the learners.

- III. The committee shall stress a healthy relationship and respect amongst staff members and learners.
- IV. The school shall intervene in any cases of disagreement between parties within the school.
- V. The committee shall take disciplinary actions for any misconduct within the school. Any action taken by this committee shall be within the dictates of the South African School Act and matters beyond disciplinary structures.

### **SPORT COMMITTEE**

- I. The committee shall consist of the delegated Education Specialist (overseer), the sports organiser(chairperson), assistant organiser (deputy chair), the secretary, treasure and (3) addition members. All these members shall be educators.
- II. The committee shall nature the physical wellbeing of the leaners.
- III. The committee shall co-ordinate all sport and entertainment activities.
- IV. The committee shall organise various sporting activities for the leaners.
- V. The committee shall, with the permission of the management team, organise their own fund raising.
- VI. The treasure of the committee shall keep all records and finances of the committee.

### **SOCIAL AND WELFARE COMMITTEE**

- I. The committee shall be composed of delegated SMT member and democratically elected educators.
- II. The committee shall organise and prepare for all functions at the school.

### **CLEANING COMMITTEE**

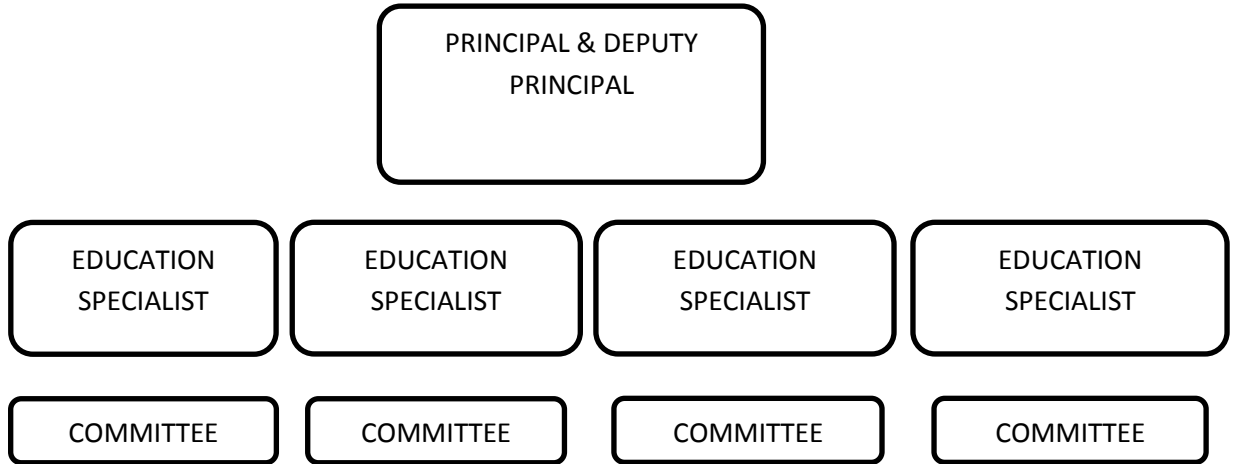
- I. The committee shall be composed of one (1) head of department as an overseer and democratically elected educators.
- II. The committee shall assist class teachers and learners with the cleaning of the school, both inside and outside the classrooms.
- III. The committee shall supervise the cleaning of the surroundings of the school.
- IV. The committee shall provide cleaning materials to class teachers and their learners.

### **PROJECT COMMITTEE (SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE)**

- I. The project committee shall be composed of the principal (chair), secretary (an educator in the SGB), two (2) parent members of the SGB and two additional members (educators).
- II. The committee shall be tasked with responsibilities of identifying minor and major projects for the financial year of the school.
- III. The committee shall report directly to the SGB, which shall either endorse or reject a proposed project.
- IV. The committee shall implement a project endorsed by the SGB.

It shall be the responsibility of both the management team and the SGB of the school to review the need for the continuous existence of any of the above committees or an addition of other as needs may arise.

## **SCHOOL STRUCTURE**



## **MEETINGS**

### **DAILY SHORT STAFF CONSULTATIONS**

Daily short staff consultations meetings shall be held before the start of the school to keep the educators informed of developments within the Department and the school. The principal shall chair such meetings; however this task may also be delegated to some members of the management team. These will be informal meetings and no resolutions shall be taken, only the implementation of standing solutions taken in staff meetings.

### **GENERAL STAFF MEETINGS**

- I. The general staff meetings shall be held once every three (3) months. The principal shall, however, the right to call urgent general staff meetings to discuss the urgent matters that are affecting the school. This can be done by the means of issuing an internal circular informing staff members of such a meeting.
- II. The structure of the general meetings shall comprise of the chairperson (usually the principal) and recording secretary (an elected educator) and the entire staff, both the educating and non-educating staff.

### **BASIC PROCEDURES OF MEETINGS**

- I. Every member of staff in the meeting shall be allowed the freedom of speech and expression without intimidation and the members view shall be respected.

- II. The chairperson shall be the highest authority at the meeting and his or ruling shall be binding.
- III. All questions or comments shall be addressed through the chairperson.
- IV. During the meeting every member shall be attentive and participative.

### **PARENTS' MEETINGS**

- I. Parents meetings shall be held quarterly or as determined by the SGB with the view to reporting the progress of the school to the parents.
- II. The chairperson/deputy chairperson of the SGB shall be the chairperson of all parents meeting.
- III. Notices of the parents meeting shall be issued at least seven (7) days prior to the exact date of the meeting.
- IV. During the meetings every member shall be attentive and participative.
- V. Parents meeting shall be attended by all parents of registered learners in the school, community members who have an interest in the school, invited guest and the educators.

### **ROLE OF PARENTS IN SUPPORTING THE SCHOOL**

- I. Supervision of the home studies.
- II. Supervision of home-works.
- III. Supervision of wearing of proper school uniform.
- IV. Supervision of adherence to school time encouraging of learners to leave early for the school.
- V. Look after the property and or school equipment.

### **SCHOOL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

#### **FOR EDUCATORS**

- I. Gambling of any kind is strictly prohibited.
- II. Any educator found taking liquor during school hours shall be subjected to the stronger disciplinary actions (guided by the relevant policies).

- III. Educators are not allowed into the school premises if they are either drunk or have taken liquor.
- IV. Educators are not allowed to carry any weapon to the classroom.
- V. Any weapon should be kept safe in schools strong room or with the administration of the school.
- VI. Educators who shall be found carrying weapon in the classroom shall be subjected to strict disciplinary actions (guided by relevant policies).
- VII. Educator's absenteeism from work is strictly not allowed and any educator who absents him/herself without informing the authorities shall be dealt with accordingly.
- VIII. For all cases of absenteeism leave form should be filled up and signed by the educator concerned.
- IX. Smoking in the classroom, in front of the learners is strictly prohibited.
- X. Late-coming for work strictly not allowed
- XI. Educators should attend all the school activities including staff meetings, assembly, parents meeting, sporting activities and other activities that touch the school.
- XII. Vulgar and abusive language is not allowed at school.
- XIII. Gossiping and bad mouthing colleagues is strongly discouraged.
- XIV. Having sexual relations with learners is totally not allowed and any educator who shall be found guilty of such an offence shall be reported to the SGB. The Department of South African Council for Educators.
- XV. Educators are required to honour their periods regularly and their assigned duties.
- XVI. Any other misconduct listed in the educators employment act.

### **FOR LEARNERS**

- I. Late-coming is strictly not allowed.
- II. Dodging of classes/lessons strictly not allowed.
- III. Loitering around the school premises during lesson times is not allowed.
- IV. Gambling of any kind in the schoolyard is strictly prohibited and a serious offence.
- V. A learner found talking or smelling liquor shall be subjected to the strongest disciplinary action.
- VI. Smoking on the school premises strictly prohibited.
- VII. No learner is allowed to leave the school premises without approval from the principal/class teacher.

- VIII. No learner visitors are allowed to the classrooms without approval from the principal /class teacher.
- IX. Fighting of learners within the school premises is strictly not allowed and a heavily punishable offence.
- X. Gates shall be closed for learners at 8h15 in the morning every morning and be opened at break time. They shall again be closed after break till the end of the last period.
- XI. All learners shall be required to wear their proper school uniform, as determined by the school, in a proper way.
- XII. Taking or selling drugs of any kind within the school premises is strictly forbidden. Any learner found guilty of such offences shall be immediately reported to the police and expelled from the school with immediate effect.
- XIII. No learners is /are allowed to have sexual relationship with an educator. Should a learner be guilty of such an offence he/she shall be transferred to another school, preferably a neighbour school, since that damages the image of the school.
- XIV. In case a learner falls pregnant the school shall abide by the constitution of the country, which stipulates that no learner shall be excluded from school on the basis of any discriminatory factor. However, parents who willingly withdraw their children from school on the basis that they are pregnant shall not be prevented by the school by doing so. If the parents decide that the learner should continue with her studies, the parents and the learner should inform the school of their plans for emergency cases.
- XV. Learners who shall be absent from school for more than (10) days consecutive days without any valid reasons shall be withdrawn from the register of the school.
- XVI. Any learner who was absent from school because of illness shall be required to provide proof for such illness in a form of a medical certificate.
- XVII. All learners are responsible for the wellbeing of the school, i.e. cleaning, caring for the textbook, equipment, furniture etc.
- XVIII. Sarcasm, vulgar and abusive language is strictly prohibited in the school.

### **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

- I. A visitor's register should be used for any visitor who comes to school. In the register the following information should appear: Name of the visitor, purpose of the visit, person visited, address of the visitor and signature of the visitor.

- II. The register shall be used for any visitor coming to the school irrespective of the status of the visitor.
- III. Any visitor to the school should always via the school principal office. Under no circumstances is a visitor allowed to the classrooms without the approval of the principal.
- IV. Members of the public, officials of the Department, company agents should reports their visits to the administration office and fill in the visitor's register as indicated in (ii) above.
- V. Visitors are not allowed to go with an educator or learner out of the school premises without the consent of the principal or his/her immediate assistant.

### **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

- I. Any parties in the school found to be in conflict with each other or one another shall be brought together by the SGB in an effort to resolve that conflict.
- II. Should conflict be between two educators and after measure to resolve have failed, the school shall inform circuit manager of such a conflict and recommend the said educators be transferred from the school with immediate effect.
- III. In case the conflict involves tan educator and a learner the school shall measure to resolve such conflict and if that fails the school shall recommend that the learners should be transferred from the school to a neighbouring school.
- IV. In case the conflict parties are learners only and after all measures of resolving the conflict within the school have been exhausted, the school shall recommend that the learners concerned be suspended from attending school for period of two (2) to three (3) weeks depending on the seriousness of the conflict and only if the conflict did not involve the use of weapons.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- I. Educators are expected to be at work at all times, however principal of the school has to use his/her discretion in giving educators permission not to be at work for valid reason including silliness, unforeseen urgent matters that need the physical attention of an educators. Educators who absent themselves without the knowledge of the principal shall be issued with leave forms with the recommendation of no pay.

- II. Application of maternity leave should be in writing directed to the principal and submitted to the circuit manager, three (3) months in advance.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- I. No educator shall make any announcement to the school or community without the knowledge of the principal or his/her immediate assistant.
- II. At no time shall learners be made to make announcements to the school. A learner will have to communicate whatever information he/she wants to pass to the principal. The principal will use his/her discretion whether or not to give learner such chance.
- III. The management of the school shall be concerned with the smooth running of the school.

## **THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND THEIR FUNCTIONS**

### **COMMITTEE**

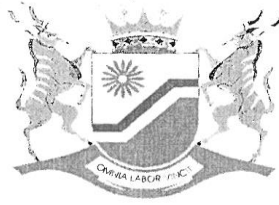
- I. The committee shall be composed of the principal, the deputy and all the heads of departments.
- II. The committee shall plan the physical needs of the school.
- III. The committee shall plan the academically needs of school in accordance with needs of the department.
- IV. The committee shall plan the daily, monthly, quarterly and annual needs of the school.

### **ORAL**

- I. Educators should understand that they are in authoritative positions and therefore, they represent human virtues, values, attitudes and norms.
- II. Educators are always expected to execute their duties honestly, faithfully, committedly, dedicatedly and responsibly.
- III. Educators should avoid uttering degrading or negative remarks about other educators or learners or school.
- IV. Educators should always work as co-ordinated unit and always be supportive of each other.

- V. Educators should always remember that they are the light of the world and such they should let this light shine for the young and old so that they may be able to find their way to the future.

**Appendix Q: The code of conduct of Fundani Primary School**

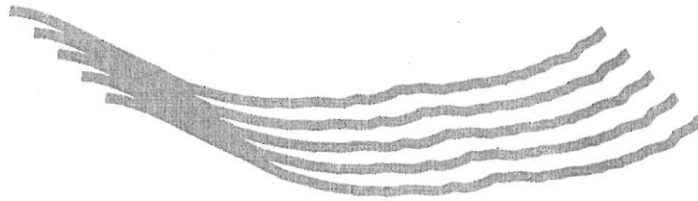


**Mpumalanga Department of Education**

**School:** Fundani Primary

**Circuit:** Mankweng

**District:** Gert Sibande



**SCHOOL POLICIES – the do's for *democratic governance and leadership practices* in the schools of Mpumalanga Province**

**The Code of Conduct for Learners**

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# Code of Conduct for Learners

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## 1. Preamble

Subject to any applicable Provincial laws, a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. A code of conduct must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. This policy shall uphold the rights of all individuals affected by it as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to define how the *Mohlengwe* Primary School community will establish a disciplined and determined school environment. It is a proactive tool that seeks to guide the ways in which bad and inconsistent behaviour shall be dealt with in this school. This code of conduct must not be considered as a simple list of rules for learners but a direction giving and behaviour changing guide.

## 3. The vision of the school

The school sees its vision as that of developing the child academically and socially so that the child could play a meaningful role in the social and economic life of the broader society.

## 4. The mission statement of the school

The mission of the school is to make the school to be a conducive place nurtures the individual talents of the learner so that these learners could be able to face the challenges of the world outside with relative ease. It is also the mission of the school to equip ourselves with contemporary technologies that will make the duty of preparing the learners fir their future adequate and relevant.

## 5. Principles and values: The rights of learners

- a. All learners and parents of Malibongwe Primary School shall have the democratic rights to due process and participation in decision making on matters directly affecting them at the school.
- b. No corporal punishment shall be applied in this school in whatever manner and method.
- c. No one may discriminate against a learner who must enjoy the equal opportunity, treatment, protection and benefits before the law.
- d. Learners have a right to a clean, safe, harassment-free and healthy environment which provides for conducive teaching and learning.
- e. Learners have the right to expect educators to maintain high standards of professionalism in practice, behaviour and ethics.
- f. Learners have the right to freedom of expression. This freedom has the following limits:
  - (i) Must not violate other peoples' right
  - (ii) Must be inline with the school policy
  - (iii) Must not be humiliating and/or undermine other  
People's dignity
- g. All learners have the right to privacy and may not have their property seized without reasonable suspicion.
- h. Respect for the human dignity of learners shall be maintained. This includes religious, cultural and other convictions.
- i. Learners have a right to discipline based on respect and dignity and without inhuman treatment, degradation, and inconsideration.
- j. A pregnant learner may not be denied access to education. The handling of learner pregnancy in this school shall be dealt with in the Policy on pregnancy.
- k. No learners shall be locked in isolation and/or solitary detention.
- l. Learners shall have the right to education. This right includes the right to attend all classes in all approved learning areas in the school, to be informed regularly about his/her school progress, to make use of all the school facilities and to have their potential developed to its possible fullest.

## 6. Responsibilities of learners

- a. All learners have the responsibility to attend school regularly. Absence from school must be reported to the school in due course.
- b. Learners are expected to show respect to educators, visitors, parents, fellow learners and other individuals found in the school.
- c. Learners must show their commitment to doing their school work either in the classrooms or at home (assignments, class work, homework, projects and group work).
- d. Each and every learner is responsible to catch-up with work done in their absence from class or school.
- e. It is the responsibility of every learner to ensure that they do not disrupt teaching and learning and other activities of the school.
- f. Learners are responsible for ensuring that they do not damage school property. They should take good care of school property.
- g. Any learner who intentionally damages any property of the school will be held responsible for paying for the repair or replacement of such.
- h. The learners are responsible for upholding the following values of the school: Respect; Accountability; Transparency; Integrity; Honest and Excellence
- i. Learners are expected to be tolerant to other people's religious and cultural beliefs in the school.

## 7. Responsibilities of educators

In ensuring that learners behave accordingly, educators are also expected to uphold certain responsibilities to ensure the promotion of a healthy school environment. Educators will uphold the following responsibilities in the school:

- a. Conduct themselves in a professionally acceptable manner.
- b. Educators shall be punctual and report for duty regularly.
- c. Be well prepared for teaching and carrying out any responsibility accorded to them.
- d. Educators will take full responsibility of their classrooms as class managers

## 8. Responsibilities of parents in advancing the code of conduct of learners

The parents and guardians have a role to play in advancing the acceptance and compliance of learners with this policy. Parents are henceforth expected to uphold the following responsibilities:

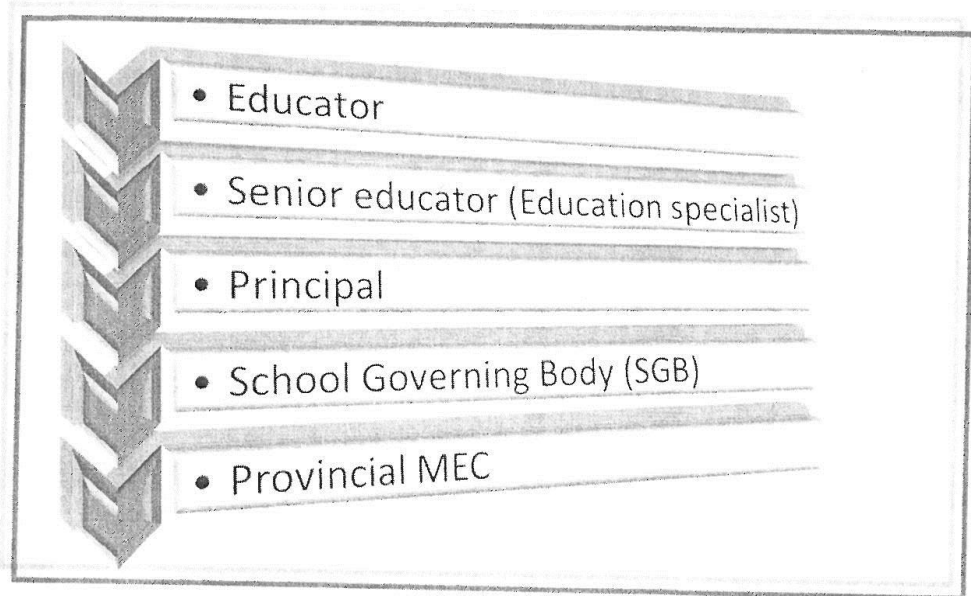
- a. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide for a conducive environment, resources and time for the child to learn.
- b. Support the school and encourage learners to observe the school rules and regulations and accept responsibility for their actions.
- c. Take part in the child's learning by providing the child with the necessary support, such as ensuring that school work is done and completed accordingly.
- d. Parents are expected to attend SGB and school meetings when invited.
- e. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that the children are protected and are in safe environments.
- f. Parents may take legal action against any person who is found to have infringed the right of the child.

## 9. The operationalisation of the school rules

- a. The school shall have clearly outlined and publicised school rules.
- b. Educators shall have the same rights as parents when it comes to the application of discipline to and controlling of a learner during the activities of the school.
- c. Learners shall be involved in the drawing of school rules. The following are ways in which learners will be involved in the process: By drawing up their classroom rules
- d. Ignoring of the school rules shall not be an acceptable excuse.
- e. This policy shall be widely publicised to all the school community.
- f. Any discipline that has to be carried out shall be done so expeditiously, fairly, justly, consistently, and it shall be a corrective not punitive measure.
- g. Parents shall be involved in the corrective measure taken against a learner.
- h. No discipline of a learner can be delegated to other learners.
- i. All disciplinary measures shall match the offence committed and shall be more severe as the behaviour becomes repetitive.
- j. All serious misconduct should be reported to the school principal.
- k. The school must keep a register of all reported misconduct which also reflect the outcomes of actions taken.

## 10. Dealing with misconduct

The disciplinary proceedings on dealing with misconduct shall, depending on the nature and level of the misconduct, be attended to in the following manner:



### 10.1 Level 1 – misconduct inside the classroom

This level of misconduct includes the following acts by a learner:

- Failing to be in class on time
- Bunking classes
- Failing to complete school work
- Failing to respond to reasonable instructions
- Being dishonest with minor consequences

### 10.2 Dealing with level 1 misconduct

- To be carried out by the educator in class.
- Verbal warning
- Demerits
- Additional work which is constructive
- Small menial tasks like cleaning the classroom
- Detention where the learner uses the time fruitfully for learning purposes

**10.3 Level 2 – misconduct by breaking school rules**

- a. Frequently repeating level 1 misconducts
- b. Smoking or found in the possession of tobacco
- c. Leaving school without permission
- d. Using abusive language
- e. Interrupting teaching and learning in the classroom
- f. Engaging in vandalism like graffiti
- g. Being dishonest with more serious consequences

**10.4 Dealing with level 2 misconduct**

- a. Any of the level 1 disciplinary actions
- b. Disciplinary talk with the learner
- c. Talks with the learner's parents
- d. Written warnings
- e. Signing an agreement with a learner who agrees and promises to improve

**10.5 Level 3 – serious misconduct or serious violation of school codes**

- a. Frequently repeated level 2 offences
- b. Inflicting minor injury on another person
- c. Gambling
- d. Being severely disruptive in class
- e. Forging documents or signatures with minor consequences
- f. Using racist, sexist, or other discriminatory behaviour
- g. Possessing or distributing pornographic material,
- h. Possessing dangerous weapons
- i. Theft
- j. Vandalism
- k. Cheating during examinations

**10.6 Dealing with level 3 misconduct**

- a. Any of the disciplinary action of the level 2 misconduct
- b. Written warning with the possibility of suspension from the school
- c. Referral to a counsellor or social worker
- d. Community service, with permission from the MEC

**10.7 Level 4 – very serious misconduct or very serious violation of school codes**

- a. Continuous repetition of level 3 misconduct
- b. Threatening other people with dangerous weapons
- c. Causing intentional injury to other persons
- d. Verbally threatening the safety of other persons

- e. Engaging in sexual abuse such as forceful grabbing
- f. Engaging in sexual activity
- g. Selling drugs
- h. Possessing or using alcohol and drugs
- i. Being under the influence of narcotics
- j. Disrupting the entire school
- k. Forging documents or signatures with serious consequences

**10.8 Dealing with level 4 misconduct**

- a. Any of the actions to deal with level 3 misconduct
- b. Referral of the learner to an outside agency for counselling
- c. Application to the provincial education department for limited suspension from all school activities

**10.9 Level 5 – criminal acts which breach the law**

- a. Repetition of level 4 misconduct
- b. Assault
- c. Intentionally using dangerous weapons
- d. Sexual harassment
- e. Sexual abuse and rape
- f. Robbery
- g. Major theft
- h. Breaking and entering locked premises
- i. Murder

**10.10 Dealing with level 5 misconduct**

The disciplinary actions taken to deal with these kinds of misconduct are solely the responsibility of the principal and the SGB together with the provincial education department.

- a. Application to the provincial education department for expulsion or transfer of the learner from the school
- b. Allow for criminal and/or civil prosecution processes to take effect

**11. Disciplinary action**

- a. A disciplinary hearing takes place when a very serious misconduct has been committed.
- b. The principal shall refer the problem to the SGB for a decision on a hearing.

- c. The SGB must make arrangements for a hearing.
- d. The SGB must ensure that a fair hearing shall take place and that it will not contravene the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and any provincial education department regulations.
- e. The SGB shall appoint a maximum of three people to check whether the seriousness of the case warrants a hearing.
- f. Once the SGB decides to continue with a hearing, it must appoint a four members tribunal (committee) to hear the case.
- g. The tribunal members do not have to be members of the SGB.

## 12. Disciplinary hearing process

- a. The tribunal shall have a formal sitting to conduct the hearing.
- b. The SGB shall sanction the principal to communicate the charges brought against the learner in writing and shall inform the learner and his/her parents/guardian at least seven days before the formal sitting for the hearing. The information shall include the date, time and venue where the hearing will take place.
- c. The parents must be fore-warned that the hearing may result in a suspension and expulsion of the learner from the school.
- d. The learner and his/her parents must be told that they have the right to bring evidence to the hearing.
- e. The learner charged with the misconduct and his/her parents may attend the hearing but cannot be forced to give evidence.
- f. Witnesses may be called to the hearing and may be questioned by all parties.
- g. All participants at the hearing must have access to all documents presented.
- h. Everything said at the hearing must be recorded.
- i. The tribunal shall draw its conclusions on the basis of the evidence presented before them.
- j. The tribunal shall make its recommendations to the SGB.
- k. The SGB does not have to accept the recommendations of the tribunal and may refer some of the matters back to the tribunal for further deliberations.

**13. Populating/publishing the code of conduct**

- a. The code of conduct shall be displayed openly in the school classrooms and offices
- b. Each and every learner at the school shall be given a copy of the code of conduct in the beginning of the year.
- c. The code shall be read to younger learners at primary school level.
- d. The code shall be in the official language of teaching and learning in the school.
- e. The school shall keep a record to prove that all learners know and understand the content of this policy.

**14. Policy review**

The policy shall be reviewed every year.

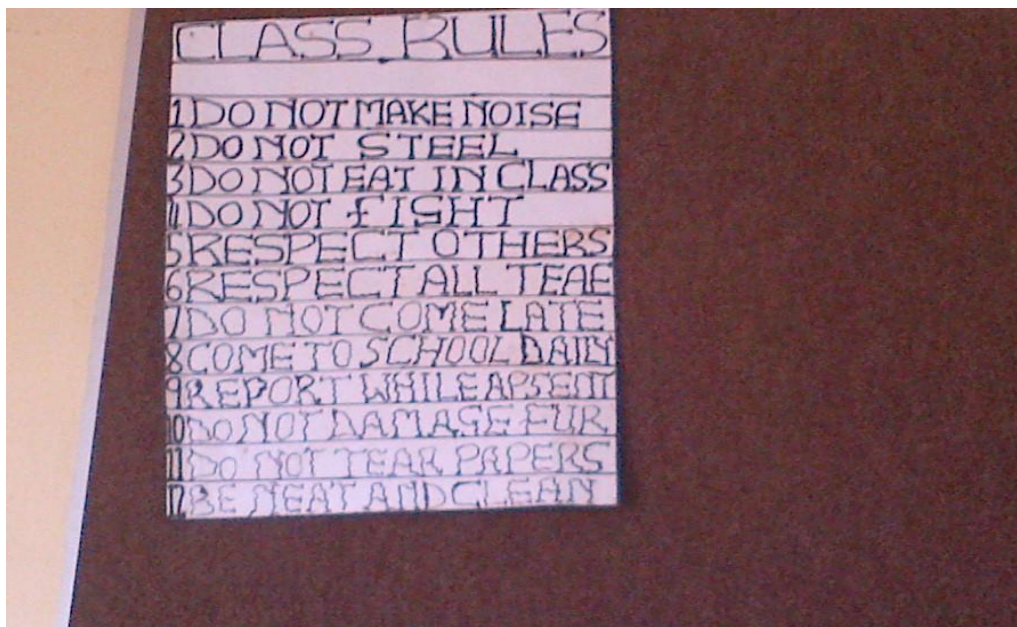
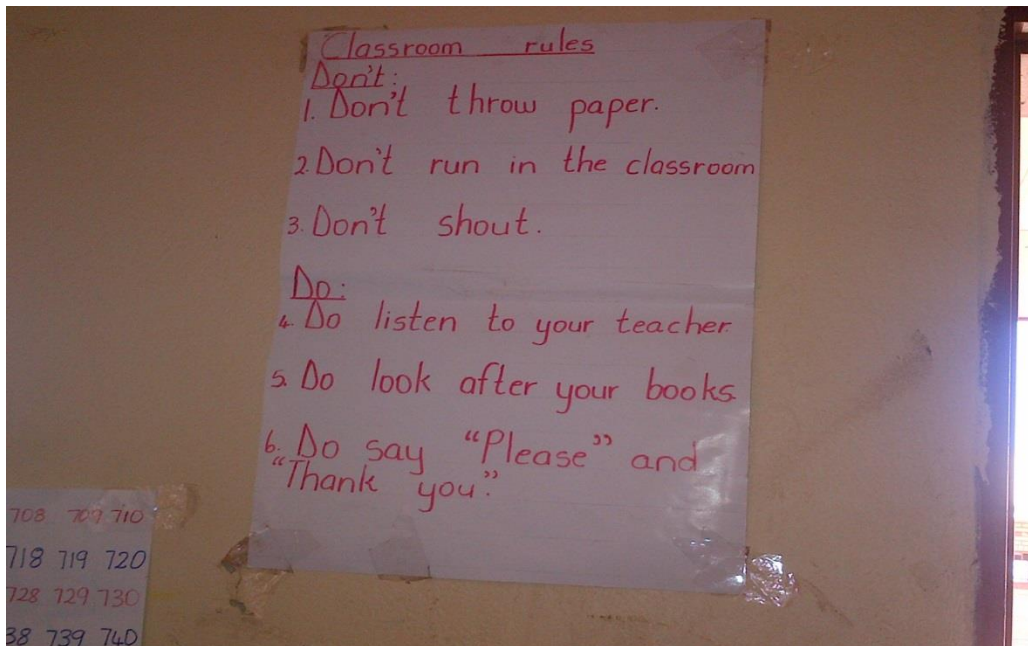
**15. Effective date of implementation**

This Code of Conduct of learners of Malibongwe Primary School becomes effective and functional as of the date on which the policy was adopted and signed into effect.

**16. Conclusion**


The code of conduct for learners is a guiding document that provides a directive and corrective platform towards the expected behaviour and conduct of learners at our school. The code is to be adhered to by all learners of this school at all times.

## Appendix R: Class rules



## Appendix S: SADTU/SACE code of conduct meeting


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**SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC TEACHERS' UNION**  
**MPUMALANGA PROVINCE: MZANSI LIGWA REGION**

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Office No. 103  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Mutual Plein Building  
Cnr Kerk & Joubert Street  
ERWELD

---

**SACE WORKSHOP**

**DATE : 15 APRIL 2014**

**VENUE : MKHONDO TOWN HALL**

**PROGRAMME**

1. OPENING : NATIONAL ANTHEM
2. WELCOMING : MKHONDO BRANCH
3. INTRODUCTION OF SACE REPRESENTATIVES : REGIONAL SECRETARY
4. PRESENTATION BY SACE
5. QUESTIONS FOR CLARITY
6. VOTE OF THANKS : MSOBOTSHENI BRANCH
7. CLOSURE

## Appendix T: Snippets of School Activities



Figure 1: Small office of the HOD, used as a store room as well, a stick as part of the stored activity tools



Figure 2: Morning assembly



Figure 3: Furniture in the grade R class



Figure 4: Story time in a Grade R class



Figure 5: Sport time – long jump practice

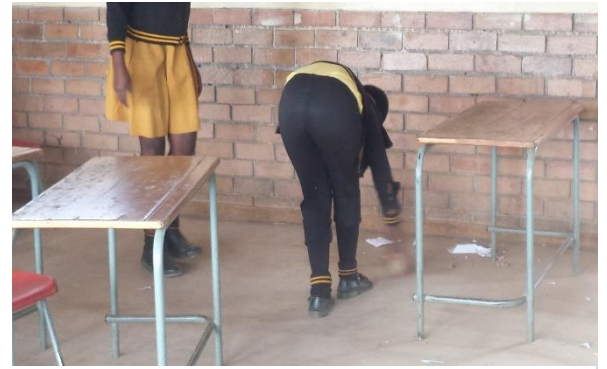


Figure 6: After school classroom cleaning



Figure 7: "Alternative to corporal punishment"

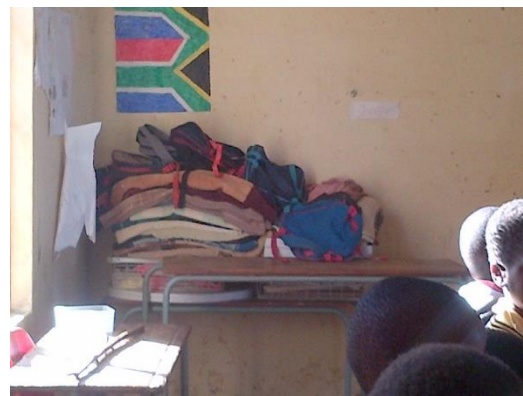


Figure 8: A stick, part of the classroom tools

## Appendix U: Interview Excerpts

### CHAPTER 6 EXCERPTS

#### Excerpt: 6.2 The Deputy Principal's childhood experience of discipline

Researcher: now I'm asking about personal things in relation to you. Now, in primary school how were you disciplined?

Deputy Principal: Corporally. It was corporal punishment. I remember one day I was doing standard, what was it in our time? I was doing standard one which is grade what now?

Researcher: Grade three.

Deputy Principal: Yes, grade three. There was this educator who used to hit us, not joking here, she used a cane that had been soaked in salt water and I passed grade one [here she meant grade 3 or standard one] and I was moving to grade two and then I cried because back then you moved with your teacher, it's not like how it is now, they taught you everything. I cried and I went to the principal because I said I wanted to repeat grade one, I didn't want to move with her. I didn't want her in my standard four class which is grade four but the principal calmed me down and said, no go to grade four which is standard two. I went then and still it continued.

Researcher: It continued.

Deputy Principal: Yes, still. We were punished until we were in grade twelve in our time. You see, others were punishing within reason, you know like there's one, two, three for misdemeanours like not doing your homework or... but that woman would hit you!

Researcher: For the joy of it.

Deputy Principal: Yes, and we knew that if today she dressed like that, then today 'die poppe sal dans'<sup>30</sup>.

Researcher: Die poppe sal dans?

Deputy Principal: Yes, and we knew that... (IDP. 166,37-167,32).

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<sup>30</sup> *An Afrikaans phrase for a group of people being beaten*

**Excerpt 6.6: Teachers arguing with one teacher who claimed she was never punished**

*Teacher K: No I happen to be this quite child, a good child, I'm naturally quite, in would be quite in the classroom, even if there was noise in the classroom, I was never beaten, I would be lying.*

*Researcher: Okay*

*Teacher D: but you were not only beaten for making noise, you would be beaten for work (performance) as well.*

*Teacher K: I was clever, I was quite, my mother was a teacher at the school, I...*

*I mean that the beating was also for performance, or for why you didn't do it.*

*Teacher D: what I remember in one of the days being beaten, the teacher was beating us three, and you know us as children, we kept retreating and teacher said you who are retreating I'll give you 50. We thought he is joking, there is no way he raise 3 to 50 beatings and another teacher came in he called that 50 we went to be beaten that 50, not a little.*

*Researcher: were you beaten that 50*

*Teacher D: yes, 50.*

*Researcher: alone?*

*Teacher D: yes, alone*

*Teacher K: My mother was a teacher and luckily I was always ahead with school work, I would do work even before I come to school, because I knew we were beaten at that time.*

*Teacher D: I do not agree with you, I mean you would be beaten not only for noise, but for performance as well.*

*Researcher: like when you write a test out of 10. If you wrong 1, why did you wrong that one and you'll get 1?*

*All: yes, yes yes*

*Researcher: was it really like that with you?*

*Yes (All), oh yes my Lord*

*Teacher Z: with us we would write speed test,*

*Researcher: you mean speed test, that mental [Arithmetics] one?*

*All: Yes, the mental one(FT. 8,21-9,21).*

### **Excerpt 6.3: Teachers' childhood: learning to memorise with corporal punishment**

*Researcher: how did you memorise it?*

*Teacher Kz: In the morning we would sing 6X table, we would go in a row...if you make a mistake, you would get sweets, [sweets means corporal punishment].*

*Researcher: so what made you to memorise was the knowledge that you will get sweets*

*All teachers: yes*

*Researcher: what do you mean by 'sweets'?*

*All teachers: punishment! [as if I'm asking a petty question]*

*Researcher: punishment as in...what ...what kind of punishment ...corporal punishment?*

*All teachers: yes, corporal punishment [now with some element of annoyance because they assume I should know this](RT, 287, 13-23).*

### **Excerpt 6.4a: Retired teachers' childhood: classroom experience with corporal punishment**

*Mr. Q: ...In class we knew that so and so, don't touch him in Afrikaans, that one in Arithmetic ... that one in History... yeah in class when the teacher asked a question, we would look at him, for him to asitakule [rescue us].*

*Researcher: What do you mean by 'anitakule'?*

*ALL: we mean we look at him because we pinned our hopes on him to rescue us, he must answer so that the whole class escapes being beaten.*

*Researcher: What if he doesn't know the answer?*

*ALL: then, we will all be beaten*

*ALL: hay, but it was lovely in our times [perhaps in response to my flabbergasted expression](RT. 292, 14-23).*

### **Excerpt 6.4b: Retired teachers' learning experience**

*Teachers K,Q,H (the three teachers talking about their favorite teacher): What he used to do he would give you 'a journey by train on Mondays', you will write the first paragraph on Monday and it (the essay) would be finished by Friday. "Here is your introduction, here is your body, and here's is your conclusion", on Monday you are on introduction, there you will talk about the preparations, on Wednesday you talk about now you are in the train...they he would explain so well, oh our teachers![in admiration]. If we could wake them up, we would! [with nostalgic excitement].*

*Researcher: What I see in you, you are excited at the memories and at talking about the way you learned more than about the punishment itself.*

*Teacher Q: oh you want talk about the punishment...that's a useless thing[dismissing the impact of punishment in their schooling-it seemed on him as if I was making a big deal out of nothing]. (RT.120, 4-13).*

### **Excerpt 6.4c: Children's classroom corporal punishment similar to the retired teachers'**

*Child 1: Even with a clap, like when the teacher comes when you are writing and you are not paying attention to him, then he hits you with a clap...*

*Child 2: oh when you are writing, and now you get scared that the teacher is approaching you, you start to shiver [laughing]*

*Child 1: yeah you are shivering [laughing – only this child] we laugh.*

*he hits you and goes, du! [laughing]*

*Child 3: yes or when you are facing down busy writing, then he hits at the back of your head and you hit the desk with your face [now all laughing]. (G6C. 272, 21-273,6).*

### **Excerpt 6.6a: Teacher as a child was injured by her teacher's corporal punishment, and at home he was further beaten**

*Teacher M: even you were beaten at school, and you go and report at home, you would be beaten at home for being beaten at school, because it meant you were not listening at school. If they do not understand, they come to school with you to ask why you were beaten, then the teacher and parent will both beat you together.*

*Researcher: So you are beaten at school, and again be beaten at home?*

*Teacher D: yes, for you to be beaten what have you done at school?*

*Teacher Z: like me, my teacher hit me and I bled through my nostrils, he hit me on the ear. I arrived at home and told my grandmother, my grandmother kept quite, and the following day she came to school with me, I thought she was going to fight for me, she arrived at school and she said, 'beat her again miss', the teacher beat me again.*

*Teacher H: you wouldn't even say at home that you were beaten, even though your bums are green.*

*Teacher Z: even when you try to dodge the school, you hide yourself behind a house because you are scared of that teacher. Some parents would take you to school and they would say "eh eh he is building you". [that is the teacher who is beating you is building you]. He [the parent] will take you to school, I mean the parent that you don't even know (FT. 7-17-8,6).*

### **Excerpt 6.6b: Parents also believe that children cannot learn without being beaten**

*Parent 1: because the child must know that if I didn't do this, the child must know that there is something he will get. The child must know that if he is late at school, he will get. Even myself as old as I am, I know that at home, if they can get me in a mistake like this one, even if they cannot beat me anymore, but they could beat me. I myself know that if at home they find me in this mistake, they were going to beat me, hey, you see, my soul does not become free because I know I am wrong. Not that the child is wrong or right he does not see the difference.*

*Researcher: do you mean the child will not know that he is wrong without having to be beaten.*

*Parent 1: Never, no they can't.*

*Chairperson: our children today, we've seen them, they don't listen to their parent, parents are helpless. There is something that, because their parents only tell them, wake up, wash up, go to school, you see something like that – but if you say "now I say everyone must get up now, and everyone should go to school!, you see- in that tone" ...(an emphatic and stern tone). (PI. 91, 9-20).*

### **Excerpt 6.6c: Parents were beaten by the parents too, but they also valued communication**

*P3: I my father used to beat me: but he wouldn't beat you having not spoken to you. If I have done something wrong, he would let me sit down and he will talk to me, he will say you see that his this and this and that which is wrong and then he will beat you, then he will ask you again," why am I beating you?" then you say "I have done this and that that", it is you who answers, and he asks you do you realise that you are wrong? You see that thing made me to know, I never hated.*

### **Excerpt 6.7: Teachers believe corporal punishment is biblically sound and effective**

Researcher: ...And, there is another thing that I want make a follow up on that you mentioned earlier about the bible [probing further on the issue that was introduced earlier but could not explore at that point].

Teacher Kw: say what the bible says [encouraging Mk, the teacher who brought this subject up earlier to talk].

Teacher Mk: isn't it that mistress [a way of addressing a lady teacher, deemed to be respectful] saying we as Black people we believe that the stick does not kill, so I was saying even the bible says that the stick does not kill a child, but it builds him it makes him to learn and have a right way to live.

Researcher: and that is in the bible?

[all laughing]

Researcher: among yourselves, how many of you believe in the bible?

All: it's me, [one by one] it's all of us.

Teacher Mk: I for one I believe in it

Teacher Mt: awu all of us

Researcher: Mhh yes, you know sometimes yes you believe in the bible, but sometimes there are those things in the bible that you say I believe in the bible but ey this one ey ey it is difficult [Mk laughing]. So this thing that the stick does kill a child it builds him, do you believe in it?

Teacher Kw: now the other thing that you believe in, for instance in the bible, it is because you have found that it works for you, but if when you look at it and found that it hasn't worked for you, then you think no, isn't it that you also search yourself if this thing is working for me, if the bible tells you the right thing.

Researcher: so there are two things here, the way you were raised you found that the stick has helped you

Teacher Kw: yes it has worked (IST. 67, 24 - 68, 20).

### **Excerpt 6.7a: Deputy Principal's view, provides a wider view to discipline, she does not support corporal punishment**

Deputy Principal: Yes, it's like that. But then you find that there are those who knowing it's wrong, they abuse it still. But then what I can say is that here generally the use of corporal punishment is not as severe as what I have seen in KZN because in KZN they used to beat the children and they still do. It's what I first noticed when I came here, that here they don't beat the kids like in KZN where teachers really beat the kids there and that I don't know how you can compare the children in KZN and the children here you'll find that the children in KZN are more studious.

Researcher: Really? Do you believe that?

Deputy Principal: Yes. I am comparing because I was teaching there.

Researcher: Ok, so while you are there do you agree that corporal punishment was effective? Why are you saying that?

Deputy Principal: I won't say 100%.

Researcher: Is it effective for learning?

Deputy Principal: Like I was saying, there's no way to know for sure why it is that children are the way they are. You might find that in KZN, what I suspect is that the children are living with their mothers and their fathers are gone to work and so because you know that mothers care and so they help them with their work and so that's the difference.

Researcher: Oh, that corporal punishment is not the sole reason for this.

Deputy Principal: Yes, there's corporal punishment and there's support.

Researcher: Ok. Do you agree with the abolition of corporal punishment? ...

Deputy Principal: Ok, it's just that I do agree with that abolishment of corporal punishment and the reason being is that as educators we are not all the same and even if there was a limit there would still be those who would abuse that, so I feel that it is better that we do not hit them altogether (IDP. 179, 14-180, 20).

### **Excerpt 6.7b: Parents revere the teachers who punish their children**

Researcher: we were still talking about what the teacher should do if the child has not done the homework. What do you say ladies?

Parent 3: yes if the child has not done the teachers homework, the teacher must scare the child.

Researcher: what do you means by “scare him”?

Parent 3: I mean that she must clap him, isn't it that she will not beat him to injure him only that they child learns to do what the teacher says he must do. You see there is a teacher that I like here at school, that I like very much here at school, you see I have a child who is 15yrs turning 16yrs,

Chairperson: you mean Themba, he is with Ms Tj.

Parent 3: Themba, hey I like this teacher, mam Tj I like her, when my child arrives from school, eish just this year, just when he comes back, he says, “Ma can I not go fetch water, because I have so much to do of Mam Tj's work, and eish! I can't be fine if I do not do Ms. Tj's work”

Researcher: what does he mean when he says, I cannot be fine without doing Mam Tj's work?

Parent 3: he means he has to do Ms Tj's work, otherwise 'uzomtrappa!' [she will beat him!].

Parent 4: the punishment, he knows

Parent 3: she has her own punishment that she uses.

Chairperson: yes she gives them punishment (with satisfaction).

Parent 3: she has a punishment that she gives them, because all the time he (the child) says “Mama I'm sorry I have to do Ms Tj's homework”, and where he does not understand he asks his elder sisters, he says “hey I don't understand this word, sis Mbali please tell me, what this word means?”

Researcher: are you saying the punishment that she gives them, is beating them?

Chairperson: no we do not say, the punishment is beating them, remember we are using some one's name here, lets simply say punishment (signing with his hand showing beating).

Parent 3: because he does not say she is beating him. But there is this punishment that she uses (now being conscious of the illegality of corporal punishment] (PI. 92, 11-93-8).

### **Excerpt 6.7c: The Principal – believes corporal punishment needs to be regulated, not abolished**

Principal: ...truly it was not used correctly, that is why I personally think it needed to be controlled, it needed to have some limit, that these are limits to it, you see. But the way it was before, really, ...it was wrong, but again to phase it out completely, it is causing a challenge again,

Researcher: okay

Principal: I think it's causing a challenge

Researcher: so in short what you are saying corporal punishment you think is an effective disciplinary measure, if only if it is controlled

Principal: if only if it is controlled

Researcher: how would you describe corporal punishment that is controlled?

Principal: ehheh (laughing and thinking) ehheh, take an example that I've just mentioned now, we are in a class, somebody just gets in pointing to others “come this side” you see it's because there was no control of corporal punishment, and someone was abusing the power, you see?

Researcher: mh you just said an important word, somebody was abusing power,

Principal: that's it, you see, you see, you see? Someone was abusing the power (emphasising), so corporal punishment in a sense to say, for an example when they were phasing it away, at that stage there was an understanding that if you beat less than 5, beat them 3, you see? You remember when they were starting to phase it out,

there was an understanding that beat them 3, beat them 2, don't beat them on the buttock, control means to be reasonable you see.  
Researcher: okay  
Principal: to be reasonable. (IP. 212, 30-213,17).

### **Excerpt 6.7c: Teacher's traumatic childhood experiences of corporal punishment, supports controlled corporal punishment along with communication with the child**

Researcher: finally what are you saying with the abolishing of corporal punishment? In the light of the whole situation that you are faced with, what are you saying?  
Teacher G: yeah, I can say that it is fair, but not good, you see?  
Researcher: ohhhhh  
Teacher G: just like me, you went through this corporal punishment; it may happen that the child does not reach the level where he should because he is beaten. But again this corporal punishment, I can also say it is not that bad, because if you will beat the child not in a way that is loaded with anger, as the way it was happening to us.  
Researcher: mhhh  
Teacher G: it is fair that corporal punishment is abolished because we abuse it, teachers abuse it.  
Researcher: it is fair because teachers abuse it  
Teacher G: yes  
Researcher: is there a way of using corporal punishment without being abusive?  
Teacher G: yeah, yeah, there is.  
Researcher: how, for an example?  
Teacher G: you let the kid know that "here you have made an offense like this and that, you see?"  
Researcher: okay  
Teacher G: and when you beat the child here on the hand you need not to stress so that the child feels that you hate him indeed, you see?  
Researcher: yeah,  
Teacher G: you just need to touch the child so that he remembers what he shouldn't do again.  
Researcher: okay, so that he remembers that he shouldn't do that, if you never touch him with a stick do you think he will forget, he will not remember?  
Teacher G: awu, they keep doing it repeatedly  
Researcher: okay  
Teacher G: he tells himself that "what can you do to him?"  
Researcher: and when you touch him with a stick, he never does it?  
Teacher G: he never does it  
Researcher: in short are you saying using corporal punishment helps in making a child to remember what they are not supposed to do.  
Teacher G: yeah yeah (IG.155,1-14).

### **Excerpt 6.7d: Parents considering reprimanding the child first before hitting him**

P3: I my father used to beat me: but he wouldn't beat you having not spoken to you. If I have done something wrong, he would let me sit down and he will talk to me, he will say you see that his this and this and that which is wrong and then he will beat you, then he will ask you again, "why am I beating you?" then you say "I have done this and that that"..., it is you who answers, and he asks you do you realise that you are wrong? You see that thing made me to know, I never hated.

### **Excerpt 6.7d: Teacher recommending that they reduce the use of corporal punishment**

Y: we must reduce the use of a stick (speaking softly as is she does not want to be heard), these children at home they live with grandmothers, so there are no people helping them you see, so they had to learn here, this thing will stay.

### **Excerpt 6.8: Teacher once beaten with 50 strokes at school**

D: what I remember in one of the days, being beaten the teacher was beating us three, and you know as children, we kept retreating and teacher said you who are retreating I'll give you 50. We thought he is joking, there is no way he raise 3 to 50 beatings and another teacher came in he called that 50 we went to be beaten that 50, not a little.

Researcher: were you beaten that 50

D: yes, 50.

Researcher: alone?

D: yes, alone

### **6.8a: Teacher G had some traumatic experiences of corporal punishment, but believes there is a place for corporal punishment**

*Researcher: let me ask you about yourself, how were you raised, and at school how were you disciplined as a child.*

*Teacher G: eish, yeah yeah, I finished school in 1988, at matric, those were the difficult times.*

*Me: mhhh*

*Teacher G: when we enrolled at school, at matric the classes were nine - up to I, you see, but as time goes on they ended up at H, so they ended in 10H, because of being beaten. Eish! We grew up in hardship. The way we were beaten [gently shaking his head, and some few second silence as if he is drawing from a distant memory]). I remember that I was once admitted at hospital for two weeks, when I was young. Remember we were walking bare foot, in the cold. And I was beaten underneath my feet, then I got swollen.*

*Me: Mhhh*

*Teacher G: I know that corporal punishment was not bad (a twist of tongue, he meant to say it was bad) because most people lost out on education whom I was at school with, bright student, I was not bright. [trying to say, some students were better than him intellectually but they could not finish school due to corporal punishment].*

*Me: mhhh*

*Teacher G: because at home they wanted me to go to school I went to school. And at my home we didn't have much, I couldn't even get school uniform at all, let alone school books, and they were very expensive then, it's better now they have them free. At that time if you did not have the book that the teacher wants and you'll be beaten until you have it, you see. You do all of that you see.*

*Me: every day you are beaten until you have it*

*Teacher G: until you have it{(emphasizing)} (IG.150,4-23).*

### **Excerpt 6.9a: Parents would reprimand the child and then beat him**

CP: few days in succession...someone else has said you speak to the child, for few days in succession that this person I am busy talking to him and he does not understand, it means he does not hear what I am saying.

Researcher: in other word you saying that the talking to the child is something that you already have been doing, and then if the child does not listen then you use a stick

CP and others: yes, as a last resort

Researcher: as a last resort, in other words you use a stick as a last report, it's not the first thing.

CP :no, actually you will confuse his brain if you beat him first, because he will not understand why you are beating him because he will not know why you are beating him, whereas you could count for him and say 123, and these things are not happening

## 6.10 “Rotten banana” children

### CHAPTER 7 EXCERPTS

#### Excerpt 7.3: What teachers do when children break the rules

Researcher: What does the teacher do, if you break the rule of the class?

Child 1: Uyakushaya (she hits you) (all children shouting out this response)

Researcher: Besides hitting you, what else does she do?

Child 2: She reprimands you?

Researcher: She reprimands you, how does she reprimand you?

Child 3: “don't make noise” (mimicking the teacher)

Child 4: “sit down and do not make noise”

Child 5: “don't get on the tables”

Researcher: How does she do this? Does she talk to you?

All: Yes

Child 7: She reprimands you with “uswazi” (a small soft stick) (others laugh)

Researcher: how?

All: with a stick [like they are saying to me, “don't you know how the stick is us

Researcher: how? does she reprimand you just carrying a stick?

All: She hits you!

Researcher: what does she do?

All: She hits you

(G1C. 229, 16–230, 7)

#### Excerpt 7.3.3: The principal believes a child who comes late over and over can still be punished

Researcher: those are the finer dynamics around corporal punishment, but I understand your point, you are saying maybe three would do for late-coming

P: okay

Me: let me paint a scenario, a scenario that I am going to paint for you is scenario of the three children that I met there at the gate, the three children I was talking to you about.

P: yeah yeah yeah

Researcher: and then they come they are late, they are many, and then I ask them “why are you late?” this child says “we didn't see the time”

P: yeah

Researcher: “how come you did not see the time” then they say “we overslept”

“usually how do you see the time?” “I usually wake up, and then these two are woken up by me, so today I woke up late”  
 P: yeah yeah it’s a common thing  
 Researcher: you can even see them their eyes that they still have “izintongo” (Snots around their eyes)  
 P: that they just wiped their faces.  
 Researcher: yes they wiped their faces and ran to school. Then what punishment do they deserve?  
 P: that of three strokes, if it was allowed.  
 Researcher: yes if it was allowed, yes, you would give them three lashes.  
 P: yeah, if it was allowed

**Excerpt 7.5a: Children’s feelings related to belief that they have called corporal punishment upon themselves**

Researcher: you don’t know how you feel? How do others feel?  
 Child 3: I feel bad.  
 Researcher: And you? By the way who are you? M?  
 Child 4: I feel good because I know that it’s me who has started her.  
 Researcher: you feel good because it’s you who started the teacher?  
 Child 4: Yes  
 Researcher: Tell me what you do to start your teacher.  
 Child 4: like when I do not read, when she said we should read or I do not write homework when she said we should write.  
 Researcher: in that way you have started the teacher?  
 Researcher: who else feels good because he know she has started the teacher.  
 Child 5: I feel good  
 Researcher: yes and you Khulani?  
 Child 5: and I also feel good, but in my heart I do think that if didn’t do this mistake I wouldn’t be beaten  
 Researcher: so you think that if you didn’t do the mistake you did you would not be beaten  
 Child 5: yes.  
 Researcher: In other words... oh K you are still talking, what are you saying?  
 Child 4: I want to say I also feel good because our teacher tells us that she does not want to hit us but it us who are starting her  
 Researcher: oh the teacher tells you; and that it is you who starts her.  
 Child 6: yes she tells that she does not want noise  
 Researcher: she also does not want noise? What noise?  
 Child 3: like when she is gone out, then we make noise  
 (G4C. 243,2-245, 1).

**Excerpt 7.5b: Children feeling inhibited to talk about being beaten because they feel guilty**

Researcher: okay, it’s just that you don’t want to talk about this.  
 Child 1: because she does not start us  
 Child 2: yes, because it us who has started her, not wanting to learn  
 Child 3: or when she reprimands us we continue  
 Child 1: it’s us who has started her  
 Researcher: so you don’t want to talk about this, because it is you who starts her?  
 Children: yes  
 Researcher: so is that why you do not want talk about it [puzzled] [silence].  
 Researcher: I’m sorry to make you talk about what you don’t like to talk about.  
 Child 2: but it’s okay  
 Researcher: but it’s okay?  
 Child 2: yes,

Researcher: okay, how do you feel when you are hit?  
Child 2: it's hard to say  
Researcher: oh it's hard to say, why is it hard to say?  
Child 2: I don't know.

### **Excerpt 7.6a: Children expressing traumatic symptoms as they talk about their corporal punishment experiences**

Researcher: how does it affect you if teachers discipline you by using a stick?

(Silence, with shifting and sighs)

Child 1: Shlllsho! I want to go and wee (heard this only from the audio record, this child never left the group)

Child 2: it is painful, I get anxious.

Researcher: oh it's painful because you get anxious

Child 3: if you haven't written your homework you become anxious because you know that this teacher is always carrying a stick therefore you become anxious that he may hit you again.

Child 4: they hit you here again

Child 5: you also think they can do it if you have not written

Researcher: Ohhh

Child 6: I feel pain when I see another child is beaten and she cries.

Researcher: Oh you feel hurt when you see another child in pain

Child 4: Just like those children who got injured, mistress you see these children who got injured....

Child 3: there is this teacher who hits you here, when you rub to take off the pain he hits you again here and you get swollen here and he does not see [other children were also competing to be heard]

Child 2: and his stick is very painful

Child 3: Just like me, there is this teacher who hit me, but I will not tell her name, there is this teacher who hit me and my hand was so swollen, it was so swollen until I reached home...(G6C. 271, 15–272,5).

### **Excerpt 7.7a: A walking stick – used for corporal punishment as well**

Child 3: Teacher M -he walks with it and he hits us with it [other children giggling].

Child 4: But then, he does not start us, for nothing

Researcher: oh he does not start you, he hits you under what situations?

Child 3: like when they are those who are fighting here at school and he resolves this issue and hit those.

Child 4: or when you fight in the forest, those who are watching and not came to tell that there those who fighting, he hits all of you including the onlookers.

Researcher: mh, he hits you

Child 5: or when you took the school soccer ball and played with it there at the courts then it gets lost and he finds it. He will call you all who were playing this ball and beat you up.

Child 6: or when you have not finished doing his work (G6C. 261, 5-17).

### **Excerpt 7.7b: A big walking stick – used for corporal punishment**

Researcher: oh I also see a stick here [referring to the drawings]

Child 1: the teacher hits us.

Child 2: he point with it at the board

Child 3: if you didn't do his work, like home work, he hits you,

Child 4: even if when you haven't finished your work, even if it's a very small part, like you did not completely write because the word is too long, then he hits you, hey.

[I see one learner pushing or nudging the one who is talking].

Researcher: you are reprimanding him why?

Child 5 No I am encouraging him to say it [laughing].

Child 6: he hits us, he hits 4s, here I am swollen, it cramps all the time

Child 5: hey there is a stick, this big! [demonstrating with his hands] which is called 'Umqondisi' [the straightener] it's this big [demonstrating with his hands again]

Researcher: Really?

Child 2: a stick this big [demonstrating] he uses it as a walking stick,

Child 3: Teacher M -he walks with it and he hits us with it [other learners giggling].

(G6C.260,18-261,6).

### **Excerpt 7.7c: A pipe – also used for corporal punishment**

Researcher: Mh, I have seen these others (thinking aloud as I am paging through the drawings),

even these, the stalk sweets we did talk about them, a pipe, what is a pipe?

Child: mhh it's a pipe that they beat us with

Researcher: oh is a stick neh?

Child: it is torn, it is torn here [trying to demonstrate to me], it is torn inside [showing the front part of the stick], Shooo it's so painful mistress![addressing me as mistress].

Child: other teachers, they put a stick inside,

Child: and some teachers, they don't even lift the stick too high, she lifts it, as she lifts a stick when he hits you, "akudinde" –[it's a way of just hitting repeatedly anywhere on the body].

Child: the other one it happens that he hits you only to find that her hand is very bad, it causes more pain (G6C. 267,4-13).

## Excerpt 7.8: Children's perspective of their parents' support of corporal punishment

Child 1: Just like me, there is this teacher who hit me, but I will not tell her name, there is this teacher who hit me and my hand was so swollen, it was so swollen until I reached home, and my mother asked what injured you, I told her that I was beaten by the teacher, she asked why was I beaten, I told her then she said "any way a child is raised by?..."

Children: by a stick [others joining in to complete her sentence]

Researcher: ohhh that's what you mom said at home

Child 1: Yes.

Researcher: what you are telling me is important

Child 1: But it is painful when you are beaten

Researcher: what do your parents say about you being beaten at school?

Child 2: They do say that a child is raised by a stick

Child 3: Some parents do not like [strongly objecting]

Researcher: just wait, let's hear what he wants to say.

Child 4: yes, others get annoyed, they even come here at school and they tell the teacher that the child is not beaten like that. Even with a clap, like when the teachers come when you are writing and you are not paying attention to him, they hit you with a clap,

Researcher: So you say some parents say its fine, just like you at home they say "the child is..."

Children: Oh yes truly they do not want....we at home they say....not at [all voices coming at once – then I decided to use eye contact to select one child to follow and pay attention to].

Child 2: at home they say its fine but the teacher must not injure you

Researcher: Mhhh, you

Child 6: yes at home they say every child needs to be beaten but not in this way they beat us

Researcher: Mhhh

Child 3: at home they say I must be beaten so that I can be on the line.

Researcher: Mhhh, you

Child 2: And me too, they say that.

Researcher: and you too, do they say that at your home? [Asking another child].

Child 1: Yes,

Researcher: At home, what are they saying?

Child 3: you are asked what are they saying at home. [helping to redirect the interview].

Child 4: at home they say we must be beaten, but they must increase ways because education is important.

Child 1: At home they actually do not like it when I'm beaten too much and I bleed

Child 4: and me they don't want it when I bleed

Researcher: Have you ever been beaten to the extent that you bleed?

Child3: and me [vehemently] I was beaten to bleed

Child 2: and me

Child 3: and me

Child 4: yes, and when I come back from home I show my mother, and my mother comes here at school and when she comes, they talk they talk, they tell each other, they tell each other [meaning they shout at each other].

Child 2: My mother, what she does not like, at grade 5 they hit me with a clap and I bled with my nose, and the teacher apologised to me and he asked me not to tell

Child 1: Ohh that's what he said, and what did you say?

(Another child juttet in)

Child 2: Other teachers sometimes, when you keep repeating that thing they eventually phone your parent and tell her what you have done.

Child 3: That is right [another child commenting]

Researcher: ohhh, okay, that what I also wanted to hear, I was still going to ask you what else do teachers do if they do not hit you, what else do they do?

Child 1: Others they did not write the work, and the teacher says, "Get out of my class" just like mam Sh,

Child 5: its true [affirmation by another child] (G6C. 272,7-274,23).

## CHAPTER 8 EXCERPTS

### Excerpt 8.4a: Alternatives to CP

Researcher: okay, have you seen the book from the Department of Education that tells if you do not beat a child how can you discipline him? or what can you do?

All: no, we've never. There isn't.

Researcher: all of you?

All: No, never

Y: It's just that corporal punishment is not allowed

Researcher: Where have you seen that? Who told you that?

Z: SACE

All: yes and SACE .

Y: in ELRC, it is there in that book (the school has the file on labour relations ....., which every teacher receives from the DoE on induction).

Z: even SACE says it

Y: yes SACE is getting it from the ELRC

Z: even our union says "we will just accompany you to court if you have beaten a child, but we will not fight for you".

Researcher: So they say corporal punishment is not good but they do not tell you what should you do as an alternative?

All: They don't (emphasising the point).

F: and when our children get out of order, how should we bring them back?

D: there are no alternatives

Researcher: there are no alternatives?

All: Yes.

F: we are never told how to discipline children (FP. 21, 23-24, 19)

### Excerpt 8.4b: The Principal's view on alternatives to corporal punishment

Researcher: and what disciplinary method is used.

Principal: you see this disciplinary measure is difficult to define; we always speak of alternative, alternative.

Researcher: yes I know

Principal: I also have a problem to define what is alternative; myself I also have a problem.

Researcher: what are alternatives, alternative to what?

Principal: alternative to, we normally talking of alternatives to corporal punishment, they say "try alternatives". Again, you have to be sensitive when you try alternatives, because when you look at constitutional issues, you see, because there are a lot of things that you might be doing and it's against the law, you see.

Researcher: okay

Principal: so alternatives is something that you cannot exactly define, because I remember also with some of the workshops I attended on discipline what [meaning discipline and other issues].

Researcher: Mhh

Principal: we speak alternatives, we speak alternatives but when you say "give me one alternative" one cannot give you exactly that, because it is unlawful. When the child is already at the school, you punish the child, he is not attending to class instead he is doing something else, that is unlawful now, that you cannot do you see, once he is at school, he must be allowed to learn (here the principal means, one cannot detain the child or institute time out) (IP. 210, 1-18).

### **Excerpt 8.5a: Teachers' understanding of parental involvement**

Researcher: What are the reasons? Why they [parents] are not involved?  
Teacher Kw: we cannot even say it's the level of education, I don't know hey.  
Teacher Ny: because some of them are of our age, some of them were our students here, you find that they didn't finish school.  
Teacher Kw: some do not stay here.  
Teacher Mt: they are working  
Researcher: so it's the level of education of parents, and they don't stay here  
Teacher Kw: some families' backgrounds, they are exposing children to bad things , for instance when the child has done something and you reprimand the child, and when the child repeats it, you can see that this child has an influence of what the parent has said, like "who is that? It's mam Makoko? I'll beat her up and what not and what not and what not" [imitating a parent telling a child that she will beat the teacher].  
Teacher Ny: Like here at grade R, there was this child who had a hair style, with hair that was bothering the child, as they were praying there at the assembly this child was busy with her hair trying, to push her hair off her face. So I assisted the little girl to hold the hair back, and I told her to tell her mom to hold her hair backwards like this. She came the following day and said to me "my mother said I should ask you what was your business with my hair? Because you are not even teaching grade R" (IST.71,28-72,15).

### **Excerpt 8.5b: Teachers on parental involvement**

Teacher Z: no they do not motivate, parents are no more as it is.  
Teacher K: "*hay suka* those teachers of yours do not teach!" [mimicking what a parent would possibly say].  
Teacher Z: some say, your teacher is earning, let him teach you [meaning the teacher getting paid for teaching the child].  
Teacher F: Hay, I once met some parents talking in a taxi. they were not aware that I was a teacher, they were saying "these teachers, they amaze me, I don't know what they are earning for, they want me to come here and teach my child, I knock off at 4 and I don't even understand what is written here, actually what is the duty of teachers, what are they earning for?" (F1.13, 15-22).

### **Excerpt 8.6: Talking to the child**

Parent 3: they just say "talk to the child"  
Researcher: oh, they say talk to the child [expecting some elaboration].  
Parent 3: yes I don't know because talking to a child is something that we are already doing, first thing you talk to the child.  
Chairperson: it's the first thing you do?  
Researcher: you have already started talking to the child [paraphrasing].  
Chairperson: few days in succession...someone else has said you speak to the child. For few days in succession that this person I am busy talking to and he does not understand, it means he does not hear what I am saying.  
Researcher: in other word you saying that talking to the child is something that you already have been doing, and then if the child does not listen then you use a stick (the conversation was in the context of talking about other means the try other than corporal punishment, hence the question is phrased in this manner)  
Chairperson and others: yes, as a last resort [vehemently].  
Researcher: as a last resort, in other words you use a stick as a last resort, it's not a the first thing [rephrasing]  
Chairperson: No, actually you will confuse his brain if you beat him first, because he will not understand why you are beating him because he will not know why you are beating him, whereas you could count for him and say; one, two, three, and these things are not

happening you see and then he will see that his wrong starts here and ends here (PI. 94, 25-95, 11).

### **Excerpt 8.7.1: Detention**

Deputy Principal: No, there isn't any. I won't lie, we weren't given any. But like I said when we attend workshops, people talk and so forth, and you find that when *they make examples they want to talk about Model C schools* of which the parental involvement is such that if you give a child detention the parent will show up. But here [shaking her head sideways].

Researcher: Which is why I am doing this research,...

Deputy Principal: It's also that when you try and adopt some of the alternative methods they don't work. Because look at our school the children live far away and if you detain a child afterschool, they might be attacked on their way back or miss the bus, meaning you have made that child miss the bus. You see? You see, you find that sometimes you want to make the punishment something educational, you may want to keep them back so that they can learn something but you find that you can't because as I've said some of these kids don't have parents. For example look at Thembisile [referring to one of the children at the school] who might be a parent figure at home and so holding her back means that Thembisile must come and fetch her and the little ones suffer as well. Whereas White people drive and they can come through and pick their children up. So those are the kinds of things that make people frustrated because they wonder how is it that they are meant to discipline this child now. Because, if you use their break time, it's wrong because it's time for them to eat.

Researcher: Yes, because it's physical punishment in its own way because if you deny them anything that is physical...

Deputy Principal: Yes because they must eat like other children because there are children here who are excited waiting for that meal because the food they get here at school is the first meal they will have that day and so...

Researcher: So what other methods are there besides .....

Deputy Principal: Oh, it's hard because other methods I won't lie, especially here in the rural areas (IDP. 178, 4-34).

### **Excerpt 8.7.3: Detention detaining teacher too**

Researcher: ... What disciplinary measure do you think will actually assist or you believe is effective in dealing with disciplinary problems.

Principal: You see what I sometimes do, and I think it helps, but educators will not like it again because it required their time. You see, when you note the children who are late, and then you call them by break time. You say "you are not going for break, you will do one, two, three and four, you were late in the morning." you see, most of the time it does assist to a certain extend.

Researcher: and during break teachers may not like it [picking up from where he left off earlier]

Principal: during break teachers may not like it because they also need to go and eat, you see, and when you detain children you need to supervise them

Researcher: oh yes, I heard some teacher saying if you detain a child you also detain yourself

Principal: Yes, that's how they define it, "you detain yourself if you detain a child" (laughing) and some children enjoy it because you are there with them [laughing]. Yeah, some children but it's more of high school children who say "ah no its fine" [meaning detention is fine]. They say "it doesn't matter because we will be together".

And really you have to supervise them, if you detain them, you have to supervise them (IP. 211, 1-24).

### **Excerpt 8.9a: Listening and support**

Researcher: but what should be done in that case?

Chairperson: no no, the parent there has a problem...

Parent 1: the teacher has to play a role there. Let's say it's my child, and you are the teacher, and this is your child [in class], you gave him home work and he did not write it, tomorrow he wrote it but he did not complete it, the truth is this; it is a chain, a chain from the teacher to the child and to the parent. If the child does not write homework...

Chairperson: call the parent [jutting in]

Parent 1: ...no even before you call the parent, call the child, ask, you are not fighting, you want to know that perhaps the child does not write homework the problem is back at home. You ask; "actually when you don't write homework what is the problem?" maybe he will not tell you. As a teacher you observe that this child plays with that child, and you call a friend and ask him why is the friend not writing homework. This child will ask her friend...you why are not writing homework, he may tell a friend that... when he has to write his homework my mother puts the light off. the friend will come and tell you that at the friend s home they put off lights, switch off the electricity, we want to sleep, no one assisting the child, you with the current education it needs a child with a parent who have some education, a parent who hasn't been to school at all finds it difficult to assist the child, you find that the parent want to assist but he cannot. But now as a teacher you get to understand that this child comes from a family where no one is educated. Then if there is homework like this, you will guide the child that she should go to who for assistance.

Researcher: mhhhh, so it means such a child will not be beaten?

Parent 1: no no, here now you understand what is the problem, that the problem has nothing to do with the child being lazy to do homework, you understand that there is a another problem, that problem that is on the side and that problem has to be solved separately(PI. 99,17-100, 26).

### **Excerpt 8.9b: Listening and support**

Researcher: let me paint a scenario, a scenario that I am going to paint for you is scenario of the three children that I met there at the gate, the three children I was talking to you about [extending the previous vignette, a true scenario]

Principal: yeah yeah yeah

Researcher: and then they come they are late, they are many, and them I ask them "why are you late?"

this child says "we didn't see the time"

Principal: yeah

Researcher: "how come you did not see the time", then they say "we overslept"

"Usually how do you see the time?", "I usually wake up, and then these two are woken up by me, so today I woke up late"

Principal: yeah yeah it's a common thing

Researcher: you can even see them their eyes that they still have "izintongo" [snorts around their eyes]

Principal: that they just wiped their faces.

Researcher: yes they wiped their faces and ran to school. Then what punishment do they deserve?

Principal: that of three strokes, if it was allowed.

Researcher: yes if it was allowed, yes, you would give them three lashes?

Principal: yeah, if it was allowed

Researcher: [further extending the vignette]now, they go to class after that, the following day they wake up early and come to school on time, the other day they wake up early, and the other day, the next day they wake up late and we don't even ask them why are late today we just give them their three, and the next day they are late again and they get the three, and the next day for some reason they were late and then they say "is it not better for us to go back home, otherwise we are going to be beaten again, we can see that others are running, and look we are still far, we surely we will not make it, let's just go back home" then they decided to return home because "we are going to be beaten"

Principal: I think those are some of the reason corporal punishment was abolished is there were such scenarios and all the stuff, but you see what normality happens, you beat this child tomorrow he improves, you see...(IP. 215, 9-216,11).

### **Excerpt 8.10: Dialectical transformation**

Teacher Kw: and if it has happened that you stole him [meaning you have beaten him, just a little].

You steal him in a way that...

Teacher Mt: you smile with him, you are not angry

Teacher Kw: so that he can see that and you do not punish the child in a way that you are killing him, you just go vha vha twice

Teacher Mt: in a friendly way

Teacher Kw: after that make sure you make her laugh, so that he can see that this is passing

Researcher: Mhhhh. If it has happened that you steal him; by 'ukumtshontsha' what do you mean?

You happened to beat him?

All: yes

Researcher: okay, so if it happened that you stole him you make sure that after that...?

Teacher Kw: then you make sure that you are happy [no longer upset] so that they see that you hit him for the wrong thing that he did, it's not like you hate him or, just make things normal so that the child leave the school happy, because if you leave him to go unhappy he will arrive at home and say wrong things (IST. 63, 13-27).

### Excerpt 8.11a: Transformation

Teacher Ny: and parents, when they eventually come they can say, if the child does not do work you can beat her, but you are afraid, because you are not sure if once you have done that she may turn against you, because they know that corporal punishment is abolished.

Researcher: so you are afraid to hit a child, you fear that the parent...

Teacher Mt: even though he said so, you will never know if he is just putting me in a trap

Researcher: In short, the way I hear you, so you want to hit the child but you are afraid because you know that hitting is abolished so you are afraid

Teacher Mt: yes they always remind us even in SADTU meetings that we should not beat then because they will not represent you, they say you must find other ways, but by not beating him (IST. 63, 2-10).

### Excerpt 8.11b: Transformation

Teacher Z: you see these days, being a teacher its risky, in these days I don't want to lie, it is no longer nice. It's a risk being a teacher. Because when a child plays there and he gets injured then that is your fault. There is that child, who got injured while they were playing out there, outside the school. they were playing their thing and he got into the bottle it injured him here, and they tried to remove it and broke from inside, the father of the child "fokorond" us, he insulted and insulted and insulted us, and even when the granny tried to explain "no, the child was playing and got injured outside the school "teachers went up and down with the child taking the child to hospitals, and the whole of Fundani got into trouble. When the child was discharged from hospital, the father said "you fetch him" the uncle said that while he was away far away in eGoli "the child got injured in your hands" "No it was outside the school, it's them who break bottles it's not teachers" "No, no, I'll sue you." Can you see that? It's a risk today to be a teacher, it's not nice, it's not nice my sister I don't want to lie, if this child can fall here, why did this child get injured and how? They ask many times as well at hospital "didn't the teacher touch you?" at the hospital, "didn't the teacher touch you?" "No"

Teacher K: oh yes many times, they ask many time. Mine (child in her class) pumped on the wall, fell and got injured here (showing on her forehead), you could see the way they asked the same question repeatedly saying "can you just fall and get injured here at the middle of the forehead?"

Teacher Z: phakathi nekhand! [in the middle of your head!], even though the child testifies that "no I fell" even though he repeatedly said "I fell" [emphasising]

Teacher Z: then they turn to you and say, "are you the teacher?" Then you say "yes", then they turn to the child "don't be afraid of the teacher"

Teachers K/Z: just say it, don't be afraid of your teacher [K and Z enthusiastically assisting each other to make this point clear]

Teacher Z: even though the teacher came to the hospital for this one child and left behind other 46 children, but then "didn't my boy?" [imitating nurses] "No we were running during break and we pumped onto each other and then I fell," "didn't my boy?" "And you got injured on the head just like that?"[Further imitating the health worker]

Teacher Z: Can you see?

Researcher: is that your child? [Meaning the child in her class].

Teacher K: yes

Researcher: and how did you feel?

Teacher K: I was just stunned, "what is happening here"? (FT. 29,2 -30,1).

### **Excerpt 8.11c/8.12: The ZPD to alternatives to corporal punishment**

Researcher: Now as a teacher, are you trained on how can you discipline children, if you do not beat children how can you discipline the child?

Teacher Z: they say you must think for yourself, use you won discretion

Teacher K: isn't it that they say use your own discretion, they say so because whatever you do, you do it at your own risk. When you get in trouble, you remain alone.

Researcher: who says you must use your own discretion

All: SACE

Teacher F: let him sit on the air "chair in the air" (a practice of making children squat in front of the class for an extended period, causing pain on the legs, thighs and bums)

Teacher D: let him seat on the air, or let them clean?

Teacher K: You let the child do the Chair in the air and the get some cramps.

Teacher Z: when you make them clean the toilet they say do you have the must because the child will contract diseases, and we used to do the garden, but when you make them do the garden, you are asked what if the child injures himself with a spade.

Researcher: there is nothing that is right. Even to make him sit on the chair that is wrong?

All: yes

Teacher Z: the father of my child, once made children to do a "chair in the air" this child had cramps, only to find she was pregnant and the teacher did not know. The teacher's left the school, and the child remained at school sick with cramps and another teacher took her to the doctor, that doctor kept asking "didn't the teacher hit you" ...when they examined the child they found that the child was pregnant.

Researcher: Mhh

Teacher Z: You see, you think you do good, whereas you do wrong.

Teacher K: it is difficult because even the parents themselves they agree when they are at the meeting and the parents agree that you beat the child...

Teacher Z: the problem again is that the parents of the children who are rude or do not do work they do not come, it's the parents of well performing children who come

Teacher K: having agreed, as we say you are still on your own, because if you happen to beat the child, and you have hit the child here (showing on the hand) then child gently, for example the child had a bump, the parent will not say I agreed, you will remain alone with the problem, you will be on your own.

Researcher: mhh, so when the child gets injured you get into trouble, you can do whatever you do but it is on your own risk

All: Yes

Teacher Z: the chair in the air is just a problem

Teacher K: there is nothing that is not a problem

Teacher F: we don't know how are we going to discipline them (FT. 19, 16-20, 24).

### **Excerpt 8.11d: The ZPD to alternatives to corporal punishment**

Teacher G: It came to our understanding that as an SMT, that our teachers more especially the female educators, are failing to discipline children, and if at all they do, they are treating them in a correct way, they were not treating them in the correct way. So we [SMT] were avoiding the flocking of parents coming to complain; educator so and so did this, educator so and so this that, it happened indeed in the past years.

Researcher: what do you mean female teachers were not treating or disciplining children well, what were they doing?

Teacher G: in terms of language they were injuring these children, so we were protecting their [teachers] professions.

Researcher: okay

Teacher G: if they injure them, because they injured them.

Researcher: they beating them and injuring them?

Teacher G: mhh [reluctantly].

Researcher: okay

Teacher G: actually we were protecting them, so that whatever happens in class they should send them to the office. They you'll report what happens

Researcher: ohhh, that's how you came to the picture

Teacher G: the picture yeah, because we once have some cases of parents, now it's all gone since we introduced this system.

Researcher: case like?

Teacher G: these children they do say at home what teachers name them in the classrooms, they say it and it's that good, and beyond that when you beat this child too much you injure him you see. And we had some cases where parents reported four teacher X, they registered their cases to the police station, so we tried to intervene, and we succeeded, but aim was to protect their profession.

Researcher: the teachers?

Teacher G: yeah the teachers, we protect them.

Researcher: because you know what is going to happen?

Teacher G: yeah yeah we know, even though we are always telling them, if you keep on doing this, this is what is going to be the results.

Researcher: yeah yeah

Teacher G: you see, so that is why it came to our understanding that let us come with the strategy

Researcher: mhhh, so tell me, do teachers realise even after those cases were reported, did you notice any change whatsoever among the teachers in the way the discipline children.

Teacher G: yes there are some changes, even if it not out of all, but there is an improvement. But you know if you discipline a child in anger and with emotions, at that moment, you tend to overdo. But we said at least in terms of them doing it themselves, they will rather send them to me, (IG. 142, 9-143,17).

## **Appendix V: National School Pledge**

### THE NATIONAL SCHOOL PLEDGE

We the youth of South Africa Recognising the injustices of our past,  
honour those who suffered and sacrificed for justice and freedom.

We will respect and protect the dignity of each person,  
and stand up for justice

We sincerely declare that we shall uphold the rights and values of our constitution  
and promise to act in accordance with the duties  
and responsibilities that flow from these rights.

! KE E: / XARRA // KE Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.

## Appendix W: Rhymes

**These are some of the grade R rhymes the children recite every morning in the classroom**

1<sup>st</sup> period of the day, in the morning children are doing rhymes

### **Rhyme 1 (a song about greetings).**

good morning  
we are greeting each other...

### **Rhymes 2**

Umama,  
akekho umuntu ofana nomama  
noma ungakhala  
noma unгахleka....  
umama ngiyamthanda  
naye udade wethu  
naye umfowethu  
kodwa hayi njengomama  
sengathi ngingaphila  
ngize ngikhule  
ngimsize umama  
ngimsize umama

### **Rhymes 3**

Teacher: Laphaya esikoleni  
Class: Laphaya esikoleni  
kukhona abantwana bayafunda ke  
bathi a e l o u  
bathi shaya thishela  
bathu shaya thishela  
bathi shaya thishela

### **Rhyme 4**

Teacher: Ngineminwe emihlanu  
Class: Ngineminwe emihlanu  
engiyibiza ngamagama  
uthuphazana lo isidudla sami  
ukhombisile lo umthethi wamacala  
umdanyana lo indoda ende kakhulu  
uthembisile lo umngane we ndandatho  
ucikicane lo ithemba lami, ithemba lami

### **Rhyme 5**

Teacher: We Nomathemba  
Class: We Nomathemba  
Ushaywe wubani  
yiley ndoda  
yibize ize la  
hayi ngiyasaba  
ngibeleva nail hashi  
hayi ngiyasaba  
eyehla amathabo wukubeheke zansi X2  
enyuka amathambo ukubheka phezulu X2

### **Rhyme 6**

Izinyoni ezinhlanu  
zihlezi emthini  
enye yathi  
ubani loya ya?  
enye yathi  
yindoda nesibhamu  
enye yath  
masicasheni  
enye yathi  
masibalekeni  
enye yathi  
asisabi lutho thina  
asisabi lutho thina  
qhu sasho isibhamu  
qhu sasho isibhamu  
zabaleka izinyoni  
zathi tswi tswi tswi  
zathi tswi tswi tswi

### **Rhyme 7**

Teacher: Nokwanda, hey Nokwanda (then Nokwanda started leading tis rhyme)  
N: I f you happy and you know clap your hands  
clap clap  
N: if you happy and you know  
and you really want to show  
if you happy and you know  
clap your hands  
N: if you happy and you know clap your hands  
clap clap  
N: if you happy and you know  
and you really want to show  
if you happy and you know  
clap your hands  
(then –stamp your feet in the next verse)

### **Rhyme 8**

Teacher: Luphi ulwandle?

Class: LuseThekwini

lwenzani

lugubha amagagasi

lwenzani

ligubha amagagasi

baye ngaphi baye esikoleni

bayofunani

isitifiketi

could not hear anymore -they were chaotic)

### **Rhyme 9**

T: hey hey let's listen

Child: heya heya heya heya

heya heya

heya heya

heya heya

**Appendix X: Government's communication – forced removals**

**FORCED REMOVALS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**THE  
TRANSVAAL**

**Volume 5 of the Surplus People Project report**

## Annexure 4

GPS (L)

Telegrafiese adres } "SAMEWERKING"  
Telegraphic address }

Posbus } 384  
P.O. Box }

NAVRAE/ENQUIRIES:

TEL. No.



REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

No. T8/7/2/2/W1/3  
W1/1

DSO 117

DEPARTEMENT VAN SAMEWERKING  
EN ONTWIKKELING

DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT

PRETORIA

0001

18/19 May 1981

Dear Sir/Madam

### INFORMATION BROCHURE

1. At the meeting held the 3rd March 1981, the Department of Co-operation and Development provided the Community with an explanatory document outlining the details of the settlement of the Driefontein people. For the convenience of the community the information contained therein is repeated. It equally applies to the people of the Kaffirlokasie.
2. The aforementioned details are as follows:
  - 2.1 The new area will be planned by a planning committee which will be composed of representatives of the Central Government, the Kangwane Government and of the Driefontein Community.
  - 2.2 Compensatory land, provided by the South African Development Trust, will not be of lesser pastoral or agricultural value than that of the land occupied at present. In the case of land owners, they will again be granted title deeds in respect of their compensatory land.
  - 2.3 The time of these resettlement will be decided on in consultation with the Community.
  - 2.4 Facilities such as school, clinics, water, temporary houses, roads and sanitation will be provided at the compensatory land by the South African Development Trust.
  - 2.5 People will be adequately compensated for their improvements and will be allowed to take with them to the new area whatever reclaimable material they wish, e.g. doors, windowframes, corrugated iron, etc.

Appendix Removed due to visible signatures

## Annexure 4

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W1/1

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